

What is a home office and do I need a permit for its operation?

A home office is a home occupation, which is limited to an office within a residence, and employs only occupants of the residence in the office operation. A permit is not required to operate a home office as long as the following is met:

- A home office is an accessory use of the residence, and can not occupy more than 20% of the home.
- Only people who live in the home may work at the home office.
- Clients or customers can not come to the home.

If you intend to have customer visits, or a nonresident employee, you would be considered a Home Occupation and would require a permit. Business use in residential areas is regulated to allow for limited commercial activity and to prevent nuisances to a neighbourhood.

Town of Whitecourt Planning and Development Department

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Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday

8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Closed between

12 noon and 12:30 p.m.

www.whitecourt.ca

Alberta 1 Call

Call before you dig

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Alberta 1 Call will assist you in locating electric, oil, gas and communication lines.

HOME OCCUPATIONS



PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
KEEPING YOU INFORMED.

HOME OFFICES

FOR MORE
INFORMATION

The logo for the Town of Whitecourt, featuring a stylized green 'W' above the word 'Whitecourt' in a green sans-serif font.

When applying for a Development Permit for a home occupation, you must briefly describe the type of business and goods or services that will be provided.

If you are not the owner of the residence, or if you live in a manufactured home park or apartment, a letter of authorization from the property owner to use the property for business purposes must be submitted at the time of application.

You will be notified when your application will be presented to the MPC. You are encouraged to attend to answer any questions that may arise.

Upon approval of the Development Permit, the property will be posted with a Notice of Decision for 21 days. The decision will also be posted in the local paper, online, and at the Town Office. Posting of the decision will give anyone affected the chance to comment on the proposed home occupation. If no appeals are received, you will be able to operate the business subject to any conditions stipulated at the time of approval.

If an appeal is received during the 21 day posting period, or if the application is not approved by the MPC, the decision can be appealed to the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board. Appeals must be made, and fees paid, within the 21 day appeal period to be considered valid. The Development Officer will assist you through this process.

A home occupation is any trade, profession or craft, carried on by an occupant of a residential building. It is secondary to the residential nature of the home. It is a discretionary use, and the application must be approved by the Municipal Planning Commission (MPC).

A home occupation can not change the character of the home. All residents of a home may be employed in a home occupation and one nonresident employee is allowed on site. The only outside evidence of a home occupation permitted is a small sign up to 0.3m², attached to the face of the building.

In addition to the required Development Permit, approval may also be required by other provincial agencies such as Alberta Health, Alberta Labour or Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs. For more information contact the Alberta Government at 310-0000.



The following aspects will be considered when the MPC approves or make additional requirements for the approval of a Home Occupation:

- traffic
- hazardous materials
- waste
- advertising
- employment
- areas of use
- noise

Development Permits for home occupations are not transferable to other addresses.

The business can not change the character or outside appearance of the house or accessory buildings.

If there is storage of materials and/or equipment at the residence, the applicants must indicate the type of materials/equipment, where and how much is stored, and the length of time that they are stored.

If alterations have been made to the home, additional permits may be required. For more information on applying for a Building Permit, check the brochure titled “Applying for Permits”.

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

WHAT IS A HOME OCCUPATION?

CONSIDERATIONS OF HOME OCCUPATIONS