

What is a customary home occupation?

A home based business (or customary home occupation) is a small-scale occupation, service, profession, or enterprise that operates out of a dwelling unit in a residential neighborhood. Some examples of home based businesses include alteration businesses, graphic designers and professional services such as architects and accountants.

I plan to operate a business out of my home. What kind of permit will I need?

Zoning approval is required to operate a business out of your home. You must apply and be approved for a **Customary Home Occupation Permit** to operate your business.

Where do I apply?

You can apply for a Customary Home Occupation permit in person at the Hal Marshall Building, 700 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte NC 28202. Permit applications are accepted Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Persons operating a business from their home should consult with their home owner's and other applicable associations and review their deed for any possible restrictions.

This brochure is published as part of a public information service. This brochure has no legal status and cannot be used as an official interpretation of the various laws, codes, regulations and ordinances currently in effect at any given time. The City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County accept no responsibility to persons relying solely on this information.

For home businesses in other towns located in Mecklenburg County, contact:

LUESA North
18335 Old Statesville Rd Suite K
Cornelius NC 28031

LUESA South
1311 Matthews-Mint Hill Road
Matthews NC 28105
704-814-0435



Starting a
Home Based Business

What are the rules for a Customary Home Occupation?

The general rules and guidelines for a Customary Home Occupation are set forth below. Citizens should refer to the City of Charlotte Zoning Ordinance for details. The complete zoning ordinance can be viewed at www.charlotteplanning.org.

- The home occupation must be clearly incidental to the residential use of the dwelling and must not change the essential residential character of the dwelling.
- The business can occupy no more than 25 percent of the total floor area of the home, or 500 square feet, whichever is less.
- No accessory building or outside storage may be used in connection with the business.
- Machinery that causes noise, electrical interference with radio or television reception, vibration, glare, fumes, odors, dust, detectable at the property line is prohibited.
- No equipment and materials/supplies that are not normally a part of domestic or household equipment may be used or stored on the property. Medical, dental, and office equipment used for professional purposes may be used. A single trailer used for cargo/storage may be used if it is attached to vehicle at all times, but no construction or industrial equipment can be stored on the trailer.
- No display of products shall be visible from the street.
- No internal or external alterations inconsistent with the residential use of the building are allowed. There shall be no evidence on the exterior of the premises or visible from the exterior of the premises that the property is used in any way other than for a dwelling.
- No form of signage related to the business is allowed.
- Only residents of the dwelling may be engaged in work activities at the residence. Employees may not come to the residence for work purposes, including pick-up of materials, vehicles, assignments, or similar purposes.
- Clients or business related visitors shall be by appointment only.
- The number of vehicles used by clients or business related visitors to any home business shall be limited to two at any given time.
- Vehicles used in connection with the conduct of the customary home occupation shall comply with the requirements of Section 12.218, "Commercial vehicle parking in residential areas".
- Hours of operation for deliveries, clients, and operation of mechanical or electrical equipment is limited to 7:00 am to 8:00 pm.
- Prohibited home businesses include, but are not limited to: caterers, food vendors, equipment and vehicle repair shops, appliance and small mechanical repair shops, barber and beauty shops, kennels, commercial bakeries, veterinarian clinics, funeral homes, commercial cabinetry shops, welding, trucking, adult oriented businesses, warehousing, vehicular sales, and other similar uses.

When will I get my Customary Home Occupation permit?

If applying in person, an application for a Customary Home Occupation Permit can typically be processed on a same day basis, provided your application is complete and complies with all applicable codes and ordinances.

What about operating a home child care, group home, adult care home or bed and breakfast from my home?

These business types are subject to additional rules & regulations. You can learn more by visiting the Hal Marshall Building at 700 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte NC 28202 and by reviewing the Charlotte Zoning Ordinance at www.charlotteplanning.org.

Will I have to pay a fee?

As of July 1, 2013, the fee for a customary home occupation permit is \$145. This fee is subject to change. For current fees visit the Code Enforcement Zoning site at <http://nbs.charlottenc.gov>.

In addition, there are fees related to obtaining a business license.

To learn more about business license requirements & fees, visit the Business Tax Collections Office at 700 N. Tryon Street, Charlotte NC 28202 or by phone at 704-336-6315 or visit www.charmeck.org.