

B	<u>HOME OCCUPATIONS -- HOW CAN I RUN A BUSINESS FROM MY HOME?</u>
This section provides general information for business owners interested in starting a home occupation or home-based business in Clarke County.	
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Residents are allowed to operate a business from their residence as a home occupation depending upon the following factors:

- Whether the home occupation will be conducted by a resident of the property, either the property owner or a tenant with permission from the property owner.
- The scope and nature of the business activities to be conducted in the residence and on the property.
- The maximum number of employees that will be on the property working in the home occupation.
- The maximum number of customers/clients who will be on the property.
- The type, size, and amount of equipment, materials, and product that will be stored on the property – either within the residence, within an accessory structure, or out in the open.

As a rule of thumb, a home occupation should be of such low impact to surrounding properties that it should not be readily apparent that a business is being conducted on the property. In other words, the business activity must be clearly incidental and subordinate to the primary use on the property which is the single-family residence. This includes no changes in the outside appearance of the residence or property or other visible evidence of a home occupation on site. This also means that there shall be no equipment or process used in the home occupation that creates electrical interference, fumes, glare, noise, odors, or vibration that can be readily detected from nearby properties.

[Section A \(What approvals do I need to operate a business in Clarke County?\)](#) outlines the three general steps to follow when starting a business in Clarke County. Getting zoning approval to operate a home occupation falls under Step 2 -- ensuring that your business meets County Zoning Ordinance requirements. This can be accomplished by filing a [home occupation zoning permit](#) application in the Department of Planning and providing information to address the four factors described above. The Zoning Administrator will review the application and approve it if demonstrates compliance with all home occupation regulations.

The regulations for home occupations may be found in **[Article I \(Zoning Ordinance\), Section 5.2B \(Residential Uses – Home Occupation\)](#)**. Some important regulations to note are summarized below:

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- Permits and licenses required – If a home occupation requires additional County, State, or Federal permits or licenses, the applicant shall obtain those permits and licenses prior to commencing the home occupation and shall maintain the permits and licenses in good standing for the life of the business.
- Maximum number of employees – In addition to the permit holder, anyone who is employed by the home occupation and who works on the property on a regular basis – including family members – is considered an “employee” of the home occupation for the purpose of these regulations. Family members who also reside on the property are not considered in determining the number of employees. Maximum number of employees is determined by the size of the property:
 - Lots less than six acres – Maximum of **one** employee.
 - Lots six acres or greater – Maximum of **two** employees.
- Maximum area of residence or accessory structure allowed for home occupation use – A maximum of **25%** of the floor area of the residence may be used for home occupation activities. Home occupation activities may be conducted in an accessory structure. If the home occupation activities are conducted exclusively in the accessory structure, the maximum allowable floor area is equal to **25% of the maximum floor area of the residence**. If the home occupation activities are conducted in both the residence and an accessory structure, the **total** maximum allowable floor area is also equal to **25% of the maximum floor area of the residence**. Example:
 - Business owner intends to use a residence with a total floor area of 2,000 square feet and a 900 square foot accessory structure for business activities.
 - If all activities are conducted in the residence, the maximum floor area that may be used is **500 square feet**.
 - If all activities are conducted in the accessory structure, the maximum floor area that may be used is **500 square feet**.
 - If activities are conducted in both the residence and the accessory structure, the total maximum floor area that may be used between **both** structures is **500 square feet**.
- Maximum number of customers – The maximum allowable number of customers allowed on the property at any one time for a home occupation depends on the property’s zoning district classification. Customers include clients, guests, students, and any other persons visiting the residence to conduct business with the home occupation. Customers do not include residents of the home.
 - Rural Residential (RR) District – maximum of **6** customers
 - Agricultural-Open Space-Conservation (AOC) District – maximum of **12** customers
 - Forestal-Open Space-Conservation (FOC) District – maximum of **12** customers

- Parking – Home occupations with customers and/or employees are subject to parking limitations. All parking for customers must be located off-street and cannot be located in the required front yard – parking is limited to side and rear yard areas. Parking for employees, including employees who do not work on the property on a regular basis, is limited by number as follows:
 - RR District – maximum of **1** employee vehicle
 - AOC or FOC District, lot less than 6 acres – maximum of **3** employee vehicles; parking must be screened from view from adjacent properties and public streets
 - AOC or FOC District, lot six acres or greater – maximum of **3** employee vehicles

- Business equipment and vehicles – The use and storage of business equipment and vehicles on the property is limited based on property zoning district and lot size as outlined in the following chart:

USE/STORAGE OF EQUIPMENT AND STORAGE OF VEHICLES

	RR District; AOC/FOC Districts, Two (2) Acres or Less	AOC/FOC Districts, Greater than Two (2) Acres and Less than Six (6) Acres	AOC/FOC Districts, Six (6) Acres or More
Business Equipment (equipment that is not a self-propelled motorized vehicle) Business Product (merchandise produced by the home occupation)	-- Use/storage shall be within a totally enclosed structure -- Shall be included in the maximum 25% floor area requirement	-- Use/storage shall be within a totally enclosed structure -- Shall be included in the maximum 25% floor area requirement	-- Use/storage shall be shielded from view* -- Shall be included in the maximum 25% floor area requirement if in an enclosed structure**
Licensed Business Vehicles (motorized vehicles or utility trailers requiring license plates)	-- Maximum of one (1) motorized vehicle -- Maximum of one (1) utility trailer less than 20' in length -- Shall NOT be included in the maximum 25% floor area requirement	-- Maximum of one (1) motorized vehicle -- Maximum of one (1) utility trailer less than 20' in length -- Shall NOT be included in the maximum 25% floor area requirement	-- Maximum of three (3) motorized vehicles -- Maximum of three (3) utility trailers less than 20' in length -- Any combination of three (3) or more shall be shielded from view* -- Shall NOT be included in the maximum 25% floor area requirement

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	RR District; AOC/FOC Districts, Two (2) Acres or Less	AOC/FOC Districts, Greater than Two (2) Acres and Less than Six (6) Acres	AOC/FOC Districts, Six (6) Acres or More
Vehicular Business Equipment (motorized vehicles not requiring license plates, e.g., bulldozers, backhoes)	-- Not allowed	-- Maximum of one (1) -- Shall be shielded from view* -- Shall NOT be included in the maximum 25% floor area requirement	-- Maximum of three (3) -- Shall be shielded from view* -- Shall NOT be included in the maximum 25% floor area requirement
Commercial or Industrial- classified Vehicles (e.g., semi-trucks and trailers, dump trucks, box trucks, bucket trucks)	-- Not allowed	-- Maximum of one (1) -- Maximum of one (1) industrial trailer (20' or more in length) -- Shall be shielded from view* -- Shall NOT be included in the maximum 25% floor area requirement	-- Maximum of three (3) vehicles -- Maximum of three (3) industrial trailers (20' or more in length) -- Shall be shielded from view* -- Shall NOT be included in the maximum 25% floor area requirement

* “Shielded from view” means that the equipment or vehicles are screened from view from adjacent properties (whether vacant or not), public streets, and private access easements using solid fencing, evergreen trees, and/or topographic features such as berms or the natural topography of the property.

** If business equipment or product is stored outside of a totally enclosed structure, it is not required to be included in the 25% maximum floor area calculation.

- Special Rules for Certain Types of Home Occupations – In addition to the regulations noted above, there are special rules or “use regulations” for certain types of businesses operated as home occupations. These regulations may be found in the previously referenced home occupation regulations section of the Zoning Ordinance.

- Bed-and-breakfast
- Family day home (child day care)
- Breeding kennel
- Boarding kennel

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- The following types of businesses cannot be operated as home occupations:
 - Onsite vehicle repair
 - Vehicle towing

In the event that your business cannot be approved as a home occupation, there may be additional zoning application processes that could allow it to be approved. Planning Department Staff can advise you on these processes.