

Zoning Codes Changed for Operating Business Out of Madison Home

Home ownership is now a requirement for operating a business out of one's residence in the City of Madison with a recent amendment to the zoning codes. "Sustainability of residential neighborhoods is a major goal for the city" said Madison Economic Development Director Jerry Cook. "The additional requirement provides another tool for the city to reach that goal."

The newly amended section of the zoning ordinance defines a home occupation as "any activity carried out for gain by a resident in an owner-occupied dwelling." The ordinance previously allowed non-owner residents to conduct business at home. Several other restrictions apply to home occupations in Madison:

- No equipment or supplies related to the home occupation may be visible outside of the house or other structures.
- No more than 25 percent of the floor area of a house, or not more than 400 square feet, may be used for the home occupation.
- Home occupations cannot exist in accessory buildings.
- The home occupation must not generate more traffic than is normally expected in a residential neighborhood – as determined by the zoning administrator – and parking needs must be met off of the street and not in a yard.
- No signs or exterior lighting can be used to indicate that the home contains a business.
- Only the people who live in the house can conduct home occupation business there.
- The home occupation must not create "noise, vibration, glare, fumes or objectionable colors detectable to the normal senses" outside the house, the city website says.
- No tractor-trailer trucks may be used for a home occupation.
- And the home occupation must not cause visible or audible electrical interference in any radio or television receivers off the premises or cause fluctuations in line voltage off the premises.

To get a home occupation permit, homeowners must file an application and a \$25.00 fee with the city. The zoning administrator then will check to see if the zoning requirements are met before issuing a permit.

"Any violation of the home occupation permit is a violation of the zoning ordinance" Cook said. "As such, if the violation is not corrected, the property owner can be taken to court for the violation."

He said the city doesn't have many violations of the home occupation restrictions.