

HOME-BASED BUSINESS

Many small businesses (and some large ones) began in someone's home. In the city of Dubuque, you can operate a home-based business in your principal residence -- your home (be it a house, half of a duplex, or an apartment) -- provided you follow the zoning rules. Here's a basic rundown of these requirements.

Permitted Home-based Businesses

Certain home-based businesses are permitted, but specific rules may apply in different zoning districts. Be sure to contact the Planning Services Department while planning your business venture.

- Art studio
- Cake decorating
- Ceramics
- Computer programming
- Consultant services
- Child care (not including licensed child care center)
- Adult day services (not including licensed adult day care)
- Dressmaking, sewing and tailoring
- Film processing
- Home cooking and preserving
- Home crafts
- Home office
- Home products distributors
- Income tax preparations
- Insurance sales persons
- Mailing services
- Online business
- Painting, sculpting and writing
- Teaching or tutoring limited to four persons at one time
- Telephone answering
- Typist/stenographer

Don't do it alone!



Before you begin, contact
the Development Helpline
at 563-589-4210 or
planning@cityofdubuque.org
or click here!

Let us make it easy
FOR YOU!

Conditional Home-based Businesses

Any home-based business not listed above or that employs up to two people who don't reside in the home, may be allowed with a conditional use permit from the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Here are some "do's" and "don'ts" for home-based businesses:

EMPLOYEES

Do:

- Employ yourself or any family members who live with you.

Don't:

- Employ anyone else without first obtaining a conditional use permit.

ADVERTISING

Do:

- Use the telephone book, ads, business cards or the internet to advertise your business.

Don't:

- Install a business sign in your window or anywhere on your property.
- Make any changes to the outside appearance of your home that would be visible from the street.
- Display products or have outside storage of any kind.

DELIVERIES

Do:

- Use parcel post or similar parcel size vehicles for deliveries to and from your home.

Don't:

- Use semis or other delivery vehicles over two ton capacity for deliveries to and from your home.

FLOOR AREA

Do:

- Limit your home-based business to 50% or less of the total floor area of your dwelling unit.

Don't:

- Exceed 50% of your home's square footage.
- Locate the business in a garage, shed, or other accessory structure.

NEIGHBORHOOD IMPACTS

Do:

- Operate your business as if it didn't exist. Your home should appear the same as any other home without a home-based business.

Don't:

- Generate traffic, parking, or sewer and/or water use in excess of what is normal in a residential neighborhood.
- Create a hazard to people or property, create electrical interference, or become a nuisance.
- Produce noise, vibration, smoke, odors, heat or glare in excess of a normal single-family residence.

CUSTOMER CONTACT

Do:

- Use the telephone, fax, mail, e-mail or web site for customer and client contact.

- Conduct services or sales on-site by appointment only, except those home-based businesses such as tutoring, teaching, child care or personal services which cannot be conducted without personal contact.

Don't:

- Orient your business toward, or attract off-the-street customer or client traffic.

Prohibited Home-based Businesses

These uses cannot be operated out of your home:

- Barber and beauty shops.
- Service or repair of vehicles such as automobiles, trucks, boats, snowmobiles, motorcycles, lawnmowers, etc.
- Antique/furniture refinishing for resale on the premise or as a service for the general public.
- Recycling or salvage operations.
- Small engine repair.
- Contractor's shop.
- Welding services.

Questions?

This information is not intended to cover every aspect of the City's zoning regulations, and should not be considered the final or definitive authority on any of the matters it addresses. It is only a general guide.

If you have questions about home-based businesses, or would like to start a home-based business that is not listed, please contact:

Planning Services Department

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