Home Occupations & Cottage Industries
Bulletin 25

Division of Building, Safety, and Inspection for 2018 International Codes

Terms

PCC - Pierce County Code
WAC - Washington Administrative Code
IBC - International Building Code
IRC - International Residential Code
BPRS – Residential Building Permit

General Standards for Home Occupation and Cottage Industry
The following highlights the PLANNING division requirements for home occupations and cottage industries. Both of these terms refer to the operation of a business in the home by the person(s) living there. For BUILDING division requirements, see last page.

• Noticeable glare, noise, odor, vibration, smoke, dust, heat, or cause interference with radio or television receivers at or beyond the property lines shall not occur.

• Activities shall be performed inside the residence, an accessory structure, or a combination of the two.

• Structures shall comply with building and fire code requirements for permits, occupancy, and inspection.

• It shall be clearly secondary to the residential use of the property and shall not change the residential character of the dwelling or neighborhood.

• Manufacturing shall be limited to the small-scale assembly of already manufactured parts but does not preclude production of small, individually handcrafted items, furniture, or other wood items.

• Customers are allowed between the hours of 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. and sales in connection with the home occupation are limited to merchandise handcrafted on site or items accessory to a service.

• Signage is regulated by Title 18B PCC, Signs.

• Off-street parking shall include one space per non-resident employee and one for each related vehicle (unless the employee drives the cottage industry vehicle only) in addition to the parking required for the single-family residence.

• Use of hazardous materials or equipment must comply with the requirements of the Uniform Building Code and the Uniform Fire Code.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use Permit required</th>
<th>Size: 50% of total floor area of the living space within the residence, or… (whichever less)</th>
<th>Non-resident employees permitted</th>
<th># of vehicles up to 18,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight permitted</th>
<th># of vehicles over 18,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight permitted</th>
<th>Outside display or storage related to use</th>
<th>Landscaping required</th>
<th>Outdoor activities permitted</th>
<th>Use or storage of hazardous materials permitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home Occupation</strong></td>
<td>Permitted: Outright</td>
<td>500 sq. ft.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cottage Industry I</strong></td>
<td>Administrative Use Permit</td>
<td>1,000 sq. ft.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes¹</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cottage Industry II</strong></td>
<td>Conditional Use Permit</td>
<td>1,500 sq. ft.²</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes² ³</td>
<td>Yes⁴</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ A Level 3 landscape buffer is required between the cottage industry and neighboring residential dwellings
² Properties greater than five or more acres in size may exceed this at the Hearing Examiner’s discretion
³ A Level 3 landscape buffer and F1 Fence is required between outside material and vehicle storage and neighboring residential dwellings
⁴ Activities involving outdoor events, such as wedding facilities, are limited to six outdoor events per year with no more than one activity a month; at the Hearing Examiner’s discretion properties greater than 10 acres in size may exceed this
Building Permit Requirements

- **Home occupations** that have *no associated construction activity* and are offices, mercantile, personal care salons or similar uses *and* are less than 500 square feet **do not need a building permit**.

- **Home occupations** that *have associated construction activity* and are one of the uses listed above need **building, plumbing, mechanical, and/or electrical permits** for the work being done.

- **Home occupations** which are *not* one of the uses listed in the definition above will require an occupancy separation. Any use that will require an occupancy separation wall **must have a permit** to construct it. The permit for the occupancy separation must be included in the scope of work for any other construction needed for the new use.

- **Cottage Industry Levels I & II** that are not over 500 square feet and have no associated construction activity and are one of the uses listed above **do not need a building permit**.

- **Cottage Industry Levels I & II** that are over 500 square feet or are *not* one of the uses listed above, **need building permits**. Permits are required to construct an occupancy separation. Any use that will require an occupancy separation **must have a permit** to construct it. The permit for the occupancy separation shall be included in the scope of work for any other construction needed for the new use.

  *Permit applications will be reviewed under the International Building Code.*

**If your business requires permitting, you will need the following to apply:**

- Residential Application Form
- Floor Plan showing “before” the remodel and “after”, label all rooms and show new appliances.
- Details of any new construction, including fire separations if applicable.
- Site Plan
- Any other requirements from other divisions.