



Catawba County Planning Parks and Development
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CAN I OPERATE A BACK YARD BUSINESS ON MY PROPERTY? (See UDO Section 44-634.1)

The Catawba County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) allows certain businesses to be operated from accessory structure(s) with an existing dwelling, and can be located in any residential district. The home-based business will need to be either all or part of the livelihood of the person(s) living in the home.

Examples of back yard businesses are as follows:

- Cabinet and wood working shop;
- Computer programming;
- Catering, cooking and baking;
- Direct marketing enterprises;
- Dressmaking, sewing and tailoring;
- Electronic equipment repair and maintenance;
- Employment services;
- Furniture upholstery;
- Hair salons – may include only nail salon and tanning bed(s) as part of the salon;
- Home crafts, such as weaving, jewelry making, or pottery;
- Household repair and maintenance (white goods and small appliances);
- Housekeeping and janitorial services
- Lawn care services
- Management of companies and enterprises;
- Painting and sculpting;
- Printing and related support activities
- Professional services, technical services, and health care professional services;
- Real estate, rental or leasing;
- Specialty trade-contractor offices, where services are provided off site (including but not limited to plumbing, electrical, and general contracting);
- Taxidermy;
- Telephone answering service;
- Travel Agency;
- Tutoring or instruction of no more than 4 students at a time; and
- Woodcarving.

Steps to follow to obtain a permit to operate a back yard business:

- (1) Check with a representative of the Catawba County Planning Department to see if the business you are proposing would be considered a back yard business. You may contact the Catawba County Planning Department at 828-465-8380, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email us at planning@catawbacountync.gov.

Some of the standards that apply to a back yard business are:

- i. The business is located in an accessory structure(s) and may occupy an aggregate area equivalent to no more than 50% of the primary structure.
 - ii. The business cannot have any outside display of products, equipment or raw materials.
 - iii. The business must have adequate land area to accommodate customer parking outside of public and private rights of way.
 - iv. A non-illuminated sign is allowed up to 4 square feet in area and 4 feet in height.
 - v. The business may have 1 employee that does not live in the home.
 - vi. Back yard businesses are not permitted in approved major subdivisions of more than 3 lots.
- (2) If the proposed business is considered a back yard business, you will need to make an [application for a zoning permit](#) for a back yard business.
 - (3) Obtain a zoning permit from the Planning Department. You may reach the Planning Department by phone at 828-465-8380, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email at planning@catawbacountync.gov.
 - (4) Submit an [application for a septic tank permit and well permit](#) to the Catawba County Permit Center, if needed. If you have questions you may call the Permit Center at 828-465-8399, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email at permit_center@catawbacountync.gov.
 - (5) Submit an [application for a building permit](#) to the Catawba County Permit Center, if needed. If you have questions you may call the Permit Center at 828-465-8399, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email at permit_center@catawbacountync.gov.

If you have questions concerning a back yard business, where they may be located or obtaining a permit for your property, please call the Catawba County Planning Department at 828-465-8380, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email us at planning@catawbacountync.gov. Please know that we are here to assist you throughout the process.

The purpose of this information sheet is to assist you with the process of obtaining permits and approvals associated with the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). Before proceeding with any project or spending any funds, you are strongly encouraged to contact staff of the Catawba County Planning Department at 828-465-8380, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email us at planning@catawbacountync.gov to insure awareness of all options that may exist as well as the most effective way of accomplishing a particular project.

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