



Catawba County Planning, Parks and Development
100-A Southwest Blvd.
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Newton, NC 28658

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HOW TO START A COTTAGE BUSINESS

The Catawba County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) allows certain businesses, called cottage businesses, as a special use permit. Cottage businesses are allowed on the same lot as your home and are operated by the homeowner. The business may be operated inside your home, in a building located on the same property or on property adjacent to your home. (See [UDO Sec. 44-665](#))

Examples of cottages businesses are as follows:

- (1) All uses allowed as a home occupation;
- (2) Commercial machinery repair and maintenance;
- (3) Contractors—specialty trades, such as:
 - Drywall contractors;
 - Electrical contractors; masonry contractors; Painting contractors; plumbing contractors;
 - Residential, commercial and industrial building construction contractors;
 - Roofing contractors;
- (4) Electronic equipment repair and maintenance;
- (5) Employment services;
- (6) Household goods repair and maintenance;
- (7) Janitorial, housekeeping, and lawn care services;
- (8) Printing and related support activities;
- (9) Retail (small-scale), such as a florist, craft sales;
- (10) Taxidermy;
- (11) Travel agencies; and
- (12) Upholstery, cabinet and woodworking shops.

Steps to follow to obtain a permit to operate a cottage business:

- (1) Check with a representative of the Catawba County Planning, Parks and Development Department to see if the business you are proposing would be considered a cottage business. You may contact the Catawba County Planning, Parks and Development Department at 828-465-8380, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. or email us at planning@catawbacountync.gov.
- (2) If the proposed business is considered a cottage business, you would need to request a special use permit. A [special use application](#) must be filled out and submitted along

with a detailed site plan, prepared by a licensed professional, to the Catawba County Planning, Parks and Development Department by the 15th day of the month preceding the date of the Board of Adjustment's meeting. There is a filing fee of \$425.00.

- (3) The applicant will need to appear before the Catawba County Board of Adjustment on the last Tuesday of the following month at 7:00 p.m. at the Government Center, Second Floor Meeting Room at 100-A Southwest Blvd, Newton, N.C. This is a public hearing and the Board of Adjustment will hear all parties present and make a decision on the request.

Some of the standards that will be used in deciding an application for approval of a cottage business are:

1. The business does not change the way the house looks.
 2. The business does not increase traffic by more than 50 trips per day.
 3. Lot size of 1 acre with 150 feet of road frontage.
 4. Business could employ 2 employees that do not live in the home.
 5. Property will need to have a paved parking area, landscaping and a row of evergreens trees around the property to screen the business from the adjacent neighbors.
 6. Sign is allowed up to 4 square feet in area and 4 feet in height.
- (4) Once your special use request for a cottage business has been approved, you will be able to make an [application for a zoning permit](#). You may then obtain a zoning permit from the Planning, Parks and Development 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.
- (5) Submit an application for a septic tank permit and well permit to the Catawba County Permit Center. 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.
- (6) Submit an [application for a building permit](#) to the Catawba County Permit Center. 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 cottage business, where they may be located or obtaining a permit for your property, please call the Catawba County Planning, Parks and Development 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, Parks and Development 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.