

WELCOME

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which we live and work is the traditional territory of the Coast and Straits Salish Peoples. Specifically, we recognize the ʔəḵʔən people, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, and that their historic connections to these lands continue to this day.

These boards ask for your input on:



Expanding the types of home-based businesses that could operate in Oak Bay's residential neighbourhoods



Introducing a tiered approach to home-based businesses



Proposed regulations to help manage negative impacts on neighbourhoods



**Questions?
Comments?**

We want to hear from you.
Chat with staff and project team members if you have questions.

Today's Event

Thank you for joining us. This event is part of Oak Bay's review of home-based business regulations.

We want your input on proposed updates to Oak Bay's home-based business regulations.

Please review the boards and read about the proposed changes. District staff and consultants are available to answer questions.

Your feedback, along with Council direction and further analysis, will help shape the updated home-based business regulations.

Scan the QR code

for more information on the Connect Oak Bay website and follow the links to complete the questionnaire.



Background And Context

Existing Home-Based Business Regulations

The District's Zoning Bylaw currently refers to home-based business as a residential business and defines it as **“an occupation of a professional business, which is carried on by the resident of a dwelling unit; and such business is clearly incidental to the use of a dwelling unit for residential purposes.”**



In plain terms: a home-based business is run by someone who lives in that home, and it's secondary or accessory to the home's main use as a residence.

Home-based businesses allow residents to start or grow a business from home

They can help support housing affordability by providing additional income and flexible employment opportunities. For some households, a home-based business is the main source of income, while for others, it provides important secondary income. They can also support a more diverse local economy and create new business opportunities.

The District's current regulations:

- A home-based business is called a 'residential business'
- A maximum of two residential businesses are allowed per home
- The business must be operated by someone who lives in the home
- Only tutoring and music lessons businesses are allowed to have clients visit the home, and only one student is allowed at a time
- Home-based childcare is permitted in all residential zones for up to 8 children under the Community Care and Assisted Living Act
- Business-related deliveries are not allowed
- Products cannot be sold or displayed on the property
- Business signs are not allowed on the property
- Businesses must not create excessive noise, smoke, odours, or other disturbances
- Commercial workshops or manufacturing facilities are not permitted.
- Tenants must have permission from the property owner to operate a home-based business
- One employee who does not live in the home is allowed

How We Got Here

Oak Bay Council identified the need to revise the regulations for home-based businesses

2022



Community feedback was gathered through the Official Community Plan Update

2025



Recommendations presented to Council with engagement results and proposed final bylaw updates

July 2026



2024

Council received a report outlining possible amendments to these regulations with the goal of expanding the types of home-based businesses permitted, mitigating or minimizing nuisance elements, balancing the needs of the neighbourhood, and providing greater flexibility

May-June 2026

The final phase of updating home-based business regulations, including in-person and online engagement (current phase)

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What We've Heard

In May 2025, the District asked community members about their views on increasing opportunities for home-based businesses via a questionnaire.

823 people responded: 49% supported expanding opportunities, 34% were unsure, and 17% did not support expansion.

In the fall of 2025, as part of the OCP update, additional input was gathered through a questionnaire and open houses. 1,029 people completed the questionnaires, and 521 attended the open houses. Six specific questions about home-based business were asked, and 309 people responded.



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Here's how participants responded to each question:

	I support this	I'm not sure	I don't support this
Expand childcare options	80%	10%	10%
Create different pathways based on potential impacts of the business	73%	14%	14%
Expand urban agriculture	73%	13%	15%
Allow home-based businesses in all housing types	34%	15%	51%
Allow merchandise displays on the inside of homes	23%	24%	54%
Allow sale and delivery of goods	27%	23%	50%

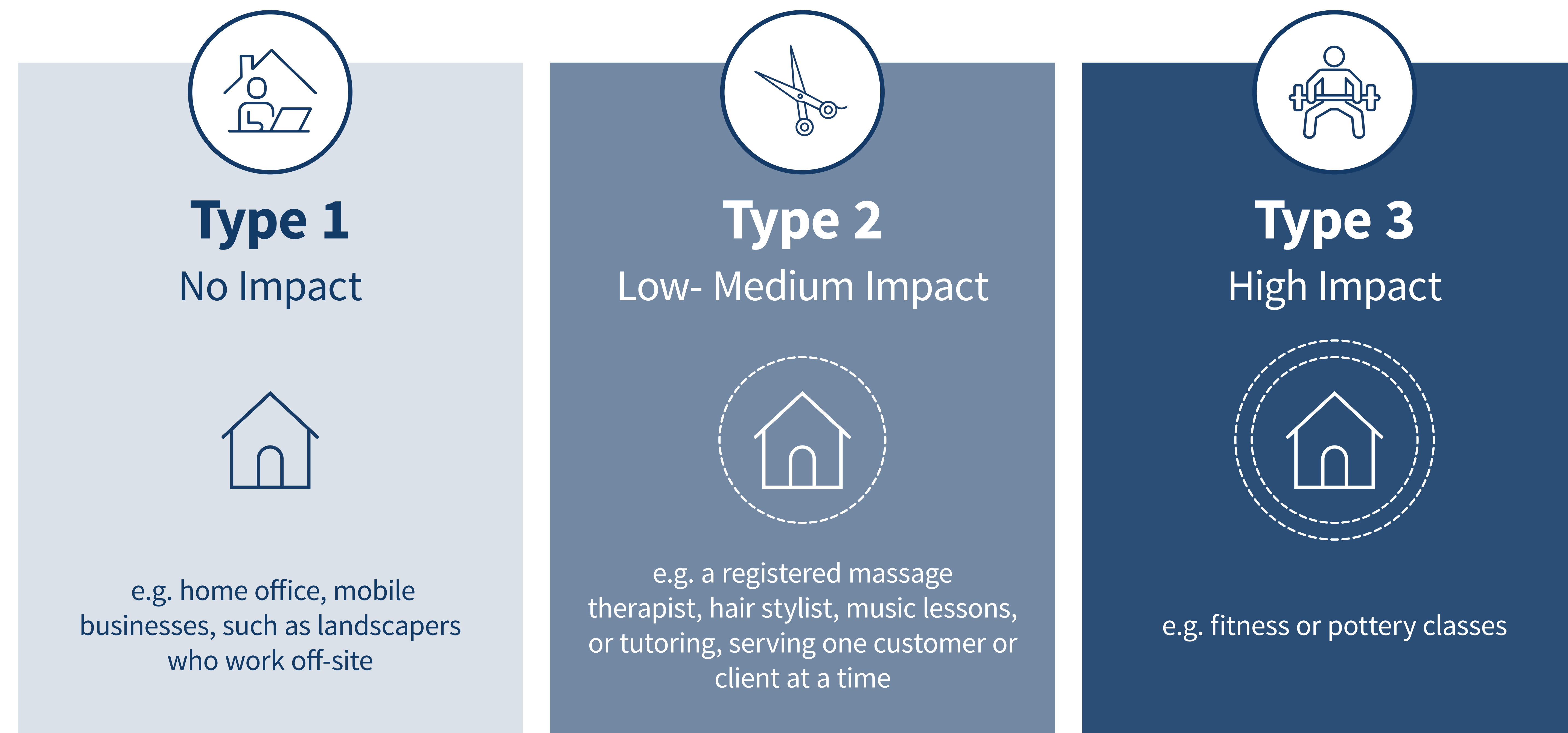
23 participants left additional comments. They noted that new regulations need clear definitions and inspections, and that issues like parking, noise, and waste disposal must be managed.

Three Types of Home-Based Businesses

A proposed tiered approach based on neighbourhood impact

We are proposing a new way to organize home-based businesses based on their level of potential impact. A tiered approach recognizes a range of business types. Each type reflects a different level of neighbourhood impact and includes regulations to help manage it.

The three proposed types of home-based businesses are:

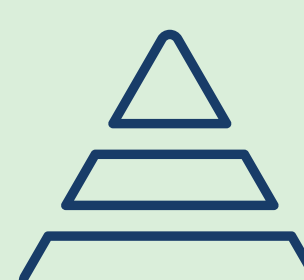
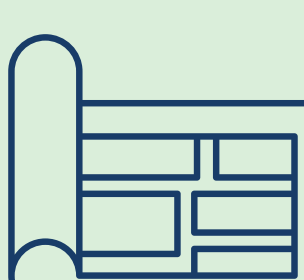
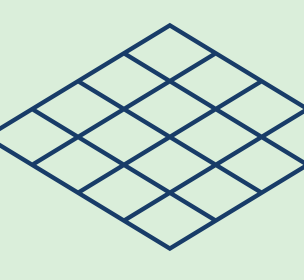
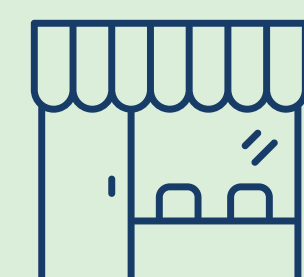


The proposed types are based on:

- Lot size
- How much floor space the business uses (as a percentage of the total area of the home or building in which the business is located)
- Number of vehicle trips
- Number of non-resident employees
- Number of visiting customers
- Type of housing in which a home-based business can be located



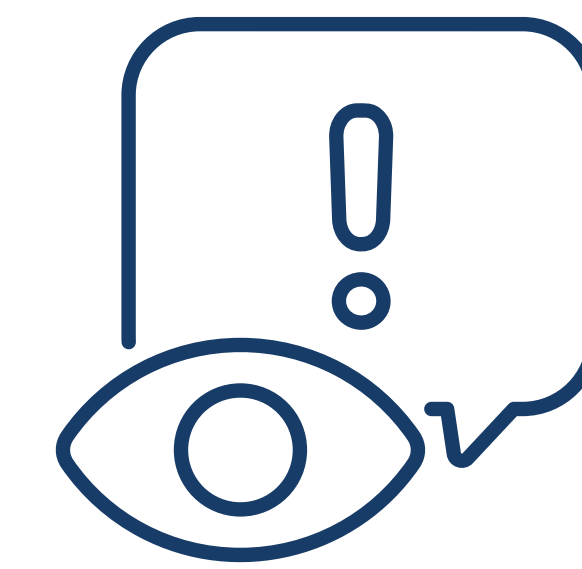
Special Business Types include opportunities for childcare and urban agriculture as home-based businesses which are different from other types due to the necessity for some outdoor activities like children's play areas and growing fruits and vegetables.

Tiers		Type 1 (no impact)	Type 2 (low - medium impact)	Type 3 (high impact)
	Level of impact	Low	Medium	High
	Housing type	Any	Single Family Homes, Duplexes, Secondary Suites, Accessory Dwelling Units, Townhouses, Apartments	Single Family Homes, Duplexes, Secondary Suites, Accessory Dwelling Units, Townhouses
	Lot size	Any	558 square metres (6,006 square feet) or more	• 1,000 square metres or more • Corner lots • Lots on a BC Transit bus route
	Business size (floor area) The total floor area used for the home-based business	Up to 30% of the home or building may be used for the business...		
		to a maximum of 28 square metres (300 square feet)	to a maximum of 46 square metres (500 square feet)	to a maximum of 70 square metres (753 square feet)
	Customers	None	One at a time, by appointment	Maximum of seven customers on-site at one time, by appointment
	Employees who do not live on-site	None	One	One
	Signs	None	One non-illuminated sign is permitted, either freestanding or attached to a fence, with a maximum area of 0.2 square metres (2 square feet) and a maximum height of 1.36 metres (4.5 feet).	
	Sale of goods	None	Sales of goods produced are permitted where sales remain secondary to the home-based business activity.	
	Display of goods	Goods may only be displayed inside the home or building. No outdoor or window displays are permitted.		
	Examples of home-based businesses	• Home office • Professional services • Small-scale makers, such as artists or online craft businesses • Mobile businesses, such as contractors, landscapers, or dog walkers	• Personal services, such as hair stylists • Health services, such as massage therapists • Makers with customer visits or appointments • Music lessons, tutoring	• Makers offering workshops or group classes • Fitness or exercise classes

Share Your Thoughts on the Proposed Business Types



What works well?



What concerns do you have?



Scan the QR code

to complete the online questionnaire and help shape updates to Oak Bay's home-based business regulations. **The questionnaire is open until June 8.**

Special Home-Based Businesses

Proposed regulations for childcare and urban agriculture businesses



Childcare

In-home childcare is currently permitted, but some regulations are unclear. A separate study completed in 2020 recommended updates to clarify:

- Licensed and unlicensed childcare operations are permitted, with up to 8 children who are not related to the caregiver
- Childcare is only permitted in ground-level residences, such as single-family homes, duplex units, or low-density residential buildings
- Childcare operators may use outdoor space and are not limited in how much of the home they can use for the business
- Childcare operations are exempt from noise restrictions
- No additional parking is required



Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture is currently defined as ‘small-scale urban agriculture,’ which means a subset of the general class of agriculture, carried out as a secondary use of land and consisting of the cultivation of a portion of a parcel for the production of fruits or vegetables for sale or exchange for money or other valuable consideration.



In plain terms: small-scale growing of food or plants on part of a residential property for income. Under current regulations, products cannot be sold from the home.

Proposed updates would:

- Expand urban agriculture to include the cultivation of fruits, flowers, vegetables, ornamental plants, poultry, and bees
- Allow the sale of raw, unprocessed fruits and vegetables, eggs, and honey
- Remove the current 95 square metres (1,023 ft²) planting area size restriction
- Allow small accessory structures such as:
 - Roadside stands up to 2.5 m² (27 ft²)
 - Greenhouses up to 46 m² (495 ft²)
 - Prohibit the sale of any processed foods
 - Prohibit artificial outdoor lighting



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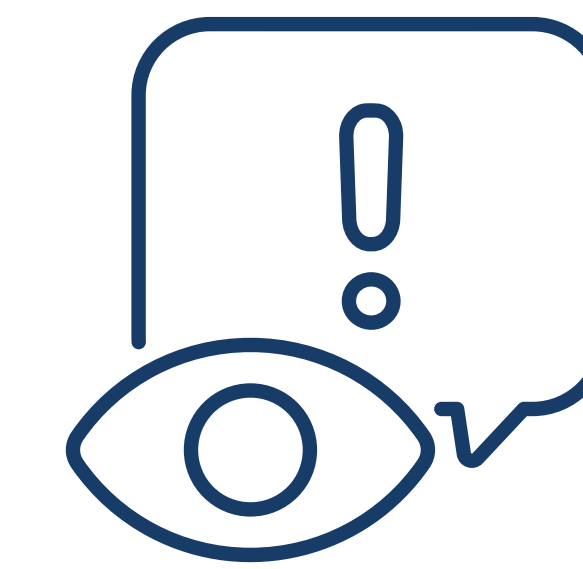
for more information on the Connect Oak Bay website and follow the links to complete the questionnaire.



Feedback on Special Home-Based Businesses



What opportunities or benefits do you see?



What concerns or questions do you have?

Considering Neighbourhood Impacts

How proposed regulations respond to community concerns

Home-based businesses can affect surrounding neighbourhoods if not well managed. Through this review, Oak Bay heard from residents that noise, parking pressures, increased traffic, and changes to neighbourhood character are the impacts they care most about.

The following proposed regulations are a direct response to those concerns.



Scan the QR code
for more information on the Connect Oak Bay website and follow the links to complete the questionnaire.



Home-based businesses in Oak Bay shall:

- Be operated entirely within a home or accessory building, except for childcare and urban agriculture
- Not include exterior features that make the property appear commercial, except where a small sign is permitted
- Store all business-related materials inside permanent buildings, except for one business-related vehicle, and outdoor equipment for childcare and urban agriculture
- Not create excessive noise, odours, smoke, dust, glare, vibrations, or other hazards that affect neighbouring properties
- Not display or sell goods outdoors, except for urban agriculture
- Limit customer visits to between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.
- Minimize traffic impacts in residential neighbourhoods



These activities and businesses are proposed to be prohibited because of their potential impacts on residential neighbourhoods:

- Automotive repairs
- Animal training, commercial dog breeding, and dog kennels, except as mobile businesses
- Commercial workshops or manufacturing facilities
- Restaurants
- Retail stores, or the sale of products not made by or directly related to the business
- Storage, wrecking, dismantling, painting, or metal plating of equipment, machinery and vehicles (including aircraft, all-terrain vehicles, recreational vehicles, snowmobiles and water vessels)



Feedback on the Neighbourhood Impacts

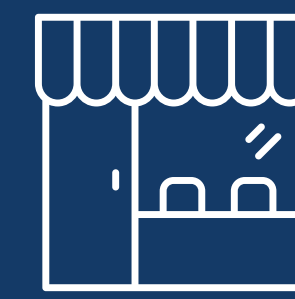
Are there additional impacts or considerations
the District should be aware of?

Proposed Regulations

Building on the impacts identified, here are the proposed regulations for each topic

These regulations build on the neighbourhood impact considerations already shared. They set out the specific rules proposed for each topic — from signage and parking to hours of operation and deliveries.

Display of goods



- Goods can only be displayed inside the home or building where the home-based business is located
- No window displays are permitted

Sale of goods



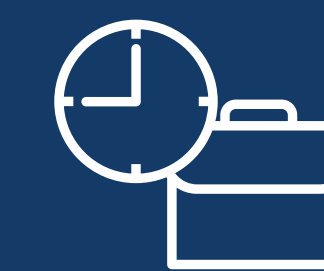
- Businesses may only sell goods made by the business or goods related to the service being provided. For example, a registered massage therapist could sell recommended massage products
- A roadside stand may be allowed for the sale of agricultural products, such as fruits, vegetables, eggs, and honey. Fill out our questionnaire to share your thoughts on whether artists and similar home-based businesses should be allowed to sell goods from a roadside stand

Signs



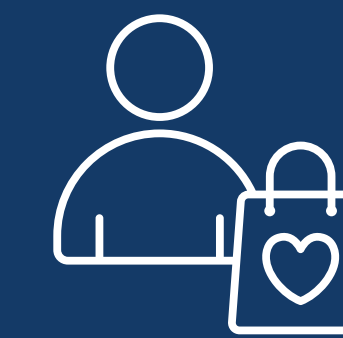
- One small, non-illuminated sign may be permitted for Type 2 and Type 3 home-based businesses

Business hours



- Businesses with visiting customers may have limits on operating hours

Customers



- Type 1: No visiting customers or clients
- Type 2: One customer or client at a time, by appointment only (no drop-ins)
- Type 3: Multiple customers or clients at a time, by appointment only (no drop-ins)

Non-resident employees



- Type 1: No non-resident employees
- Type 2: One non-resident employee at a time
- Type 3: One non-resident employee at a time

Parking



- Additional parking requirements depend on the number of non-resident employees or visiting customers
- One commercial vehicle may be parked on the property

Deliveries



- Businesses may have restrictions on the times of day when deliveries can be received
- See board 10 for a list of prohibited businesses and activities



Share Your Thoughts

What concerns or questions do you have about these proposed regulations?

Thank You & Next Steps

Your feedback, along with further analysis and direction from Council, will help inform potential updates to the home-based business regulations.



June 8, 2026

Last day to complete the questionnaire or to email comments to the District (planning@oakbay.ca)



July 2026

Recommendation presented to Council with engagement results and proposed final updates for bylaw considerations.



Please complete the online questionnaire if you have not already done so.

Scan here for a shortcut to the questionnaire



Sign up on the project webpage to receive updates:
connect.oakbay.ca/home-based-businesses



Have We Missed Anything?

Is there anything important we missed?
Share any additional comments,
questions, or ideas.