

Cottage Food Operations Regulations from California Retail Food Code Revised Effective January 1, 2023

Chapter 11.5 Cottage Food Operations

114365. Registration and permitting

- (a)
 - (1)
 - (A) A “Class A” COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION shall not be open for business unless it is registered with the local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY and has submitted a completed, self-certification checklist approved by the local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY. The self-certification checklist shall verify that the COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION conforms to this chapter, including the following requirements:
 - (i) No COTTAGE FOOD PREPARATION, packaging, or handling may occur in the home kitchen concurrent with any other domestic activities, such as family meal preparation, dishwashing, clothes washing or ironing, kitchen cleaning, or guest entertainment.
 - (ii) No infants, small children, or pets may be in the home kitchen during the preparation, packaging, or handling of any cottage FOOD products.
 - (iii) Kitchen EQUIPMENT and UTENSILS used to produce cottage FOOD products shall be clean and maintained in a good state of repair.
 - (iv) All FOOD-CONTACT SURFACES, EQUIPMENT, and UTENSILS used for the preparation, packaging, or handling of any cottage FOOD products shall be washed, rinsed, and sanitized before each use.
 - (v) All FOOD preparation and FOOD and EQUIPMENT storage areas shall be maintained free of rodents and insects.
 - (vi) Smoking shall be prohibited in the portion of a private home used for the preparation, packaging, storage, or handling of cottage FOOD products and related ingredients or EQUIPMENT, or both, while cottage FOOD products are being prepared, packaged, stored, or handled.
 - (B)
 - (i) The DEPARTMENT shall post the requirements described in subparagraph (A) on its Internet Web site.
 - (ii) The local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY shall issue a registration number to a “Class A” COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION that meets the requirements of subparagraph (A).
 - (C)
 - (i) Except as provided in (ii), a “Class A” COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION shall not be subject to initial or routine inspections.
 - (ii) For purposes of determining compliance with this chapter, a representative of a local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY may access, for inspection purposes, the registered area of a private home where a COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION is located only if the representative has, on

the basis of a consumer complaint, reason to suspect that ADULTERATED or otherwise unsafe FOOD has been produced by the COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION or that the COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION has violated this chapter.

(iii) Access under this subparagraph is limited to the registered area and solely for the purpose of enforcing or administering this chapter.

(iv) A local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY may seek recovery from a "Class A" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION of an amount that does not exceed the local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY's reasonable costs of inspecting the "Class A" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION for compliance with this chapter, if the "Class A" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION is found to be in violation of this chapter.

(D) A "Class A" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION shall be authorized to engage in the direct sales of cottage FOOD products throughout the state.

(2)

(A) A "Class B" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION shall not be open for business unless it obtains a PERMIT from the local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY in a manner approved by the local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY to engage in the direct and indirect sale of cottage FOOD products.

(B)

(i) A "Class B" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION shall comply with the requirements described in clauses (i) to (vi), inclusive, of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) in addition to the other requirements of this chapter.

(ii) The local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY shall issue a permit number after an initial inspection has determined that the proposed "Class B" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION and its method of operation conform to this chapter.

(C)

(i) Except as provided in this subparagraph, a "Class B" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION shall not be subject to more than one inspection per year by the local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY.

(ii) For purposes of determining compliance with this chapter, a representative of a LOCAL ENFORCEMENT AGENCY, for inspection purposes, may access the PERMITTED area of a private home where a COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION is located only if the representative has, on the basis of a consumer complaint, reason to suspect that adulterated or otherwise unsafe FOOD has been produced by the COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION, or that the COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION has violated this chapter.

(iii) Access under this subparagraph is limited to the PERMITTED area and solely for the purpose of enforcing or administering this chapter.

(D) A "Class B" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION shall be authorized to engage in the direct and indirect sales of cottage FOOD products throughout the state.

(b)

- (1) A registration or PERMIT, once issued, is nontransferable. A registration or PERMIT shall be valid only for the person, location, type of FOOD sales, and distribution activity specified by that registration or PERMIT, and, unless suspended or revoked for cause, for the time period indicated.
- (2) The registration or PERMIT or an accurate copy thereof shall be retained by the operator onsite at the time of either direct or indirect cottage FOOD sale.
- (3) A registration or PERMIT shall be renewed annually.
- (4) A registration or PERMIT from one county shall be sufficient for a COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION to operate throughout the state.

(D) A "Class A" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION shall renew its registration annually.

- (i) For purposes of determining compliance with this chapter, a representative of a local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY, for inspection purposes, may access the permitted area of a private home where a COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION is located only if the representative has, on the basis of a consumer complaint, reason to suspect that ADULTERATED or otherwise unsafe FOOD has been produced by the COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION, or that the COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION has violated this chapter.
- (ii) Access under this subparagraph is limited to the permitted area and solely for the purpose of enforcing or administering this chapter.

(E)

- (i) A "Class B" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION shall be authorized to engage in the indirect sales of cottage food products within the county in which the "Class B" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION is PERMITTED.
- (ii) A county may agree to allow a "Class B" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION PERMITTED in another county to engage in the indirect sales of cottage food products in the county.

(b)

- (1) A registration or PERMIT, once issued, is nontransferable. A registration or PERMIT shall be valid only for the person, location, type of FOOD sales, and distribution activity specified by that registration or PERMIT, and, unless suspended or revoked for cause, for the time period indicated.
- (2) The registration or PERMIT or an accurate copy thereof shall be retained by the operator onsite at the time of either direct or indirect cottage food sale.

114365.2. Operational Requirements

A COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION that is registered or has a PERMIT issued pursuant to Section 114365 shall be considered a RESTRICTED FOOD SERVICE FACILITY for purposes of, and subject to, Sections 113953.3, 114259.5, 114285, and 114286. A COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION that is registered or has a PERMIT also shall be subject to Sections 113967, 113973, 113980, 114259.5, 114405, 114407, 114409, 114411, and 114413, and to all of the following requirements:

- (a) A person with a contagious illness shall refrain from work in the registered or PERMITTED area of the COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION.

- (b) A person involved in the preparation or packaging of cottage FOOD products shall keep his or her hands and exposed portions of his or her arms clean and shall wash his or her hands before any FOOD preparation or packaging activity in a COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION.
- (c) Water used during the preparation of cottage FOOD products shall meet the POTABLE drinking water standards described in Section 113869, or in accordance with the local regulatory authority. A COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION shall not be required to have an indirect sewer connection. Water used during the preparation of cottage FOOD products includes all of the following:
 - (1) The washing, sanitizing, and drying of any equipment used in the preparation of a cottage FOOD product.
 - (2) The washing, sanitizing, and drying of hands and arms.
 - (3) Water used as an ingredient.
- (d) A person who prepares or packages cottage FOOD products shall complete a FOOD processor course approved by the DEPARTMENT and posted on the DEPARTMENT's Internet website to protect the public health within three months of becoming registered and every three years during operation. The course shall not exceed four hours in length. The DEPARTMENT shall work with the local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY to ensure that cottage FOOD operators are properly notified of the location, date, and time of the classes offered.
- (e) A COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION shall properly label all cottage FOOD products in compliance with the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. Sec. 343 et seq.). Additionally, to the extent permitted by federal law, the label shall include, but is not limited to, all of the following:
 - (1) The words "Made in a Home Kitchen" or "Repackaged in a Home Kitchen," as applicable, with a description of any purchased whole ready-to-eat product not used as an ingredient in 12-point type on the cottage FOOD product's primary display panel.
 - (2) The name commonly used for the FOOD product or an adequately descriptive name.
 - (3) The name of the COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION which produced the cottage FOOD product.
 - (4) The registration or PERMIT number of the "Class A" or "Class B" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION, respectively, which produced the cottage FOOD product, and the name of the county of the local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY that issued the permit or registration number.
 - (5) The ingredients of the cottage FOOD product, in descending order of predominance by weight, if the product contains two or more ingredients.
- (f) A COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION that advertises to the public, including through an internet website, social media platform, newspaper, newsletter, or other public announcement, shall indicate the following on the advertisement:
 - (1) The county of approval.
 - (2) The PERMIT or registration number.
 - (3) A statement that the food prepared is "Made in a Home Kitchen" or "Repackaged in a Home Kitchen," as applicable.

114365.5. Cottage food product list

- (a) The DEPARTMENT shall adopt and post on its Internet Web site a list of not POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS and their ethnic variations that are approved for sale by a COTTAGE FOOD

OPERATION. A cottage FOOD product shall not be POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD, as defined in Section 113871.

(b) This list of nonPOTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODs shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

- (1) Baked goods without cream, custard, or meat fillings, such as breads, biscuits, churros, cookies, pastries, and tortillas.
- (2) Candy, such as brittle and toffee.
- (3) Chocolate-covered nonperishable foods, such as nuts and dried fruit.
- (4) Dried fruit.
- (5) Dried pasta.
- (6) Dry baking mixes.
- (7) Fruit pies, fruit empanadas, and fruit tamales.
- (8) Granola, cereals, and trail mixes.
- (9) Herb blends and dried mole paste.
- (10) Honey and sweet sorghum syrup.
- (11) Jams, jellies, preserves, and fruit butter that comply with the standard described in Part 150 of Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations.
- (12) Nut mixes and nut butters.
- (13) Popcorn.
- (14) Vinegar and mustard.
- (15) Roasted coffee and dried tea.
- (16) Waffle cones and pizelles.

(c)

- (1) The State Public Health Officer may add or delete FOOD products to or from the list described in subdivision (b), which shall be known as the APPROVED FOOD products list. Notice of any change to the APPROVED FOOD products list shall be posted on the DEPARTMENT's cottage FOOD program Internet Web site, to also be known as the program Internet Web site for purposes of this chapter. Any change to the APPROVED FOOD products list shall become effective 30 days after the notice is posted. The notice shall state the reason for the change, the authority for the change, and the nature of the change. The notice will provide an opportunity for written comment by indicating the address to which to submit the comment and the deadline by which the comment is required to be received by the DEPARTMENT. The address to which the comment is to be submitted may be an electronic site. The notice shall allow at least 20 calendar days for comments to be submitted. The DEPARTMENT shall consider all comments submitted before the due date. The DEPARTMENT may withdraw the proposed change at any time by notification on the program Internet Web site or through notification by other electronic means. The approved food products list described in subdivision (b), and any updates to the list, shall not be subject to the administrative rulemaking requirements of Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.
- (2) The State Public Health Officer shall not remove any items from the approved FOOD products list unless the State Public Health Officer also posts information on the

program Internet Web site explaining the basis upon which the removed FOOD item has been determined to be potentially hazardous.

114365.6. Training

- (a) The State Public Health Officer shall provide technical assistance, and develop, maintain, and deliver commodity-specific training related to the safe processing and packaging of cottage FOOD products to local ENFORCEMENT AGENCies.
- (b) Local ENFORCEMENT AGENCies may collect a surcharge fee in addition to any PERMIT fees collected for "Class B" COTTAGE FOOD OPERATIONS. The surcharge fee shall not exceed the reasonable costs that the DEPARTMENT incurs through the administration of the training described in subdivision (a) to protect the public health. The surcharge fees collected shall be transmitted to the DEPARTMENT in a manner established by the DEPARTMENT to be deposited in the Food Safety Fund. The DEPARTMENT shall use the surcharge fees only to develop and deliver the training described in subdivision (a) to local ENFORCEMENT AGENCY personnel on an ongoing basis.