



COTTAGE FOODS



Requirements for licensing and operating cottage food sales establishments

Cottage Food Operations

Licensed cottage food operators can only make non-potentially hazardous foods. Operators can use their domestic home kitchen to produce products to sell directly to consumers at non-profit events, for-profit events, and through on-line internet sales. Cottage food operators can neither distribute/wholesale these products, nor ship cottage food products across state lines. Cottage food products are considered to be an unapproved source, and cannot be distributed to retail stores, restaurants, or institutions.

List of Approved Cottage Food Products

The following products can be produced:

- Loaf Breads, Rolls, and Biscuits;
- Cakes (*except some cakes that require refrigeration to ensure their safety*);
- Pastries and Cookies;
- Candies and Confections;
- Fruit Pies;
- Jams, Jellies, and Preserves (*not to include Fruit Butters*);
- Dried Fruits;
- Dry Herbs, Seasonings, and Mixtures;
- Cereals, Trail Mixes, and Granola;
- Coated & Uncoated Nuts;
- Vinegar and Flavored-Vinegars; and
- Popcorn, Popcorn Balls, and Cotton Candy.

Licensing

The Cottage Food License Application is available on the GDA website. A notarized affidavit and proof of U.S. citizenship is required. The annual \$100 license fee is due January 1st. Cottage food operators applying after June 30th only pay \$50.

Pre-Operational Checklist

Prior to applying for a license, you should:

- Contact your city/county **PLANNING & ZONING** office(s) to make sure that there are no local ordinances that would stop you from operating a home based business.
- The next step depends on your water and sewage connections:
 - If you are on a **PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY**, your water quality should be acceptable. **PRIVATE WELLS** must adhere to the requirements of the Department's *Non-Public Water Supply Testing Guidance* document.
 - If on a city/county sewer system, contact **PUBLIC UTILITIES** to be sure your cottage food operations are acceptable. Those on a private **SEPTIC SYSTEM** should contact your county health department to be sure your home's septic system can handle the output from your food processing operations.
- Cottage food operators must obtain **FOOD SAFETY TRAINING** that is American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited. There are several programs accredited by ANSI, and a Food Handler's certificate is adequate. A copy of the certificate issued upon course completion must be attached to the cottage food license application.

Pre-Operational Inspection

GDA conducts a pre-operational licensing inspection, which ensures the cottage food operator can meet the requirements of the regulations. Subsequent inspections are only conducted to investigate consumer complaints or foodborne illness outbreaks.

Food Safety Directives

Simple food safety guidelines considered "best practices" for cottage food operators. These strategies should be used to limit the potential for foodborne illness outbreaks, and are readily accessible via our cottage food website. Link provided below.

Product Labeling

The cottage food operator must ensure packaged food products are labeled with the following information:

- The **BUSINESS NAME** and **ADDRESS** of the cottage food operation;
- The **COMMON NAME** of the product;
- **INGREDIENTS STATEMENT** listed in descending order of predominance by weight (including all ingredients broken down into sub-ingredients);
- The **NET WEIGHT** or **VOLUME** of the product;
- **ALLERGEN DECLARATIONS** following FDA requirements;*
- **NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION** if any nutritional claims are made; and
- The **COTTAGE FOOD STATEMENT** in 10-pt Times New Roman or Arial font, and in a legible color:
"MADE IN A COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION THAT IS NOT SUBJECT TO STATE FOOD SAFETY INSPECTIONS."

* There are nine major food allergens that must always be clearly identified on a food label; either in the ingredients statement, or following the ingredients in a "Contains: ____" statement.

* Currently, the nine major allergens are Milk, Eggs, Fish, Crustacean Shellfish, Tree Nuts, Wheat, Peanuts, Soybeans, and Sesame.