

LABELING

Cottage food products, in packaged form, must be labeled with the following information:

- The BUSINESS NAME and ADDRESS of the cottage food operation;
- The COMMON NAME of the product;
- INGREDIENTS listed in descending order of predominance by weight;
- The NET WEIGHT or VOLUME of the product;
- ALLERGEN labeling following FDA requirements;
- NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION if a nutritional claim is 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.”

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The Food Safety Division's *Cottage Food Page* has the following documents available in PDF:

- Cottage Food Regulations;
- Cottage Food License Application;
- Cottage Foods: FAQ; and
- Guidelines For Food Products Sold At Events Sponsored by Non-Profit Organizations.

FOOD SAFETY FIELD FORCES

North District Office
1195 Jesse Jewell Pkwy
Gainesville, GA 30504
P:770-535-5955
F:770-531-6483

South District Office
3150 US Hwy 41 South
Tifton, GA 31794
P: 229-386-3489
F: 229-386-3369

Metro District Office
16 Forest Pkwy Bldg 2 - 1
Forest Park, GA 30297
P:404-363-7646
F:404-362-2604

Seafood Safety Office
701 U.S. Hwy 80 West
Savannah, GA 31408
P: 912-963-2500
F: 912-966-7954

FOOD SAFETY DIRECTIVES

- 1) Handwashing**
 - * Clean before preparation and packaging, and after any unsanitary activity.
 - * Use liquid soap, paper towels, and warm water.
- 2) Bare-Hand Contact**
 - * Bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods should be avoided. Use disposable gloves, bakery papers, or tongs.
- 3) Hair Restraint & Clean Garments**
 - * Hair restraint and clean outer garments worn while processing and packaging.
- 4) Eating, Drinking, & Tobacco**
 - * Employees should not eat, drink, or use tobacco products while processing and packaging.
- 5) Preventing Contamination When Tasting**
 - * Employees should not use a utensil more than once to taste a cottage food product.
- 6) Employee Health**
 - * Employees exhibiting the following symptoms should not process or package cottage foods:
 - Vomiting;
 - Fever;
 - Diarrhea,
 - Jaundice; or
 - Sore throat with fever.
- 7) Unauthorized Persons**
 - * No persons other than the operator or employees under their supervision should be in the kitchen during processing or packaging.
- 8) Food Contact Surfaces**
 - * Food contact surfaces of equipment and utensils should be clean to sight and touch before processing, and as necessary during processing to prevent product contamination.
- 9) Proper Storage of Ingredients/Finished Products**
 - * Ingredients and finished products should be stored separate from residential supplies, and in a manner that prevents contamination.
- 10) Proper Use & Storage of Chemicals**
 - * Chemicals should be used according to the label instructions;
 - * Stored to prevent contamination of food and contact surfaces;
 - * Spray bottles should be labeled; and
 - * No pest control chemicals used in the kitchen.
- 11) Pests**
 - * Pests should not be present, and the kitchen should be kept clean to prevent harborage conditions.
- 12) Pets**
 - * Pets should not be allowed in the kitchen during processing and packaging.

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Gary W. Black
Commissioner

Starting a COTTAGE FOOD Business



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Atlanta, GA 30334

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Starting a Cottage Food Business

COTTAGE FOOD OPERATIONS

Cottage food sales are allowed by the Department's Regulations Chapter 40-7-19. Licensed cottage food operators can only make non-potentially hazardous foods (*see Approved Cottage Food Products below*). Operators can sell their products at non-profit events, for-profit events, and may also conduct internet sales. The cottage food operator is not able to distribute or wholesale their product, nor can they ship cottage food products across state lines. Domestic kitchens cannot be licensed as food sales establishments. Without a Food Sales Establishment License, cottage food products are considered to be an unapproved source, and cannot be distributed to retail stores, restaurants, or institutions.

APPROVED COTTAGE FOOD PRODUCTS

The following products can be produced with a Cottage Food License:

- Loaf Breads, Rolls, and Biscuits;
- Cakes (*except those that require refrigeration*);
- 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.

COTTAGE FOOD CHECKLIST

If you want to start a cottage food business, there are some steps you should complete before contacting the Department:

- The first step is to contact your city/county PLANNING & ZONING offices to make sure that there are no local ordinances that would stop you from operating a home based business.
- ⇒ The next step will depend on your water and sewage connections.
 - If you are on a PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY, your water quality should be acceptable. If you have a PRIVATE WELL the water will have to be tested annually for coliforms and nitrates. The Department can perform this test for \$100.
 - For sewage disposal, if you are on city/county sewer, you should contact your local PUBLIC UTILITIES to ensure that your cottage food operations are acceptable for the existing system. If you use a private septic system, you should contact your county health department to ensure your SEPTIC SYSTEM can handle the output from your cottage food operations.
- The last step is to obtain FOOD SAFETY TRAINING that is American National Standards Institute accredited. There are 3 accreditations certified by ANSI: ServSafe™, NRFSP, and Prometric. A copy of the certificate issued upon completing one of these food safety exams must be attached to the cottage food license application.

LICENSING

The Cottage Food License Application form is available online, or you can call a District Office and the form can be faxed, mailed, or emailed to you (*see Food Safety Field Forces on the back page*). There is a \$100 fee for the license, which must be renewed annually. New cottage food operators applying after June 30th will only have to pay \$50. The cottage food products the operator intends to produce have to be listed on the application form. These products will be listed on the cottage food license issued to the operator. If the cottage food operator decides to add additional cottage food products, which were not disclosed on the license application, the operator will have to file another application form and will have to pay an additional license fee to cover the cost of processing the new application and re-inspection of their home kitchen.

INSPECTION

The Department will perform a pre-operational inspection after processing the Cottage Food License Application to ensure the cottage food operator can meet the requirements of the regulations. After the pre-operational inspection, the Department will only perform inspections to investigate consumer complaints and foodborne illness outbreaks.

FOOD SAFETY DIRECTIVES

The food safety directives are simple food safety guidelines considered best practices for food handling in cottage food operations. They are strategies used to limit the potential of foodborne illness outbreaks. They are summarized on the back page of this brochure.