

Minnesota Cottage Food Producer Registration Training



In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711. The MDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Training Agenda

- Overview of the Cottage Foods Exemption
 - Who qualifies for this exemption
 - Identify foods that can and cannot be sold
 - Understand where foods can be sold
- Safe Food Handling Practices
- Packaging and Labeling
- Registration Process
 - Complete training
 - Take exam
 - Submit registration form



Cottage Foods Exemption Overview



Who is a Cottage Food Producer?

- An individual who:
 - Prepares non-potentially hazardous food without inspection or a license;
 - Manufactures food that does not require time or temperature controls for safety;
 - Sells directly to the end consumer; and
 - Registers with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.



Individual Exemption Status

- An individual is exempt from licensure under 28A.152 (Cottage Food Exemption) and does not need to get a food license if they meet the requirements described in this training.
- This exemption applies to individuals, not businesses.
- Businesses include the following: firms, partnerships, cooperatives, societies, associations, companies and corporations.

Two Sales Tiers

- First tier: \$0-\$5,000
- Second tier:\$5,001-\$18,000
- Both tiers require training but first tier training can be done online
- Second tier registration has a \$50 fee

Cottage Food Exemption Requirements 1-2

An individual must do the following:

1. Prepare and sell only non-potentially hazardous food and/or home-canned pickles, vegetables, or fruits with a pH of 4.6 or lower.
2. Produce and sell pickles, fruits and vegetables with an equilibrium pH of 4.6 or lower **only in Minnesota.**

Cottage Food Exemption Requirements 3-5

3. Label food with name and address, the date produced, and the ingredients, including potential allergens.
4. Sell and deliver food directly to the ultimate consumer.
5. Display a sign that says, “These products are homemade and not subject to state inspection.”⁸

Signage Requirements: Non-potentially hazardous foods

**"THESE PRODUCTS
ARE HOMEMADE AND
NOT SUBJECT TO
STATE INSPECTION."**

Example of sign required for non-potentially hazardous foods

Signage Requirements: Canned Goods

**“THESE CANNED GOODS
ARE HOMEMADE AND
NOT SUBJECT TO
STATE INSPECTION.”**

Example of sign required for canned products

Cottage Food Exemption Requirements 6-7

6. Sell from the home, at farmers' markets, community events, or on the Internet.
7. Register with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture every year that you intend to sell food under the Cottage Food Exemption.

Cottage Food Exemption Requirements 8-10

8. Complete required Cottage Food Exemption training every three years.
9. Follow local city, county, or township business licensing, sales prohibitions, and zoning requirements.
10. Sell less than \$18,000 per individual in a calendar year.

Examples of non-potentially hazardous food that you can make at home and sell

- Acidified or acidic, home-canned and home-processed:
 - Fruits
 - Pickle
 - Vegetables
 - Fermented Foods
 - Vinegar
 - Condiments
- Baked Goods
- Candy and Confections
- Dried, Dehydrated and Roasted Items (Beans, Herbs, Seeds)
- Icings, Frostings, Sugar Art
- Jams, Jellies, Preserves, Fruit Butters



Depending on the recipe, some of these items could be potentially hazardous

Examples of potentially hazardous food that you cannot make at home and sell

- Food that originated from an animal or aquatic species, which is raw or cooked, such as meatloaf or baked salmon
- Food that is a plant that is cooked, such as cooked rice or steamed green beans
- Food that consists of raw seed sprouts, cut melons, cut fresh tomatoes, cut leafy greens, or garlic-, vegetable-, or herb-based oil mixtures

Food Product Testing

- If you use an Extension or USDA approved and tested canning recipe, testing your food product for acidity or water activity is not required
 - Follow the recipe exactly
 - Retain recipe and source as documentation
- If using a non-standard recipe, you must have the product tested for safety
 - Test for pH (≤ 4.6), water activity (≤ 0.85) as appropriate
 - Submit copy of results to the Food and Feed Safety Division at the MDA
mda.cottagefood@state.mn.us
 - May also require process authority evaluation



Safe Food Handling Practices



Prevent Foodborne Illness

- What is foodborne illness?
 - Food poisoning
 - An illness caused by consuming food or beverages containing harmful pathogens

What are Common Symptoms of Foodborne Illness?

- The two most common symptoms of foodborne illness are vomiting and diarrhea
- Foodborne illness is caused by a virus, bacteria, parasite or other source of contamination in food
 - Symptoms can appear a half an hour to 6 weeks after eating unsafe food
 - Symptoms generally last 1-7 days
- If you suspect you have a foodborne illness call the Minnesota Department of Health Foodborne Illness Hotline
 - 1-877- FOOD-ILL

Dangers of Preparing Food when Ill

- You can transfer your illness to others through the food you prepare.
- Many foodborne illness outbreaks have been caused by people who prepared food when they were sick.



Image courtesy of University of Minnesota Extension

- Never prepare food to sell if you have nausea, vomiting or diarrhea.

What Factors Cause Foodborne Illness?

1. Ill food preparers
 - 1 out of 3 outbreaks linked to infected food handlers
2. Poor personal hygiene
3. Time and temperature abuse
 - Food not kept sufficiently hot or cold
4. Contaminated raw product
5. Using contaminated equipment
 - Poor cleaning and sanitizing



A Clean You

Do the following to prevent contamination from other sources:

- Use clean clothes, aprons
- Maintain short, clean fingernails
- Cover cuts
- Limit jewelry on hands
- Use a hair restraint
- Do not touch ready-to-eat foods like baked goods with bare hands. Use gloves, tongs, etc.
- **Most importantly, wash hands often!**



Image courtesy of University of Minnesota Extension

Handwashing Steps 1-3

1. Wet hands and forearms with hot water



2. Apply soap



3. Scrub hands, fingernails, and forearms



Handwashing Steps 4-5

4. Rinse off soap, turn off faucet with paper towel



5. Dry with single use paper towel



Images courtesy of University of Minnesota Extension

The handwashing process should take 20 seconds

When to Wash Your Hands?

Before:

- Preparing food
- Beginning new task

After:

- Restroom use
- Handling raw meat/poultry, eggs, produce
- Handling animals and pets
- Eating/smoking, coughing/blowing nose
- Touching hair, face, body
- Handling garbage
- Cleaning
- Shaking hands, using phone



Image courtesy of University of Minnesota Extension

Glove Use

- Gloves are capable of spreading germs
- Not a substitute for handwashing
- Use for a single task
- Change when:
 - Damaged
 - Soiled
 - Task is interrupted

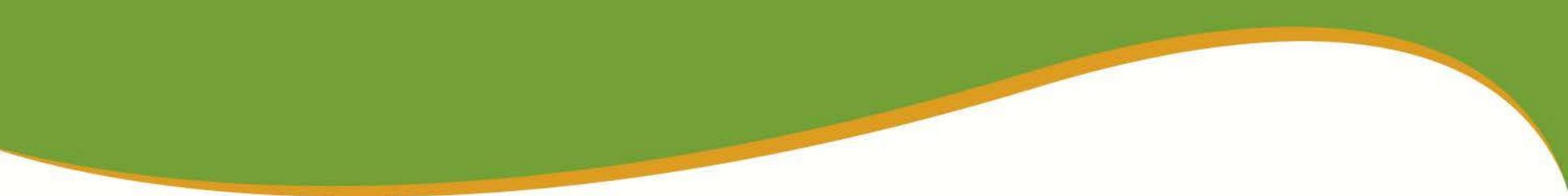


Safe Food Preparation Practices

- Clean and sanitize sinks, equipment, table, and counter tops before, during and after food preparation



- Keep pets out of the prep area



Packaging and Labeling

Protecting your Food from Contamination During Packaging

- Package food in a clean, dry place to protect it from contamination
- Do not misrepresent your products, for example, by using materials that make the product look different than it is, like colored plastic wrap



Label your Products

Label Must Include

- Name and **address** of the individual preparing and selling the food
- The date on which the food was prepared
- Ingredients
- Possible allergens
 - Eggs
 - Milk
 - Wheat
 - Tree nuts
 - Peanuts
 - Soy ingredients
 - Fish
 - Shellfish



Product Label Example

Label:

Chocolate Chip Cookies With Walnuts

Made on: 9/23/15

Sally Baker

123 Cottage Food Lane

Anywhere, MN 56XXX

Ingredients: Enriched flour (Wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamine, mononitrate, riboflavin and folic acid), butter (milk, salt), chocolate chips (sugar, chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, butterfat (milk), walnuts, sugar, eggs, salt, artificial vanilla extract, baking soda.

Contains: Wheat, eggs, milk, walnuts



Health and Nutrition Claims

- Nutrition facts panels are NOT needed for cottage food products in Minnesota unless you make a claim on your label:
 - Nutrition claim such as ‘fat-free’ or ‘low sodium’
 - Health claim such as ‘prevents heart disease’
 - Claims are regulated under Title 21 Part 101 of the Code of Federal Regulations and require nutritional analysis

Protect your Food from Contamination

During storage and transport:

- Keep food wrapped or in a covered container
- Set food in a clean box or cooler for transport
- Store food off the floor or ground

During display:

- Keep food covered, wrapped or sealed in packaging
- Do not handle with bare hands; use utensils or disposable gloves
- Store food off the floor or ground



What do I do next? Steps 1-3

Step One: Based on this training, decide if you are eligible to register for this license exemption

Step Two: If your sales are greater than \$5000 per year you will need to take an in person training through the University of Minnesota Extension program. Find training information here:

[University of Minnesota Extension cottage food course information](#)

Step Three: If your sales are less than \$5000 per year, take the exam that begins on slide 35.

What do I do next? Steps 4-5

Step four: Send in the registration form. You can email the form to Mda.cottagefood@state.mn.us or send it by mail to the following address:

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
ATTN: Cashier
625 Robert Street North
Saint Paul, MN 55155-2538

Step five: MDA will send you a registration card in the mail with a unique registration number that you should keep with you when selling food under the cottage food exemption

Cottage Food Producer Registration Exam

Please answer the following questions based on the training in the previous slides. This exam is not graded and the answers appear after each question so you can check your knowledge.

Question One

True or False? This registration allows me to sell up to \$18,000 per year as an individual.

Answer: Question One

True.

The Cottage Food Exemption allows an individual to sell up to \$18,000 annually if they have completed Tier 2 training.

Question Two

This exemption from licensing applies to which of the following:

- A. Corporations
- B. Limited liability companies
- C. Individuals
- D. Cooperatives

Answer: Question Two

C. Individuals.

This exemption from licensing applies to individuals only.

Question Three

True or False? The highest pH level allowed for canned products under this registration is 5.5.

Answer: Question Three

False.

The highest pH value allowed for canned products under this exemption is 4.6.

Question Four

What product can you make and sell with this registration?

- A. Roasted walnuts
- B. Pickled green bean
- C. Chocolate chip cookies
- D. All of the above

Answer: Question Four

D. All of the above.

Roasted walnuts, pickled green beans, and chocolate chip cookies can all be made and sold under the cottage food exemption.

Question Five

True or False? Food products must be labeled with the name and address of the producer, the date the food was produced, ingredients, and any allergens contained in the food.

Answer: Question Five

True.

All cottage food product labels must contain the name and address of the producer, the date the food was produced, a list of ingredients, and any allergens present in the food.

Question Six

Where can products made under this registration be sold? Select all that apply.

- A. Directly from your home
- B. To restaurants
- C. To grocery stores
- D. To cooperatives

Answer: Question Six

A. Directly from your home.

Cottage food products may not be sold to restaurants, grocery stores, or cooperatives.

Question Seven

Fill in the blank with the most appropriate answer. Before registering with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture as a cottage food producer, I need to confirm that local _____ allows home based food businesses.

- A. food and retail businesses
- B. neighborhood groups and city councils
- C. city, county, or township licensing and zoning
- D. food and safety inspectors

Answer: Question Seven

C. City, county, or township licensing and zoning.

As stated in subdivision 6 of 28A.152, Cottage Foods Exemption, this section does not preempt the application of any business licensing requirement or sanitation, public health, or zoning ordinance of a political subdivision.

Question Eight

True or False? Foodborne illness is caused by consuming food or beverages containing harmful pathogens.

Answer: Question Eight

True.

Foodborne illness, also known as food poisoning, results from eating food or beverages containing harmful pathogens or other contaminants.

Question Nine

What are the most common practices that cause foodborne illness? Select all that apply.

- A. Ill food workers
- B. Using contaminated equipment
- C. Hot food kept at the correct temperature
- D. Poor personal hygiene

Answer: Question Nine

A, B, and D.

Ill food workers, using contaminated equipment, and poor personal hygiene are among the top factors that cause foodborne illness.

Question Ten

True or False? Food preparation surfaces should be cleaned and sanitized before food is produced.

Answer: Question Ten

True.

Food contact surfaces should be washed, rinsed and sanitized before starting food production and at any point during production that the surfaces become contaminated.

Question Eleven

What is the most important step you can take to prevent foodborne illness? Select all that apply.

- A. Wash your hands often
- B. Use a hair restraint
- C. Keep your fingernails covered
- D. Reuse single use plastic gloves

Answer: Question Eleven

A. Wash your hands often.

Effective handwashing removes pathogens and is the most important step you can take to prevent the spread of foodborne illness.

Question Twelve

Which of the following food items are you not allowed to sell under this registration? Select all that apply.

- A. Cut fresh tomatoes
- B. Meatloaf
- C. Baked wheat bread
- D. Pickles

Answer: Question Twelve

A and B. Cut fresh tomatoes and meatloaf.

Cut fresh tomatoes and meatloaf are both considered potentially hazardous foods. They may not be produced and sold under the cottage food exemption.

Question Thirteen

True or False? Cottage food producer registration and training are both required every year.

Answer: Question Thirteen

False.

Registration as a cottage food producer is required every calendar year. Training for either Tier One or Tier Two sales is required once every three years.

Question Fourteen

Fill in the blank with the most appropriate answer.
Cottage food products not immediately placed out for sale should be stored at a farmer's market _____.

- A. off the ground in clean, dry containers
- B. directly on the grass or ground under the table
- C. under the hand washing station
- D. out in front of the table

Answer: Question Fourteen

A. Off the ground in clean, dry containers.

Cottage food products must be protected from contamination during preparation, storage, and sale.

Question Fifteen

True or False? The major allergens that must be identified when present are wheat, eggs, milk, and peanuts.

Answer: Question Fifteen

False.

Any of the eight major allergens present in cottage food products must be identified. The eight major allergens are milk, soy, wheat, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and crustacean shellfish.

Questions?

Contact the MN Department of Agriculture
Food and Feed Safety Division at:

mda.cottagefood@state.mn.us

651-201-6081

Additional Resources

[The Minnesota Department of Agriculture cottage food information](#)

[The Minnesota Farmers' Market Association](#)

[The University of Minnesota Extension cottage food information](#)

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the University of Minnesota
Extension food safety program staff for
review of this online cottage food training