

Starting a Wholesale Food Business Checklist

The information contained in this document is current as of the date of this publication. Because laws can change, it is important to check for changes or updates to applicable laws and regulations. This document is intended to be a guide only and may not be all inclusive. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) will determine your exact licensing requirements after reviewing all details about your new food business.

Where do I start?

Facilities used for food production and/or sales in Minnesota must meet certain construction requirements. Inspections and approvals are required from the responsible regulatory agency before a food license can be obtained. Use the checklist below to help you get started!

Table 1: Starting a Wholesale Food Business Checklist

Task	Resource	Completed
<p>Zoning - All businesses in Minnesota, including those in rural areas, must comply with local zoning requirements. Requirements will state what types of activities may be carried out in certain geographical areas.</p>	<p>Contact the local City, County, or Township Authority to determine zoning requirements for your food business.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Water Source - Water from a source other than a public water supply must be evaluated and approved by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) prior to licensing. Getting a private well approved as a water source requires an evaluation, which may be requested from the Minnesota Department of Health. They will review well construction records, water testing results, and well isolation distances when making this determination. A preliminary evaluation may be completed by your MDA Inspector prior to the MDH evaluation.</p>	<p>Contact the Minnesota Department of Health, Drinking Water Protection Program. 651.201.4700 Health.drinkingwater@state.mn.us</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Wastewater/Sewer/Septic-Systems - must meet the requirements of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. A current Certificate of Compliance (COC) or septic system inspection report indicating the septic system complies with state requirements is required.</p>	<p>Contact the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Task	Resource	Completed
<p>Building Inspection/Certificate of Occupancy - The building where food is produced must meet the State Building Code, which provides construction and alteration requirements, performance standards, and required health and safety guidelines. All food establishments are required to comply with the State Building Code, whether they have a local building inspector or not.</p>	<p>Contact your City/County to determine whether they have a building inspector and/or require a Certificate of Occupancy.</p> <p>Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Local Code Lookup</p> <p>Overview of the Minnesota State Building Code website</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Fire Inspection - The building where your food business is located must comply with the State Fire Code.</p>	<p>Contact your local and state fire inspector for information on fire code compliance inspections for your food business.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Plumbing Inspection - Plumbing installed in your facility, which includes new installations and/or updates, must be completed by a licensed plumber, and must meet the State Plumbing Code.</p>	<p>Contact your local plumbing inspector.</p> <p>State Plumbing Code</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Electrical Inspection - The building where your food business is located must meet the State Electrical Code, including any new installations/updates.</p>	<p>Contact your State Electrical Inspector.</p> <p>Electrical Codes and Standards</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>HVAC (heating, ventilation, air conditioning) - The HVAC system must meet the required codes. Work can be completed by a mechanical engineer or licensed plumber or electrician.</p>	<p>Contact your local Building Official.</p> <p>Minnesota State Mechanical Code</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>For Alcohol Producing Facilities -Multiple agency approvals are required for facilities that intend to sell alcohol.</p>	<p>Federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB)</p> <p>Minnesota Department of Public Safety alcohol, Gambling, and Enforcement</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Obtaining a Food License:

Contact your [local food inspector](#) for final inspection at least **two weeks prior** to needing your license to allow time for scheduling. Items needed for your food licensing inspection include:

- Final signoffs from the above listed inspectors (i.e., applicable plumbing inspection, building inspection, etc.)
- Worker’s Compensation information (if any paid employees)
- Minnesota Tax ID number or social security number
- Estimated Gross Annual Food Sales
- Check or Money Order as payment for license

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.