



Harford County Health Department

Main Office: 120 S. Hays Street • P.O. Box 797 • Bel Air, Maryland 21014 • 410-838-1500

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Harford County
Health Department

Russell W. Moy, MD, MPH • Health Officer
Marcy Austin • Deputy Health Officer



410-877-2300/410-879-2684
FAX 443-643-0333
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Guidance for Cottage Food Businesses

This memo provides guidance for foods to be produced and sold from a cottage food business located in Maryland. COMAR 10.15.03 defines a “cottage food business” as a business that a) Produces or packages cottage food products in a residential kitchen; and b) Has annual revenues from the sale of cottage food products in an amount not exceeding \$25,000. Additionally, it further defines a “cottage food product” as being a non-potentially hazardous food as specified in COMAR 10.15.03.27 that is offered for sale only at a farmer’s market or public event. **Effective October 1, 2018**, cottage food products may also be sold directly to a consumer from a residence, by personal delivery, or by mail delivery. Interstate sales are prohibited.

Foods that may be produced under COMAR 10.15.03.27 for Farmers’ Markets, Bake Sales, and Cottage Food Businesses:

- Breads and Pastries without potentially hazardous toppings or fillings:
 - Pies, turnovers, and fruit tarts from fruits with a natural pH of 4.6 or less
 - Baked breads, biscuits, and muffins
 - Cakes and cupcakes
- Canned acid foods such as:
 - Fruit jelly, jam, and preserves from fruits with a natural pH of 4.6 or less
 - Fruit butters from apple, apricot, grape, peach, plum, prune, and quince
- Snacks such as popcorn/kettle corn, popcorn balls, nuts, and cotton candy
- Cereal trail mixes, granola
- Repackaged commercially processed dry ingredients (i.e. spice and seasoning blends, tea blends)
- Chocolate confections made from commercially manufactured chocolate (i.e. chocolate covered pretzels). **Chocolate covered fresh fruits are prohibited.**
- Candy such as lollipops, gummy bears, brittles, toffee
- Fruit leathers from fruits with a natural pH of 4.6 or less.
- Raw unflavored honey
- Whole roasted coffee beans

BEL AIR OFFICE
1 N. Main Street
Bel Air, MD 21014
410-638-3060

EDGEWOOD OFFICE
1321 Woodbridge Station Way
Edgewood, MD 21040
410-612-1779

EDGEWOOD OFFICE
2204 Hanson Road
Edgewood, MD 21040
443-922-7670

HAVRE DE GRACE OFFICE
2027 Pulaski Highway
Havre de Grace, MD 21078
410-939-6680

HAVRE DE GRACE OFFICE
2015 Pulaski Highway
Havre de Grace, MD 21078
410-942-7999

Examples of Foods that cannot be offered as cottage foods:

- Fish or shellfish products;
- Fresh, dried, or dehydrated meat or meat products;
- Fresh, dried, or dehydrated poultry or poultry products;
- Baked goods that require any type of refrigeration (e.g., meringue pies, pecan pies, pumpkin pies, cheesecake, cream and custard pies, and cakes or pastries with cream cheese/butter cream icings or fillings);
- Focaccia-style breads with vegetables and/or cheeses
- Raw seed sprouts, including but not limited to alfalfa sprouts or bean sprouts
- Raw cookie and pizza dough
- Acidified foods/pickled products such as corn relish, pickles, or salsa, pepper jelly, sauerkraut
- Milk and dairy products including hard, soft and cottage cheeses, and yogurt,
- Cut fresh fruit and vegetables;
- Food products made from cut fresh fruits or vegetables;
- Food products made with cooked vegetable products;
- Garlic and/or vegetable in oil mixtures;
- Sugar-free products, such as jams, jellies, syrups, marmalades and other preserves;
- Pumpkin and nut butters;
- Ice or ice products;
- Barbeque sauces, ketchups, and mustards;
- Bottled water;
- Candy or chocolate covered fresh fruits
- Fresh pasta;
- Dehydrated herbs and vegetables

If the approved foods are produced under the cottage foods regulation, these products may only be sold within the State of Maryland directly to a consumer from a residence, at a farmer's market, at a public event, by personal delivery, or by mail delivery (interstate sales are prohibited). The operator must:

- Pre-package all products at the cottage food business.
- Provide a label that contains the following information:
 - The name and address of the cottage food business;
 - The name of the cottage food product;
 - The ingredients of the cottage food product in descending order of the amount of each ingredient by weight;
 - The net weight or net volume of the cottage food product;
 - Allergen information as specified by federal labeling requirements;
 - Nutritional information as specified by federal labeling requirements, if any nutritional information claim is made; and
 - Printed in 10 point or larger type in a color that provides a clear contrast to the background of the label: "Made by a cottage food business that is not subject to Maryland's food safety regulations."

SAMPLE LABEL

Chocolate Chip Cookies
Delicious Desserts
Any Street
Any City, MD Zip

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), soy lecithin, walnuts,
sugar eggs, salt, artificial vanilla extract, baking soda.

Contains: Wheat, eggs, milk, soy, walnuts

Net Wt. 3 oz.

Made by a cottage food business that is not subject to Maryland's food safety regulations.

Sampling of Cottage Foods

Cottage foods may be sampled as long as your product meets the requirements of the Cottage Food guidance document and is a non-potentially hazardous food. Samples must be pre-packaged in the home kitchen. The food must be individually wrapped or packaged into sample cups with lids in the home kitchen. An individual label for each sample is not needed, but the packaged products on display must be properly labeled so the customer can review the ingredient list and required information. The product cannot be cooked or prepared in a way that makes it a potentially hazardous food/temperature control for safety food. For example, adding sour cream to a dried dip mix would require a food service facility license.

A temporary food service facility license is not required to sell cottage foods.

If planning to sell from a residence, please contact the Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning at 410-638-3103 for approval.

Questions may be directed to the Harford County Health Department Division of Food Control at 410-877-2300 or the Maryland Department of Health Office of Food Protection at (410) 767-8400.