



Home Food License 101

A Home Food license allows you to create a number of products at your home that you can sell from home and/or at retail stores. The foods have to be shelf-stable (non-potentially hazardous). Products that have to be refrigerated or frozen to control microbial growth are not allowed with a Home Food License (a commercial food processing license would be required).

A Home Food License is not required for selling only fresh produce, fresh eggs from a farm with fewer than 3,000 birds, or a poultry producer operating under a Fewer than 1,000 Bird Exemption.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- Clean and Sanitary Process Area:
 - Food contact surfaces like tables, chopping blocks, and countertops must be of a non-absorbent, corrosion-resistant material and be smooth and easy to clean.
 - Floors, walls, and ceilings must be smooth and easily cleanable.
 - Equipment and utensils must be kept clean and sanitary.
- Water Requirements:
 - The kitchen must have a two-bay sink **or** a one-bay sink and dish washer with an adequate supply of hot and cold water with adequate water pressure.
 - i. 100-110 degrees is recommended for hot water.
 - Private water (wells) require an annual water test for coliform and nitrates.
- Refrigerator Temperature Control:
 - A thermometer must be installed in the refrigerator to make sure it is maintained at 41 degrees or less.
- Canned, Shelf-Stable Products:
 - Prior to licensing, all canned, shelf-stable products (such as pickles, relishes, and BBQ sauces) must be submitted to the [University of Maine Food Testing Services](#), or another acidified process authority for review.
 - i. Canned foods can be a potential botulism risk if products are incorrectly formulated. Therefore, it's essential to ensure the proper

heating process is followed, and the pH or water activity level of the canned products are safe.

- Labeling Requirements:
 - All foods sold outside of the home must be labelled with:
 - The common or usual name of the product (e.g., apple pie, dill pickles)
 - Ingredients in order of predominance (i.e., in the order of greatest to least amount in product)
 - Net weight, net volume, or numerical count
 - Name, address, and zip code of the producer
 - No label is required if product is sold directly to the consumer from the home.
- Animal Requirements:
 - Animals are allowed in the processing area during non-production time.
 - Prior to processing, all pets must be removed and excluded from the processing area, and all surfaces and utensils shall be washed, rinsed, and sanitized for food safety.
- Initial Inspection:
 - An initial inspection is required to receive a Home Food License.
 - Department staff will visit to make sure your home kitchen is ready to start processing your food products.
 - Annual inspections are not required.

LICENSE & FEE

The Home Food License fee is \$20/year.

A Home Food License will be issued when Department staff determine that there is proper labeling, general sanitation is met, adequate food protection, and thermometers in use where required.

The license application form can be found at:

http://www.maine.gov/dacf/qar/permits_and_licenses/application_forms.shtml

Department staff are available to answer any questions you may have about a Home Kitchen License and are ready to work with you to successfully get licensed. Please call us at 287-3841.

For more information about growing your own home-based food business, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension is an excellent resource. Visit them online:

- <https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/3101e/>
- <https://extension.umaine.edu/food-health/food-safety/training/>
- <https://extension.umaine.edu/business/specialty-foods/>