

Cottage Food Vendor Frequently Asked Questions



Anchorage
Health
Department

Q: What are cottage foods?

A: Cottage foods are products made in a home kitchen and sold at venues such as craft fairs or seasonal markets.

Q: What are examples of cottage foods?

A: Cottage foods include jams, pickled foods, breads, baked goods, dried herbs, and vinegar (foods that do not require refrigeration).

Q: What foods are NOT considered cottage foods?

A: Fresh or dried meats, baked goods that need to be refrigerated, dairy products, fresh vegetable juices, and non-acidic canned foods.

Q: How and where can I sell cottage foods?

A: Cottage foods can be sold directly to customers (not for wholesale or online sales shipped to customers) and total sales per year cannot exceed \$25,000. Seasonal craft fairs and markets are places where cottage foods are commonly sold.

Q: What do I need to do before selling cottage foods?

A: An annual Cottage Foods License (\$25), an Alaska Food Worker Card (\$10 for three years), cottage food ingredient list & food preparation list, and pH and/or water activity testing (required for some cottage foods) must be submitted to the Anchorage Health Department, Environmental Health Services Program before you can start selling cottage foods.

Q: Do I need to label and identify cottage foods for customers?

A: Yes, all cottage foods must be labeled with the name, physical address, and telephone number of the individual who prepared the food or with the Alaska business license number. A cottage food placard must be visible to customers at all times while selling products.

Q: What must be done to be sure cottage foods are safe to eat?

A: Assure the health and sanitation practices of those involved in the cottage food making process. People preparing cottage foods must not work in the home kitchen if sick, wash hands before and during the cottage food making process, avoid bare hand contact with cottage foods (use gloves or tongs as needed), and do not allow pets or children in the kitchen while preparing cottage foods.

Cottage Food Vendor Frequently Asked Questions



Anchorage
Health
Department

Q: Will my cottage foods or kitchen be inspected?

A: If there is a complaint or concern related to food safety of your cottage food product(s), the Municipality may inspect the cottage food operation at any time. This may include the purpose of inspection and/or the collection of food samples for laboratory analysis.

Q: May I offer free samples of my cottage foods to customers?

A: Yes, although disposable single use gloves, utensils, toothpicks, etc. are required to be provided for sampling of products. Sample preparation should include no bare hand contact with products. Hands must be properly washed and dried prior to preparation and all samples should be prepared using tongs, single use gloves, single use papers, or other sanitary methods to maintain food safety.

Q: What else do I need if I offer free samples of products?

A: A temporary hand wash station must be available and enough utensils to allow for switching of utensils every four hours or as often as needed if they become soiled. Alternatively, vendors may have a three basin setup available with wash, rinse and sanitize steps to properly clean reusable utensils throughout the day.

Q: What is required for sanitization?

A: An approved sanitizer should be present for use in sanitizing utensils. If chlorine is used for sanitizing utensils, a 50ppm solution is required or 200ppm solution for quaternary solutions.

Q: What if I have more questions about cottage food vending?

A: Call AHD Environmental Health Services (907) 343-4200

Or, find more information online:

[Anchorage Health Department, Cottage Food information](#)

[Anchorage Health Department, Food Safety Resources homepage](#)

[State of Alaska, Food Safety & Sanitation Cottage Foods homepage](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Food Safety homepage](#)