

Alabama Cottage Food Law

Food Safety

► Food safety should be your first consideration in preparing food for your family or for your customers. Before you start to prepare your product to sell, consider these recommendations to make the safest food you can.

Kitchen—Clean Your Kitchen from Top to Bottom

Cleaning Solutions

- Detergents and warm water make a great cleaning solution.
- Clean all surfaces before you sanitize.

Chlorine Sanitizing Solutions

- Use 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach per gallon of water.
- Chlorine acts quickly.
- Chlorine becomes inactive quickly.
- Chlorine solutions in an open container like a bucket should be discarded daily.
- Chlorine in a tightly closed bottle will last about a week.
- Store chlorine in any form in a cool dark place to keep its strength.
- DO NOT use chlorine with added fragrances.

How Often Should You Sanitize?

- Before starting your preparation
- After using milk or raw eggs
- When moving from one task to another



Counter Tops and Other Work Spaces

- Clean off the counter tops with hot, soapy water.
- Wipe them with a clean cloth to rinse off the soap.
- Wipe with a sanitizing wipe or with a clean cloth held in a sanitizing solution.

Floors

- Sweep floors to remove any loose dirt.
- Mop the swept floors with a cleaning solution to ensure food safety.

Utensils and Equipment

- Clean and sanitize pots, pans, bowls, spoons, measuring cups, etc., used in your process.

Personal Hygiene for You and Helpers

- Put on clean clothes.
- Wear a hair restraint, such as a cap, or tie back hair.
- Remove nail polish and jewelry.
- Cover cuts or sores on hands with a bandage and wear single-use gloves.
- Wash your hands (20 seconds with soap and warm water) in the bathroom, NOT the kitchen sink, after touching your face or handling raw eggs or meats; when moving from one task to another; after using the bathroom.

- DO NOT allow eating or smoking while you are preparing cottage food products.
- Do NOT let small children or babies in the kitchen area while preparing the food.
- Do NOT have pets in the kitchen during food preparation.

Water Supply

- Use water from a tested municipality.
- Use water from a well that is tested at least once a year.
- If you do not have a safe water supply, use bottled water.

Storage of Food Supplies

- Store cleaning supplies separate from your food items.
- Store ingredients for your food processing business separate from household food supplies.
- Store utensils and other equipment used specifically for food processing in a separate area from where you store other food preparation equipment.

Quality

- Develop a standard recipe so you will be able to have the same quality of product each time you produce it.

Handling the Finished Product

- When handling a ready-to-eat product, always wear gloves. Consider single-use nonlatex gloves to avoid allergen cross contact.
- Do not handle ready to eat foods with bare hands.

Storage of Your Finished Product

- Make a place to store your finished product.
- Store on shelves or off the floor.
- Store your food in a dry, cool place.
- Develop a storage rotation system of FIFO (First In First Out).

Labeling

Required labels shall include the following:

- Name of individual or business
- Address of the individual or business
- The statement THIS FOOD IS NOT INSPECTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Recommended labeling should include the following:

- Name of the product in bold print
- List of ingredients (from the largest amount to the smallest amount)
- List of allergens (milk; eggs; fish, e.g., bass, flounder, cod; crustacean shellfish, e.g., crab, lobster, shrimp; tree nuts, e.g., almonds, walnuts, pecans; peanuts; wheat; and soybeans)
- Weight of the product or volume (8 ounces or 1 pint)

Packaging

- Purchase food grade packaging material.
- Cover all products for safe transport by the customer.



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