

WASHOE COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT

ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE

Cottage Food Fact Sheet and Food Safety Guidelines

A “cottage food operation,” as allowed by Nevada Revised Statutes Chapter 446, means a natural person who manufactures or prepares food items in a non-food establishment setting for sale to a natural person. In Washoe County cottage food production is also allowed in food establishments with a Washoe County Permit to Operate.

Sales:

- Must be direct to the end consumer and not for resale.
- May take place on the cottage food operator’s private property/ site of manufacture or at a farmer’s market, swap meet, flea market, church bazaar, garage sale, or craft fair.
- To remain exempted from permitting, cottage foods sold at a venue that is regulated by Washoe County Health District (WCHD), such as a farmers’ market or swap meet, the food product must remain in its durable packaging with proper labeling affixed. Food samples may be individually pre-portioned in closed, disposable containers at the cottage food operation kitchen for sample distribution at the sale site. Open product sampling may require additional permits. Contact WCHD at 775-328-2434, if you have questions.

The types of food that can be manufactured (only the items listed below are permissible):

1. Nuts and nut mixes;
2. Candies;
3. Jams, jellies, and preserves;
4. Vinegar and flavored vinegar;
5. Dry herbs and seasoning mixes;
6. Dried fruits;
7. Cereals, trail mixes, and granola;
8. Popcorn and popcorn balls; or
9. Baked goods that:
 - a. Are not potentially hazardous foods;
 - b. Do not contain home canned foods, cream, uncooked egg, custard, meringue or cream cheese frosting or garnishes, fillings or frostings with low sugar content; and
 - c. Do not require time or temperature controls for food safety.

Before selling foods, the cottage food operator:

1. Needs to determine the type of durable packaging that will be used to protect the food items from contamination during transport, display, sale, and acquisition by consumers.
2. Must design labeling for the food product to meet Cottage Food Bill requirements
3. Must design labeling for the food product to meet 21 U.S.C. § 343(W) and 9 C.F.R. Part 101.
 - a. Statement of identity - the common, usual name or descriptive identity of the packaged food item.
 - b. Net quantity of contents
 - i. Net weight in ounces, pounds, or grams; or
 - ii. Net content in fluid ounces pints or liters, or number of pieces.
 - c. Ingredient statement - a list of all ingredients, in descending order of predominance by weight. This includes listing all ingredients of an ingredient that in itself contains two or more ingredients.
 - d. The name and physical address where the product was manufactured, packaged or distributed.
 - e. Declaration of any food allergen contained in the food, unless the food source is already part of the common or usual name of the product or clearly identified in the ingredient list.
 - i. Major food allergens include milk, eggs, fish, crustacean or bivalve shellfish, tree nuts, wheat, peanuts and soybeans and any ingredient that contains protein derived from any one of these ingredients or additives.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

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- ii. It must be included in one of two ways:
 1. In parentheses following the name of the ingredient. Examples: lecithin (soy), flour (wheat), and whey (milk); or
 2. Immediately after or next to the list of ingredients in a "contains" statement. Example: Contains wheat, milk and soy.
- f. Must include the statement, "Made in a cottage food operation that is not subject to routine government inspection."
- 4. Must register with the local health authority.

Kitchen Sanitation and Food Safety Guidelines for Cottage Food Operators

1. The preparation, packaging, and handling of cottage foods should take place separately from other domestic activities, such as family meal preparation, dishwashing, clothes washing, kitchen cleaning, or guest entertainment. No infants, small children, or pets should be present in the kitchen during cottage food preparation.
 - Smoking should not take place during a cottage food operation.
 - A person with a contagious illness should refrain from working in the cottage food operation while ill.
 - Individuals ill with gastrointestinal symptoms (vomiting and/or diarrhea) should refrain from working in the cottage food operation until at least 48 hours after their symptoms stop.
 - Individuals involved in the preparation or packaging of cottage food products should keep their hands and exposed portions of their arms clean and should wash their hands before any food preparation or packaging activity.
 - Particularly with ready-to-eat food, bare hand contact should be minimized by use of utensils, single-use gloves, bakery papers, or tongs.
2. Kitchen equipment and utensils used to produce cottage food products should be clean and maintained in a good state of repair.
 - All food contact surfaces, equipment, and utensils should be washed, rinsed, and sanitized before each use.
 - Water used during the preparation of cottage food products should meet the potable drinking water standards.
 - All food preparation and food and equipment storage areas should be maintained free of rodents and insects.
3. All food should be manufactured, produced, prepared, packed, stored, transported, and kept for sale so as to be pure and free from adulteration and spoilage.
 - Ingredients should be obtained from approved sources.
 - Food should be protected from dirt, vermin, unnecessary handling, droplet contamination, overhead leakage, or other environmental sources of contamination.
 - Care should be taken to prevent cross contamination of cottage foods and ingredients used in the manufacture of cottage foods with raw animal products and chemicals.
 - All cottage foods should be prepackaged in a manner that protects the food item from contamination during transport, display, sale, and acquisition by consumers.

Basic Sanitization Guidelines

Basic sanitization is a 3 step wash-rinse-sanitizer process using household bleach.

Step 1: Wash all items to be used in cooking process with soap and water. Ensure all food particles have been removed from cooking items.

Step 2: Rinse all soap off items using clean and warm water.

Step 3: Submerge items in a chlorine-water solution with a concentration of 50 ppm Chlorine for one minute. Then let air dry.

- Using regular household bleach (without any fragrances), a 50 ppm Chlorine concentration can be achieved by adding 1 teaspoon of bleach to one gallon of water.