

Commercial Kitchen-Based Food Business

Completing the Permit Application for a Commercial Kitchen Food Processing Operation and what to expect during your food safety inspection at the commercial kitchen.

Applicable Laws and Regulations

As a food producer, you are required to meet certain standards. The following regulations are most applicable to your food business. You should familiarize yourself with these regulations to prepare for the inspection and to educate yourself on how to provide safe, wholesome food to your customers.

- [Virginia Food and Drink Law](#)
- [21 CFR 117 Current Good Manufacturing Practices](#)
- [21 CFR 101 Food Labeling](#)

* Please note that additional regulations may apply depending on the product you are manufacturing *

Completing the Application

Page 1 of the Application

Business Name: Enter the name of your business

Owner Name: Enter your full, legal name

Phone: Enter the phone number to best reach you

Email Address: Enter the email address where you would like us to reach you

Name of Commercial Kitchen: Enter the name of the shared commercial kitchen

Commercial Kitchen Address: Enter the physical address of the commercial kitchen

County in which commercial kitchen is located: Enter the County or City in which the kitchen you'll use for production is located

Your Business Mailing Address: Enter the name of your business and the address where you would like to receive mail correspondence. This likely will not be the same as the commercial kitchen address.

Water Supply: Mark whether the incoming water supply is from a public source, like the city's water works, or if there is a private water supply like a well.

Sewage Disposal: Mark whether the waste water is disposed of into a public system, like the city's waste disposal, or if there is a private disposal system, like a septic tank.

Completing the Application

Page 1 of the Application

Number of employees, including owner: Enter the number of employees for your business, including yourself.

Hours of operation: Enter the weekdays and times that your operation would normally occur.

Percentage of ingredients received from out of state suppliers: Enter the percentage of raw materials that originated in another state, territory, or country.

Percentage of products sold to out of state customers: Enter the percentage of products that are distributed to a customer in another state, territory, or country.

Percentage of products sold retail: Enter the percentage of products sold directly to the end consumer (hand to hand, Internet sales, farmers markets, etc.)

Percentage of products sold wholesale: Enter the percentage of products sold to wholesale accounts for the purpose of resale (restaurants, retail stores, etc.)

Checklist of Required Information: This section is intended to help you make sure that you have included everything in your packet that is required.

Completing the Application

Page 2 of the Application

Application Instructions: Take care to read and follow the application instructions on Page 2 carefully, in addition to reviewing this document's guidance. Failure to follow the application instructions will complicate the review process, may result in a returned application, a delay in approval of your application, or your application may not be approved.

Completing the Application

Page 3 of the Application

Commercial Kitchen Approval

Contact the commercial kitchen and inquire about whether you can conduct a food business in their facility. If they will allow it, ask for written documentation confirming this. It can be in the form of letter, email, license or other.

Completing the Application

Page 4 of the Application

Food Processing and Storage Area Diagram

Provide a diagram, hand-drawn or computer generated, of all the areas that will be used for preparing food, storing food and washing and storing equipment, packaging, or other non-food materials. You may also submit pictures.

All materials used for your food business must be stored at the commercial kitchen.

Completing the Application

Page 5 and 6 of the Application

Employee Training and Records

Provide documentation that employee training was completed. A template you may use to document employee training is provided.

Training must be completed prior to submitting the application. Adequate training will cover principles of food hygiene and food safety, as appropriate to your food processing operation and the duties of each employee.

*Special note for single-employee businesses: Even if the owner is the only employee, a training record still needs to be maintained.

Completing the Application

Page 6 of the Application

Product List and Planned Distribution

In the left column, list the name of each of your products. In the right column, list the outlets where you intend on selling your products to the consumer. Examples: delivery to customer home or event, Farmers Market, grocery stores, convenient stores, restaurants, over the internet to be shipped via USPS, UPS, FedEx.

Completing the Application

Page 7 of the Application

Preventing Allergen Cross-Contact

Provide a written plan for preventing allergen cross-contact. Review the “[Allergen Control Plan – Overview and Guidance](#)” for an outline of the topics your plan should cover. You should conduct a food allergen ingredient analysis, which considers all eight major food allergens. If your analysis identifies food allergens that will (or may be) in your products, you must have controls in place that prevent allergen cross-contact that includes all the products you manufacture for sale. A template is provided on page 8 to help you with your allergen ingredient analysis.

*Special consideration: When you operate in a shared space that is also used by other businesses/individuals, you must also consider cross-contact from ingredients/foods that are used by other businesses/individuals.

Completing the Application

Page 8 of the Application

Complete the Allergen Control Plan – Master List of Ingredients

List your ingredients (raw materials) in the column on the left.

Identify the supplier/manufacturer of your ingredient. All ingredients must come from approved sources. In the case of ingredients such as herbs, fruits, vegetables, if you grow these yourself, you may use them in your business.

List the ingredients from the package label of the ingredient. These ingredients will be the “sub-ingredients” for the ingredient on your own label.

Identify the food allergens in each ingredient by marking if any of the following are present: Egg, Milk, Soy, Wheat, Tree Nut, Peanut, Fish, Shellfish.

Check the packaging label of your ingredients for any allergen precautionary labeling and determine if this information should also be on your own label.

You may need to contact the manufacturer for clarification of their precautionary statement.

Completing the Application

Page 9 of the Application

Requirements of Subparts C & G and Exemptions

Do **not** complete this section if your business is any of the following:

- A business conducting at least 50% of sales directly to the consumer (retail). This type of business does not need to attest to FDA.
- A **very small business** that has attested. A very small business is one that averages less than \$1,000,000 in sales of human food per year for 3 years. Even if you are a small business, you must still attest to FDA using the Qualified Facility Attestation module:

<https://www.access.fda.gov>

Note: If your business model changes (increased sales, wholesale greater than 50%), then you must comply with Subparts C & G.

Completing the Application

Page 9 of the Application

Requirements of Subparts C & G and Exemptions (continued)

Do **not** complete this section if your business is any of the following:

- Devoted strictly to making **seafood products** under [21 CFR 123](#)
- Devoted strictly to making **100% juice** under [21 CFR 120](#). You cannot claim exemption from Subparts C & G if you do not treat your juice with a 5-log reduction in pathogens
- Devoted strictly to making **dietary supplements** under [21 CFR 111](#)
- Devoted strictly to making **alcoholic beverages**

If you are making any of the above, PLUS other products, then you are subject to Subparts C & G and therefore must submit documentation.

Completing the Application

Page 9 of the Application

Requirements of Subparts C & G and Exemptions (continued)

If your business does not fit into the categories on the previous two pages, then you are required to comply with and **supply, with your application, written documentation** that you are a Preventive Controls Qualified Individual and have both a written Food Safety Plan and a Supply-Chain Program.

Use the resources provided in the application to find more information on the requirements and guidance on building your programs.

Completing the Application

Page 13 of the Application

Product Information Sheet

Business Name: Enter the name of your Business

Date: Enter the date you submitted this recipe

Product Name: Enter the name of the product this recipe is for

Trade Secret: Mark this box if your product is trade secret/confidential. Please note that you still need to provide the required information. Marking the product as trade secret protects it from being released under public Freedom of Information Act requests.

Ingredients: List each ingredient that will be used in your recipe. List the amount of each ingredient, preferably in weight, although cups, teaspoons, gallons, etc. will suffice.

Step-By-Step Instructions: (discussion on next page)

Completing the Application

Page 13 of the Application

Product Information Sheet

Step-By-Step Instructions

List each step in the process of making your product. Include things like: final baking/cooking temperature for products like custard desserts (pumpkin pie, chocolate pudding, cheesecake) or raw meats; cooling methods and times/temperatures for items like cooked food that will ultimately be sold refrigerated; final storage instructions for items that are frozen or refrigerated; expiration dates for products that are refrigerated and ready-to-eat. See the next page for specific temperature requirements.

Tips on Temperatures

Use a calibrated probe thermometer to check:



- Cooking Temperatures

- Raw seafood/meat—145°F

- Raw egg, ground meat/seafood—155°F

- Stuffed products or raw poultry—165°F

- Date Marking

It is recommended that any ready-to-eat food (dip/spread, soup, custard, salad, etc.) that you sell refrigerated should be marked to be consumed within 7 days with the day of preparation counted as day 1. If you make a product on Sunday, the expiration date would be Saturday.

You may also work with process authority to determine an appropriate shelf-life for your product. You should include the expiration date on your label.

- Cold Storage Temperature

- All food stored under refrigeration must be 41°F or below.

- All food stored frozen must remain solidly frozen.

- Cooling

- Any food that you have heated, must be cooled properly. You must cool the product rapidly using an ice bath, ice paddle, refrigeration unit with good air movement, or other. The food must cool from 135°F to 70°F in two hours and from 70°F to 41°F in four hours. Create a log that you will use to monitor the cooling and submit this log with the application.

Sample Cooling Log

		Start	After 2 hours	After 4 hours
Date	Food Item	Time/Temp	Time/Temp	Time/Temp
11-7	Black bean soup	10:00AM / 155F	12:00PM / 60F	4:00PM / 33F

Completing the Application

Page 14 of the Application

Product Label

You **must** provide a complete and final label for **each** of your products. Labeling is mandatory for all packaged foods.

Review the instructions on pages 14 and 15 of the application. The product labeling is important and will be scrutinized for accuracy by the reviewer of your application. Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) has created guidance documents that might help, too. If you need further assistance, VCE might be able to help with your labels. You can access their website: <https://ext.vt.edu/food-health/food-innovations.html> or call 540-231-2483.

The checklist used by the reviewer of your application is included on the next page. It is being provided for your convenience, so that you may submit correct labels and thus, expedite the review of your application.

Labeling Requirements Checklist

Statement of Identity

- If two labels, on front of package
- Describes food
- Parallel to bottom of label
- Bold text, prominent

Net Contents

- If two labels, on front of package
- Located in lower third of label (bottom)
- Parallel to bottom of label
- Bold text
- Distinct item (empty space around statement)
- US Customary and Metric units
- If liquid, declared in fluid measure
- If liquid, preceded by “net”
- If solid, declared by weight
- If solid, preceded by “net wt”
- If eggs, declared by count

Ingredients

- Matches recipe
- Listed in order of heaviest to least heavy
- Sub-ingredients in parenthesis
- No fanciful words (fresh, artesian, local)
- Text > 1/16 inch
- If spice blend, cannot list “spices” as ingredient
- “and/or” only used for fat or oil
- If two labels, on same as name/place and NF panel

Allergen Labeling

- Declared in ingredient list and/or contains statement
- If contains statement:
 - Only use text “Contains: __, __, __”
 - Only use: tree nut (specific), fish (specific), crustacean shellfish, peanut, soy, wheat, egg, milk
- ALL allergens listed
- Directly after ingredient statement
- Same type size as ingredients

Name and Place of Business

- Full physical address
- If two labels, on same as ingredients and NF panel

Nutrition Facts Label

- Surrounded by box
- If not using standard format, use appropriate format based on label size
- If two labels, on same as name/place and ingredients
- If standard format, all present

Claims

- If nutrient content claim or health claim, NF panel present
- Nutrient content claim meets definition (Appendix A and B of FDA guide)
- Must be truthful, not misleading OR meet FDA definition
- If gluten free, meets definition
- If healthy, meets definition (see 101.65(d)(2))
- If non-GMO, truthful
- If All Natural, truthful
- Disease claim not allowed

Other

- No text, picture, symbol between ingredients, name/address, NF panel
- No spelling mistakes on required information

Correct Label

We ♥ this serrano sauce because of its sweet and fruity kick balanced with the perfect amount of acid. Enjoy!

Find our other spicy sauces at:

sallyspicy.com

Sally's Spicy Serrano Sauce

Hot sauce



Net Wt 16 oz (484 g)

Ingredients: vinegar, serrano peppers, tomato sauce (tomato puree (water, tomato paste), water, less than 2% of: salt, citric acid, onion powder, garlic powder, red pepper), sugar, salt.

Sally's Spicy LLC
12121 E. Main Street
Richmond, VA 23181

All statements made on the website are considered labeling and must also be in compliance.

Correct Label

Front label



Back (or side) label



Correct Label

Top
label

Sally's Spicy Serrano Sauce

Hot sauce



Net Wt 16 oz (484 g)

Side label

Ingredients: vinegar, serrano peppers, tomato sauce (tomato puree (water, tomato paste), water, less than 2% of: salt, citric acid, onion powder, garlic powder, red pepper), sugar, salt.

Sally's Spicy LLC · 12121 E. Main Street Richmond, VA 23181 · sallyspicy.com

Incorrect Label

Ingredients and name and address of business not to the right of principal display panel.

No product identity

Use of term "healthy" not allowed because product does not meet definition of healthy, and no nutrition facts panel is present.

Ingredients: salt, serrano peppers, tomato sauce (tomato puree (water, tomato paste), water, less than 2% of: salt, citric acid, onion powder, garlic powder, red pepper).

Find our other spicy sauces at: sallyspicy.com

Sally's Spicy LLC
12121 E. Main Street
Richmond, VA 23181

Sally's Spicy



Net Wt 16 oz

We ♥ this healthy serrano sauce because of it's sweet and fruity kick balanced with the perfect amount of acid. Enjoy!

Material between ingredients and name and address of business

Ingredients are not listed in order of heaviest to least heavy according to the recipe, i.e., the recipe is not made predominantly of salt. Some ingredients from recipe are missing (vinegar and sugar).

Correct Label

Weight Example

CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

Ingredients: All Purpose Flour (bleached wheat flour, malted barley flour, niacin, iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips (sugar, chocolate, cocoa butter, soy lecithin, vanillin, natural flavor), Brown Sugar (molasses), Sugar, Walnuts, Butter (cream, salt), Eggs, Salt, Baking Soda, Vanilla Extract (vanilla bean extractives in water, alcohol). Contains: wheat, soy, milk, walnuts, eggs.

Grannie's Cookies, 111 Happy Lane, Anytown, VA 22554

Net Wt. 10 oz (283 g)

Correct Label

Fluid Measure Example

ORANGE JUICE
Contains: 100% Juice
Ingredients: Filtered Water, Orange Juice Concentrate.

ABC Juice Company
111 Country Road
Anytown, VA 12345

Perishable
KEEP REFRIGERATED

Net 16 fl oz (236 mL)

Foods that require refrigeration must be clearly labeled "KEEP REFRIGERATED."
Frozen food products must be clearly labeled "KEEP FROZEN."

Correct Label

Multicomponent Product Example

APPLE PIE

Ingredients: Filling: Apples, Sugar, Lemon Juice, Cinnamon. Crust: Flour (bleached wheat flour, malted barley flour, niacin, iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), **Butter** (cream, salt), **Egg, Salt. Contains: Wheat, Egg, Milk.**

Virginia Pies LLC, 123 Main Street, Anytown, VA 12345

Net wt. 34 oz (964g)

Incorrect Label

Subingredients are missing for flour, chocolate chips, and vanilla extract.

Net weight can only be abbreviated as "Net wt".
10 oz is not equivalent to 484 g.
Net weight statement must be placed at bottom of label.

CHOCOLATE CHIPS COOKIES

Nt wt. 10 oz (484g)

Ingredients: all-purpose flour, semi-sweet chocolate chips, butter, walnuts, granulated sugar, brown sugar, eggs, sodium bicarbonate, vanilla extract, salt. ALLERGY ALERT: eggs and walnuts

Grannie's Cookies · Anytown, VA · 804-111-2222 · grannybakesathome.com · granny@gmail.com

The full physical address is not included. Phone number, website, email, etc. do not substitute for full physical address.

Using "allergy alert" is incorrect. Allergens must be declared in the following way: "Contains: X, X, X". The allergens wheat, soy and milk are omitted from the allergen statement.

Review of Your Application

Once submitted, your application will be reviewed. The reviewer will contact you to let you know that your application has been received. Expect that the review could take several weeks. The reviewer will contact you with their comments and list of items needed to complete the review. Once the reviewer has determined your application is complete, the inspector will be notified that you are ready for inspection. The inspector will contact you to schedule a time they can conduct the inspection with you at the commercial kitchen.

Special Note for Dietary Supplements

A dietary supplement is a product intended for [ingestion](#) that contains an ingredient(s) intended to add further nutritional value to, or supplement, the diet. You might be making a dietary supplement if you are adding certain ingredients that don't have a history of use in food, rather they have a history of healing or wellness properties. You might be making a dietary supplement based on labeling statements or directions for use. You might also be making a dietary supplement if your product is in a pill, capsule, dropper, powder, tablet or other similar form.

If you are making a dietary supplement, you are required to meet [21 CFR 111](#). Your application will not be reviewed until you have all the dietary supplement paperwork in order.

Special Note for Acidified Foods

If you are making acidified foods, you will need to meet the requirements of [21 CFR 114](#). You will be required to have your product tested by what is called a process authority and create and maintain records. You can find a process authority at this website: <https://www.afdo.org/directories/fpa/> or you may contact the process authority in Virginia, Joell Eifert, Director of VT's Food Innovation Program. She can be reached by email (foodbiz@vt.edu) or phone 540-231-5770.

Your application will not be reviewed until you have all the acidified food paperwork in order.

What is an Acidified Food?

- It is shelf-stable, usually packaged in a glass jar
- It is a food that has a low acid content, but you add a food with a high acid content to make the end product have a high acid content, thus the term “acidified”
- It is a food that has a final pH of 4.6 or less

Some examples are pickles, fig jam, ginger jam, mango jam, pumpkin butter, pepper jelly, pickled vegetables, salsa, and relish.

What all of these products have in common is that the main ingredient (fig, pumpkin, peppers, beets, tomato/onion, pickle) have a low acid content, but when you add ingredients (lemon/lime juice, citric acid, or vinegar) that have a high acid content, it results in a product that has a high acid content (below 4.6 pH).

There are additional requirements for acidified food manufacturers. These requirements are included on the next page. They are being provided for your information so that you may submit all of the required documentation together, and thus expedite the review of your application.

Acidified Foods – Additional Requirements

Better Process Control School

- Successfully complete course
- Provide copy of certificate

Process Authority Evaluation

- Each Acidified Food product must be evaluated by a competent Process Authority

Filing with FDA

- Register as a Food Canning Establishment
 - Form FDA 2541
- File each separate product
 - Form FDA 2541e
- [FDA Establishment Registration and Process Filing](#)

Process Authority Report

- Specific to each acidified food product
- Contains all of the following:
 - Container type
 - Container size
 - pH of product before acidification
 - pH after acidification
 - Time to achieve equilibrium pH
 - Method of acidification
 - Acidifying agent
 - Microbial preservative (if applicable)
 - Process mode
 - Container and closure treatment method
 - Minimum initial temperature or fill temperature
 - Process time
 - Process temperature (for hot fill/hold methods)
 - F value
 - Least sterilizing value
 - Maximum fill weight (if applicable)

Product Information Sheet

- Recipe matches scheduled process in Process Authority report
- Includes critical limits described in schedule process

Record Templates

- Examinations of raw materials, packaging materials, and finished products
- Processing and production records
 - Document adherence to Scheduled Process
 - pH measurements and other critical factors
 - Product, lot code, date, container size
- Corrective action records
- Initial distribution of finished products
- Maintained for 3 years

Recall Procedures

- Plans for recalling products that may be injurious to health

Special Note for 100% Juice Products

If you are making a beverage that is 100% fruit or vegetable juice, you will need to meet the requirements of Juice HACCP, [21 CFR 120](#). You will be required to become a HACCP trained individual, create and maintain a hazard analysis and HACCP plans for your products and create and maintain records. If you need help with any of this, you may reach out to Joell Eifert, Director of VT's Food Innovation Program. She can be reached by email (foodbiz@vt.edu) or phone 540-231-5770.

Your application will not be reviewed until you have all the juice HACCP paperwork in order.

Special Note for Seafood Containing Products

If you are making products that contain seafood (clam chowder, oysters Rockefeller, crab cakes, crab dip, smoked fish, etc.) you will need to meet the requirements of Seafood HACCP, [21 CFR 123](#). You will be required to become a HACCP trained individual, create and maintain HACCP plans for your products and create and maintain records. If you need help with any of this, you may reach out to Dr. Michael Schwarz, Director of VT's seafood extension center. He can be reached by email (mschwarz@vt.edu) or phone 757-727-4861.

Your application will not be reviewed until you have all the seafood HACCP paperwork in order.

Special Note for Meat Containing Products

You may use meat and poultry ingredients in your products, but only if the products are sold directly to the end user, such as at a farmer's market.

If you wish to sell your meat or poultry containing products wholesale (to other businesses like restaurants, convenient stores or grocery stores), then you would need to contact VDACS Office of Meat and Poultry Services at 804-786-4569.

The meat and poultry you use for your products must be stamped with the USDA mark of inspection. Meat ground at the grocery store will not carry this mark, so it may not be used.

Special Note for Products Containing Alcohol

If you are making a product that has alcohol as an ingredient (flavorings like vanilla extract not included), you must have it evaluated to determine how much alcohol is present in the final product. If your product is determined to have greater than 0.5% alcohol by volume, you cannot make and sell this product. If it is less, you can produce it, but you must contact your local Alcohol Beverage Commission (ABC) office to inquire about permits or licenses.

To have your product tested, you may contact Ken Hurley, Director of Enology Analytical Services Laboratory at Virginia Tech. He can be reached by email (Ekhurley@vt.edu) or phone 540-231-7447.

Recipes that contain alcohol must be accompanied by the testing results showing the product contains less than 0.5% alcohol by volume.

Special Note for Products Dairy or Frozen Desserts

- If you want to make grade A dairy products like pasteurized milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, and sour cream then you must obtain a permit from Virginia Department of Health. VDACS Food Safety Program will not be involved in this inspection.
- If you want to make manufactured dairy products like cheese or butter or if you want to make frozen desserts like ice cream, contact VDACS Dairy Services at 804-786-1452.

Special Note on Catering

Catering operations are regulated through the local health departments. VDACS does not inspect or have jurisdiction over any businesses that cater. As a commercial kitchen food processing business, you are considered a manufacturer. Your VDACS inspection allows you to make food products at the commercial kitchen, package and label them, and sell them either directly to the end consumer (over the internet, farmer's market, festival, etc.) or sell your products to other businesses.

Catering falls under the Virginia Department of Health and you must contact them to obtain a separate permit to cater.

Preparing for the Inspection

Items Needed: Thermometers

An ambient air thermometer in the refrigerator.

This is necessary to monitor the air temperature of the refrigerator. You want the air temperature of the refrigerator to be about 38°F in order to keep foods 41°F or below.



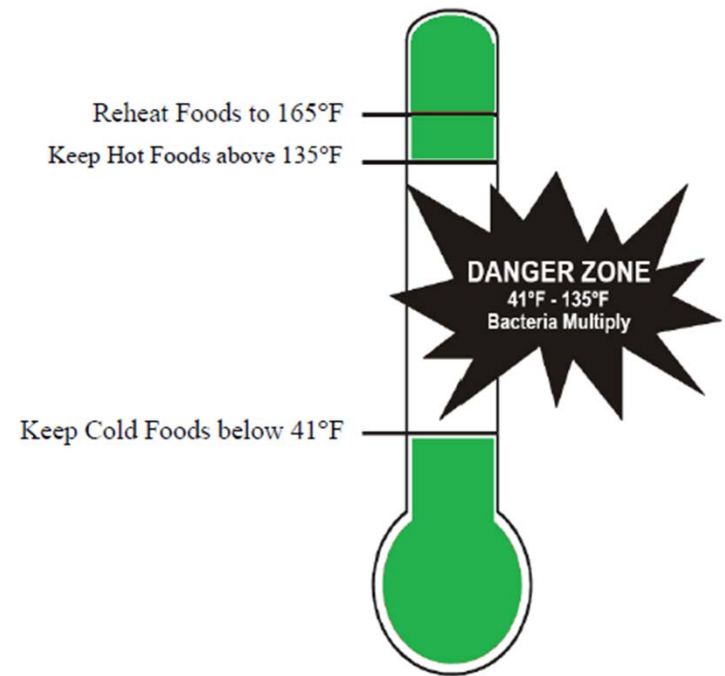
A metal stem probe type thermometer that reads from 0°F to 220°F. This is necessary to take the internal temperature of food products.



Preparing for the Inspection

Internal Food Temperatures

- Cold Holding (in refrigerator) – 41°F or lower
- Hot Holding – 135°F or higher
- Frozen Foods - 32°F or lower
- Cooking (seafood, meat) – 145°F or higher
- Cooking (raw eggs, ground meat or seafood) – 155 °F or higher
- Cooking (poultry, stuffed foods) – 165°F or higher



Preparing for the Inspection

Items Needed: Hair Restraints, Clean Clothing, Disposable Gloves

- Proper hair restraints are required to be worn while processing. These can include:
 - Ball Cap (all hair must be covered by the cap)
 - Hair Net (recommended)
 - Beard Guard
- Make sure that you wear clean clothing/aprons, etc. while processing.
- Disposable glove use is also required when you are handling finished, ready-to-eat food products. This will reduce the chance of contamination from your hands to your products.

Preparing for the Inspection

Items Needed to Clean Hands

Designated Hand Wash Sink – use this sink to wash your hands in water above 100°F with soap for 20 seconds. The sink must also be provided with single-use towels or other.

Note: Washing your hands in the sink where you clean equipment is not allowed.

Preparing for the Inspection

Items Needed to Clean Hands

Handwashing Sink provided with:

1. Soap
2. Paper Towels
3. Trash Can
4. Hot (100°F minimum) and cold running water on demand
5. Handwash Sign

Note: Do not use cloth towels for drying your hands. They can hold moisture and germs. Hand drying towels must be single use and disposed of after each use.

Preparing for the Inspection

Items Needed to Clean Hands

A sign or poster that notifies food employees to wash their hands shall be provided at all handwashing sinks and shall be clearly visible.

How to wash your hands:

1. Wet hands with hot running water
2. Apply Soap
3. Rub hands for 20-30 seconds
4. Clean under fingernails and between fingers
5. Rinse hands thoroughly under running water
6. Dry hands

You can obtain a pre-made hand wash sign from a restaurant supply company. *Your inspector may also have a sign that they can leave with you at the time of your commercial kitchen inspection.*

Preparing for the Inspection

Items Needed to Clean Equipment

Warewashing sink – soiled utensils shall be washed, rinsed and sanitized before use, with each step being performed in one of the basins. Additionally, this sink shall be designated only for utensil/equipment cleaning.

Warewashing Sink must be provided with:

1. Detergent
2. Hot (110°F minimum) and cold running water on demand
3. Sanitizer (more information on next slide)
4. Sanitizer Test Strips
5. Sink Stoppers

Preparing for the Inspection

Items Needed to Clean Equipment: Sanitizer

You will need to purchase a chemical sanitizer. Two of the most commonly used chemical sanitizers are:

- **Chlorine (Bleach)** – This is the same type of bleach that you can buy at your local grocery or supermarket.
 - PROS – easy to find and inexpensive
 - CONS – strong odor and causes bleaching of clothes
 - Tips: look for unscented, not splash-less, not concentrated
- **Ammonia Based Sanitizer (Quaternary Ammonium Chloride “QUATS”)** – This is typically found at any restaurant supply company or online.
 - PROS – mild odor, available in tablet form for easy measuring
 - CONS – not as easily obtained as bleach, slightly more expensive than bleach

Preparing for the Inspection

Items Needed to Clean Equipment: Sanitizer Test Strips

You will need to purchase sanitizer test strips.

- These strips are used to test the **concentration** of the sanitizer solution that you use after washing dishes.
 - Chlorine should be used in room temperature water at **50 ppm**
 - Quat should be used as directed on container, but usually **200 ppm**
- Sanitizer test strips are **specific** to the type of sanitizer that you choose. In other words, sanitizer test strips for chlorine **will not** work with the ammonia based “QUATS” sanitizer and vice versa.

Quat strips



Chlorine strips



Preparing for the Inspection

How to Clean Soiled Equipment

- Pre-clean by scraping large food particles into trash can
- Wash in hot soapy water
- Rinse soap from surface in clean water
- Submerge equipment in chemical sanitizer for at least 60 seconds
- Air dry – Do not towel dry

Preparing for the Inspection

Incoming Water Supply: Public or Private Sourced

If you are using water from a **public** municipal source, then you will not need any documentation on water analysis. However, if you are using a **private source of water, such as a well or spring**, then you will need to have the water tested annually for coliform* bacteria to show that your water is safe for consumption, safe to be used to clean your dishes, and safe for proper handwashing. Keep records of your water testing reports to show to the inspector upon request.

*The presence of coliform bacteria in drinking water indicates that disease-causing **organisms** (pathogens) could be in the water system.

Preparing for the Inspection

Storing Your Food Products and Equipment/ Utensils

- All food products (packaged and non-packaged) must be stored at least 4-6 inches above the floor level.
- You may store food products and equipment/utensils in cabinets, on shelving, pallets, tables, etc. as long as they are clean and won't dirty the food or equipment/utensil
- Food products, supplies, equipment, and utensils must be stored in a manner that prevents them from being contaminated. This can be accomplished by storing these items covered, inverted, and by maintaining your commercial kitchen space in a condition that ensures insect/rodent entry points such as doors, windows, floors, walls, ceiling, and the roof are in proper working order/condition.
- If you use raw foods (eggs, meat, etc.) in your food products, store them in the refrigerator **BELOW** any other ready-to-eat food products. This will help prevent any potential leakage onto other items stored in the refrigerator.

Preparing for the Inspection

Storing Your Food Products and Equipment/ Utensils

All dry goods, refrigerated food products, equipment/utensils, packaging material, finished products, etc. that are associated for your business must be stored at the commercial kitchen.

Storing Chemicals

It is important to make sure that all chemicals are stored away from your food products, equipment, and utensils. Find an area to segregate your chemicals (to include your sanitizer, medicines, first aid supplies, etc.) so that you can prevent potential contamination.

Preparing for the Inspection

Kitchen/Processing Area Lighting

Lighting in the kitchen that is above and around your food processing areas and unpackaged food products **MUST** have protective shields such as plastic tubing with endcaps (for fluorescent ceiling lighting), another form of a cover, or the light bulbs must be shatterproof. This prevents glass from your product if breakage were to happen.

Kitchen/Processing Area Food Preparation Area

All floors, walls, and ceilings in the food preparation area(s) must be: made of a material that is smooth, easily cleanable, and non-absorbent and free from open cracks, holes, exposed insulation, and flaking/peeling paint. This means no carpeting , no exposed, and no unsealed wood. Walls must be painted in a glossy paint or other smooth cleanable surface. Surfaces that cannot be easily cleaned and sanitized contribute to a dirty work area and could contaminate your product.

Developing a Lot Code System

Some businesses find that assigning lot codes to their finished products helps them to track their food products that they distribute to other businesses. This system would be very beneficial in case you find it necessary to recall certain products you have manufactured. Without a lot coding system, you may have to recall all your product if it is known to have been contaminated or potentially harmful to the public. Below is an example of a simple lot code system or log:

Item Made	Date Made	Number of Item Made	Lot Code	Date Item Delivered or Distributed	Item Delivered or Distributed At/To	Number of Item Delivered or Distributed	Notes
Brownies	01-06-13	75	A1	01-07-13	John Brown	75	
Cupcakes	04-15-13	50	A2	04-17-13	Susie Jones	50	
Lemon Bars	05-15-13	150	A3	05-16-13	John's Farmer's Market	139	Leftovers were served at my ladies garden club meeting on 05/17/13
Wedding Cake	06-10-13	1	A4	06-11-13	Dorine Smith	1	
Granola Bars	07-02-13	200	A5	07-03-13 07-04-15	John Jackson Mike Lawson	100 100	

The Day of Your Inspection

Once your business application has been approved, it is forwarded to the inspector that works in that area. The inspector will contact you to confirm a date and time that they can meet you for the initial inspection. The inspection should not take longer than about 1-2 hours.

***Special note for future inspections:** Routine inspections are unannounced and unscheduled. The inspector will visit for inspection during the hours of operation you provided in your application.

In most cases you will NOT be asked to make your food products during the inspection process. If the inspector needs to watch you make a food product, then they will inform you of that PRIOR to meeting with you.

In some cases you will be asked to provide a sample for laboratory analysis. Please make sure that you have this sample ready at the time of the inspection. Please do NOT wait until the inspector arrives to make the product. The food product can be prepared at the commercial kitchen the day before or earlier. A sample size of at least one pound will suffice. Prepare and package the product as you would for sale to the customer. This sample will be deposited in a sample collection bag and shipping container that the inspector will bring with them to the inspection.

Participating in Special Events

Once your operation has been inspected, your inspector will leave an inspection report and Permit with you. Many special events will require that you present this permit to them so that they can verify that you are under inspection. Things to note about special events:

1. If you are planning to offer samples at an event, prepare **ALL** of your samples in your inspected commercial kitchen. That is where you are approved to process foods. You are not allowed to make/cut/slice/prepare etc. food products at the special event unless you have a portable hand wash sink and three compartment equipment sink.
2. Make sure that all foods are held at the appropriate temperatures while at the event.
3. Carry a copy of your Permit with you to any special event you attend. Many events are under the jurisdiction of local health departments and they do NOT have access to the VDACS database. Presenting your Permit to the health department inspector should be satisfactory. This will offer proof that your food products are coming from an approved food source (i.e. that you are under inspection by a regulatory authority).

Guidelines for Providing Safe Food Samples at the Market

Safe preparation Use clean surfaces and utensils, good personal hygiene, and proper storage for prepared samples. Whenever possible, prepare the samples prior to arrival at the market, since access to handwashing and utensil washing at the market may be limited. If you must prepare samples at the market, work on a clean surface, with clean utensils and make sure to wear gloves on clean hands. Wash fruits and vegetables in clean water prior to cutting, and once washed, store them so they do not become soiled.

Keep your hands clean Hands must be washed after smoking, eating, drinking, using the restroom, or any other time contamination occurs. Remember to wash your hands frequently and always before putting on gloves. Use of hand sanitizer does not take the place of washing your hands with warm soapy water. You can set up a simple handwashing station with a water dispenser, catch basin, soap and disposable paper towels.

Barrier between hand and food Tongs, spoons, single-use deli paper, plastic ramekins, toothpicks or disposable gloves are a few examples of good tools. Bring extra with you to the market so you do not run out. Remember: gloves must be placed on clean hands and changed often, and they do not substitute for proper hand washing.

Keep equipment clean It is important that any knives, tongs, bowls, etc. that you use for your food samples is kept clean. You can make sure they stay clean if you follow a three step process of: wash in hot soapy water, rinse in clean water, and a 2 minute soak in a mild bleach-water solution, afterwards, letting the utensil air-dry. Bleach should be added at a ratio of about 1 teaspoon per gallon of water, which equates to about 50 ppm. This can be measured using chlorine test strips. Set this washing station up in three small plastic tubs.

Limitation of exposure time If your sample requires refrigeration, limit its exposure to outside temperatures to 4 hours or less. After the 4 hours is up, discard any uneaten food samples. Keep extra samples cold in a cooler with ice packs.

Protection from the environment You must protect the samples from the elements, pests (insect or birds) and dirty fingers. Display samples under covering like a dome or plastic wrap. To prevent customers from touching samples other than their own, place individual samples in single-serving containers or provide toothpicks.

Protect allergic customers Have signs or other materials that alert customers of the 8 major allergens that might be present in your products: milk, eggs, crustacean shellfish, finfish, tree nuts, wheat, peanuts, and soybeans. You do not want to unintentionally cause someone to have an allergic reaction to your food.

Things To Keep in Mind

- You will be approved to make the food products that were included in your original home-based kitchen business application **ONLY**.
- To make new recipes, those recipes and labels **MUST** be submitted to VDACS **PRIOR** to making and offering those new food products for public sale. This includes recipes for similar types of food products that you are already making **AND** for any new types of food products.
- New products may be submitted for review at any time after your first inspection by sending a new Product Information Sheet and label to foodsafety@vdacs.virginia.gov
- If you move your processing space to a new location, you need to contact VDACS so that an inspection can be conducted in the new location **PRIOR** to any food products being made in that new location. *A new application must be submitted for that new location.* Also note that your food product labels will also need to change so that they reflect the new address.

Questions?

Call 804-786-3520

or

email

foodsafety@vdacs.Virginia.gov