

Best Cottage Foods Practices

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- Before you register initially as a cottage food producer, make sure to check with your city or county to make sure you are allowed to sell foods from your home as a registered cottage food producer.
 - Depending on where you live in Minnesota the people to ask might be in a zoning office, a city hall, county health departments - who to ask in each city/county may vary greatly.
- Register initially as a Tier I cottage food producer after taking Tier I food safety training.
<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/food-feed/cottage-food-producer-registration>
- Re-Register your Cottage Food Registration each year when the Minnesota Department of Agriculture sends your Re-Registration paperwork. *Your re-registration paperwork comes mid-December of each calendar year.
 - Food sales are based on the anticipated amount of cottage food sales during the calendar year for which you are registering. This is the amount of gross annual receipts, not just profits, meaning the total amount for all sales as measured by the sales price.
 - Tier II training can be taken at any time, even if you haven't crossed the \$5000 threshold as a way to have more food safety knowledge. The Tier II training can be taken in person or online: <https://extension.umn.edu/courses-and-events/cottage-food-producer-food-safety-training>
- Food Safety Training needs to be taken every 3 years or if you switch from Tier I to Tier II, meaning you go from selling less than \$5000 to selling \$5000 and above.

Food Safety Is Important

- Norovirus Prevention
 - Do not produce, package or distribute food for 72 hours after you or a household member no longer have symptoms of vomiting or diarrhea
 - An individual with Norovirus is infectious for up to 72 hours after symptoms subside and still contaminate food, drinks & equipment simply by touch
 - It can take 2 weeks to rid norovirus completely from the body
 - When you resume food production, wash hands well and often
- Wash Hands
 - Remove personal protective equipment and dispose of in a plastic trash bag
 - Put on a new set of disposable gloves and transport bag to a secure trash container
 - Wash Hands! This is a critical step in preventing the spread of the Norovirus
 - Use soap & warm running water
 - Wash hands for at least 20 seconds
 - Dry with paper towels
 - Turn off faucet with paper towel to prevent re-contamination
 - To learn more about how to prevent the spread of Norovirus, head here: <https://extension.umn.edu/sanitation-and-illness/norovirus-step-step-clean-vomit-and-diarrhea>

- Prevent Cross Contamination
 - If working with top Allergens like tree nuts, soy, dairy, egg, wheat, peanut, fish and shellfish, make sure to wash hands and change gloves in between touching these ingredients and touching the next stage of your recipe
 - For example: you use peanut butter in your recipe and you get some on your hands, then you forget to wash and touch the door knob - now the peanut residue is on the door knob and anything else you touched along the way.
 - Always make sure your labels include the top 8 allergens
 - The Food Allergy and Research Education reports 15 million Americans have food allergies. Although there are many theories, we do not yet fully understand the causes of this increase. Peanut Allergy in children has double in the last 5 years
 - Food allergy symptoms can range from a tingling in the mouth, swelling of lips, tongue and throat, difficulty breathing, hives, vomiting, abdominal cramps, diarrhea and loss of consciousness, to death.
 - 150 to 250 Americans die each year from food allergy reactions
- The required warning “these items are homemade and not subject to state inspection” or “these canned goods are homemade and not subject to state inspection” NEED(s) to be posted at Point of Sale whether it be at a farmers market, a vendor show, or on your Facebook/websites.
- According to the **Minnesota Secretary of State Office**; if a person is doing business in Minnesota as a Sole-Proprietor under a business name that does not contain their full legal name(s) (Full first and last name(s)). They are Required to file that business name (assumed name) with the Secretary of State Office.
- If you are transacting business in Minnesota under “Confections by Karen” then yes an assumed name needs to be filed with the Minnesota Secretary of State Office.
 - Using mine as an example: I filed an assumed name with the Minnesota Secretary of State Office in 2013 before the cottage food law came to be so that my name was reserved and no one else could take it.
 - To check and see if your business name is available, use this site
 - When an assumed name is filed with the Minnesota Secretary of State Office an application needs to be filed with their office, a one-time \$50 fee needs to be paid. More information can be found here: <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/business-liens/business-forms-fees/assumed-namedba/>

Best Cottage Food Practices Tips from Karen & Dawn

- Network with other Registered Cottage Food Producers
 - become friends with other registered CFPs
 - refer orders to each other
 - support each other and learn from one another
 - teach people about the Cottage Food Law
- Join our Facebook page for Registered Cottage Food Producers
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/610571982425738/>
 - it’s a great place to learn & network with other Registered Cottage Food Producers
- Research prices for the products you sell in your region
 - Compare prices among many for the products you make
 - Just because a grocery store can sell it for XX amount of dollars does not mean that you should do so the same

- Put value in yourself and your products
- You are worth more
- Don't devalue your products just because you make them in your home
- Cottage Food Producers should not be the cheapest, and should try not to undercut other registered producers or the industry
- Challenge Yourself
 - learn new recipes
 - new techniques
 - Marketing and/or networking.
 - If you don't try or challenge yourself, you'll never know what may or could have been

Best Cottage Food Practices Helpful Links

- Generally Allowed Cottage Foods - <https://www.mfma.org/resources/Documents/MFMA%20Fact%20Sheet%20NPH%20Foods%20List%202017-07-18.pdf>
- University of Minnesota Extension Cottage Food Q&A - <https://blog-cottage-food.extension.umn.edu/>
- If you want to provide samples of your cottage food products, make sure to follow the Safe Sampling Rules, more information can be found here: <https://extension.umn.edu/food-entrepreneurs/safe-food-sampling-farmers-markets-vendors>
- How Much Alcohol is Left in Foods when Cooking: <https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/answerline/2016/04/14/how-much-alcohol-is-left-in-foods-when-cooking/>
- Food Licensing Wizard: <http://www2.mda.state.mn.us/webapp/foodlicensingwizard/licensingwizard.html>
- MN Department of Revenue Sales Tax Fact Sheet 102D -- <https://www.revenue.state.mn.us/businesses/sut/factsheets/FS102D.pdf>
- Preserving & Preparing Information: <https://extension.umn.edu/food-safety/preserving-and-preparing>