



## Checklist for Cottage Food Business Requesting to Sell at Retail Food Stores

Effective October 1, 2019, a cottage food business may sell their food products to a retail food store once proper documentation has been received and reviewed by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH). If you are a cottage food business and wish to sell your products to a retail food store, visit the MDH cottage food [webpage](#) and review the State requirements. The State is specific as to what products can be sold by a cottage food business so please carefully review the Cottage Food Guidelines.

To sell your products, you must complete the [Cottage Food Business Request form](#). This checklist was created to assist you in ensuring your form is complete. All items listed below must be provided so that MDH's Office of Food Protection (OFP) can process your request. Once you have submitted a completed Cottage Food Business Request form, OFP will reach out to you via email or phone.

If you have any questions regarding cottage foods, please email OFP at [mdh.foodplanreview@maryland.gov](mailto:mdh.foodplanreview@maryland.gov) or call the office at 410-767-8400.

### ***Business Information: (All information listed below must be provided on the form)***

- Name of cottage food business
- Owner's name
- Jurisdiction (county or Baltimore City)
- Address of cottage food business (a P.O. Box is not permissible)
- Phone number of cottage food business
- Email address of cottage food business
- Location(s) of retail food stores you intend to sell products to. Provide the store name and full street address. Note: you are not required to already have an agreement with the store when submitting to our office.

A "retail food store" means a licensed food service facility that sells prepackaged food items either fresh, refrigerated, frozen, or shelf-stable. A retail food store includes a grocery store, convenience store, retail market, retail bakery, or food cooperative where, in general, food is sold in its original packaging.

A retail food store does NOT include a restaurant, mobile food service facility, coffee shop, cafeteria, short order café, luncheonette, tavern sandwich shop, produce stand that only offers whole, uncut fresh fruits and vegetables, or establishment that offers only prepackaged non-potentially hazardous food.

### **General Requirements:**

- Homemade food product(s) requested to be sold meet the State requirements as specified in MDH's Guidelines for Cottage Food Businesses.
- A list of your product(s) for which you have labels is included. Include the category (e.g. cookies) and flavors (e.g. chocolate chip).
- Documentation of the cottage food business owner's successful completion of an [American National Standards Institute \(ANSI\) approved Food Safety Course](#) (certification must be renewed every 3 years) is attached.
- The food safety course name, company providing the training, date of training and expiration date are provided. Be sure the name on the certificate matches the submission or provide an explanation (such as marriage) for the discrepancy.
- Labels for all products identified in the online intake form are attached. Be sure that the labels you submit match all flavors/varieties you wish to offer, including all toppings/fillings. You can always submit additional products and/or labels at a later time.

### **Label Review Must Include: (Each Label Submitted Must Contain the Following Information):**

- Name of the cottage food business.
- Address\* of the cottage food business (a P.O. Box is not permissible).  
\* A Department issued unique identification number can be used as an alternative to a business address.
- Phone number of the cottage food business.
- Email of the cottage food business.
- Ingredients in descending order of prominence by weight.
- Ingredients list includes all sub-ingredients. Helpful Tip: examine the labels for each of your ingredients and list all of those ingredients in parenthesis on your label as sub-ingredients. See example label in the Guidelines for Cottage Food Businesses. Allergens listed. (Note: If all ingredients and sub-ingredients are listed on your label then all allergens are identified.) You may add a separate "contains" statement for allergens, although this is not required. See example label in the Guidelines for Cottage Food Businesses. Major food allergens include: milk, egg, fish (such as bass, flounder, or cod), crustacean (such as crab, lobster, or shrimp), tree nuts (such as almonds, pecans, or walnuts), wheat, peanuts, and soybeans.
- Nutrition information as specified by Federal Labeling requirements. This is not required for small businesses unless you are making a health or nutrition claim. Examples: "this food helps reduce cholesterol;" or "low fat."
- Net weight, volume, or count. An example of count is: 1 dozen cookies.
- Cottage food business disclaimer. This must be worded **exactly** as stated in the regulations and must be in 10 pt. font or larger in clear contrast to the background on the label for legibility: "Made by a cottage food business that is not subject to Maryland's food safety regulations."
- Provide a designated place on the label for the date the food item was made.