



**HHSA**  
Public Health

**Environmental Health Services**  
WWW.TULARECOUNTYEH.ORG • (559) 624-7400

### **COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION PERMIT REQUIREMENTS**

A cottage food operation is an enterprise at a private home where specific low-risk food products, that do not require refrigeration, are made or repackaged for sale to customers. Cottage food operators are required to obtain a permit to operate issued by the Tulare County Environmental Health Services Division.

### **THERE ARE TWO REGISTRATION TYPES: CLASS A & CLASS B**

#### **CLASS A (FEE \$189)**

- Allows for direct sales ONLY between the cottage food operator and consumer, where the consumer purchases the cottage food product directly from the cottage food operator. Direct sales include, but are not limited to, transactions occurring at the cottage food operator's home, certified farmer's markets, swap meets, community events, and via mail shipped exclusively within California. All products sold shall display approved cottage food product labels.
- There is no initial inspection of the cottage food operator's home kitchen for permit approval and no routine inspection annually. However, the local enforcement agency may access the cottage food operator's home kitchen for inspection purposes due to a consumer complaint or if the cottage food operation has violated the Cottage Food Operations section of the California Retail Food Code.

#### **CLASS B (FEE \$315)**

- Allows for direct (as stated above) AND indirect sales. Indirect sales include having a third-party retail store, such as a restaurant, market, or deli, sell your products. All products sold, including ones sold at these third-party retail stores, shall display approved cottage food product labels.
- Subject to an initial inspection of the private home kitchen for permit approval and annual inspections thereafter. Additional inspections may be required to investigate any consumer complaints or if the cottage food operation has violated the Cottage Food Operations section of the California Retail Food Code.

### **TO OBTAIN A PERMIT, SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS:**

1. **Home Occupation Permit (zoning permit)** from the jurisdiction in which you reside. If you live in the county area, you will have to acquire a special use permit from Tulare County Resource Management Agency.
2. **Water bill** displaying your home address. If your water source is a private well, you will be required to submit nitrate/nitrite and bacteriological test results for initial permit approval. After permit issuance, bacteriological test results will be required quarterly and nitrate test results will be required annually.
3. **Food Handlers Card**. If you do not have a Food Handlers card at the time of permit issuance, you will need to obtain one and submit a copy of the certificate within three months.
4. **Registration Declaration** form, which can be found at [tularecountyeh.org](http://tularecountyeh.org).
5. **Self-Certification Check List** form, which can be found at [tularecountyeh.org](http://tularecountyeh.org).

### **LIMITATIONS OF A COTTAGE FOOD OPERATION**

- A cottage food operation shall not exceed \$75,000 in sales per year for Class A operations and \$150,000 for Class B operations.
- An annual update form shall be completed once per year to determine gross annual sales and to update any business information that has changed.
- All class A and Class B cottage food products shall be properly labeled in compliance with the Federal, Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C Sec. 343 et seq.). **All cottage food product labels shall be approved by the Tulare County Environmental Health Services Division prior to use.**
- A review fee of \$122 per hour will apply to any label reviews submitted after permit issuance.
- If selling cottage food products in another county (i.e., Kings, Fresno, etc.) you will need to obtain approval from that county's local Environmental Health Agency.

**A non-refundable fee of \$122.00 will be charged at the time of submittal for all Cottage Food applications. Cottage Food Operators may be charged an enforcement fee for any validated consumer complaints.**