

Home Food Processing Operations

Completing the Application for a Home Food Processing Operation and what to expect during the food safety inspection of your home

Applicable Laws and Regulations

As a food producer, you are required to meet certain standards. The following regulations are 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 Law](#)
- [21 CFR 110 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

Completing the Application

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Date of Application: Enter the date you completed the application

County in which business is located: Enter the County or City in which your home kitchen is located

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

Business Address: Enter the physical address of your home kitchen

Mailing Address: Enter the address where you would like to receive mail correspondence. This may or may not be the same as your physical address.

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

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

Pets in the home: Mark whether or not you have pets that live inside your home. If you do have pets, you must enclose any area that will be used for preparing food, storing food and washing and storing equipment, packaging, or other non-food materials.

Checklist of Required Information: This section is intended to help you make sure that you have included everything that is required. **The last two items only apply if you are applying to make acidified foods.** Otherwise, you must provide everything else on the list.

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Zoning Approval

Contact your county or city's zoning office and inquire about whether you can have a food business in your home. If they will allow it, ask for written documentation confirming this. It can be in the form of letter, email, license or other.

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Food Processing and Storage Area Diagram

Provide a diagram, hand-drawn or computer generated, of all the areas in your home that you will use for preparing food, storing food and washing and storing equipment, packaging, or other non-food materials for your home based food business. You may also submit pictures of your kitchen.

***Special note for homes with pets inside:** indicate clearly on the diagram how the pet is excluded from these areas. Indicate their route for getting in and out of your home that does not include passing through areas used for your food business.

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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: customer pick-up at your home, delivery to customer home or event, Farmers Market, grocery stores, convenience stores, restaurants, over the internet to be shipped via USPS, UPS, FedEx.

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Ingredient List and Source

In the left column, list the name of each ingredient you will use.

In the right column, list the place you will purchase each ingredient.

Where you obtain your ingredients is important—they must come from approved sources. Ingredients such as herbs, fruits, vegetables, etc. from your own garden may be used as ingredients in your home food processing operation.

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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 slide)

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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); 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 slide for specific temperature requirements.

Tips on Temperatures and Times

Use a calibrated probe thermometer to check:

- 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.

- Cooking Temperatures

Raw Seafood—145°F

Raw Egg—155°F

- Date Marking

It is recommended that any ready-to-eat food (dip/spread, soup, custard, salad, etc) that you sell refrigerated 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.



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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 8 and 9 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 can 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.

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)

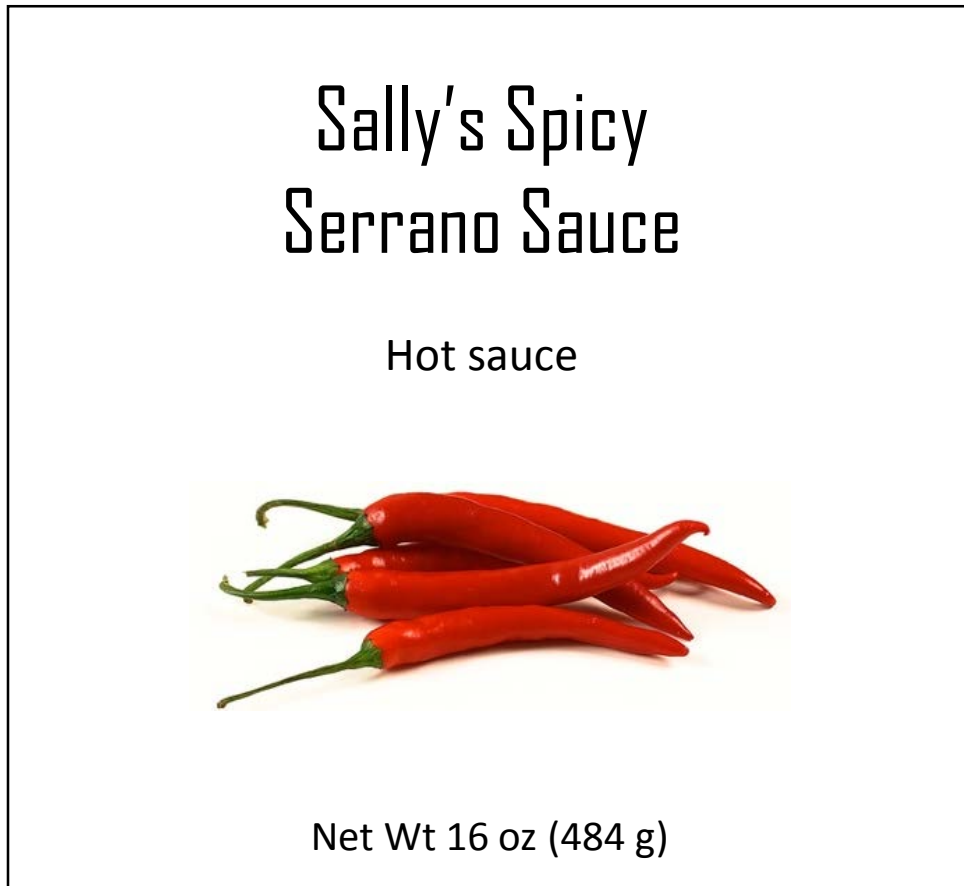
Ingredients: vinegar, serrano peppers, tomato sauce (tomato puree (water, tomato paste), water, less than 2% of: salt, citric acid, onion powder, garlic powder, red pepper), sugar, salt.

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

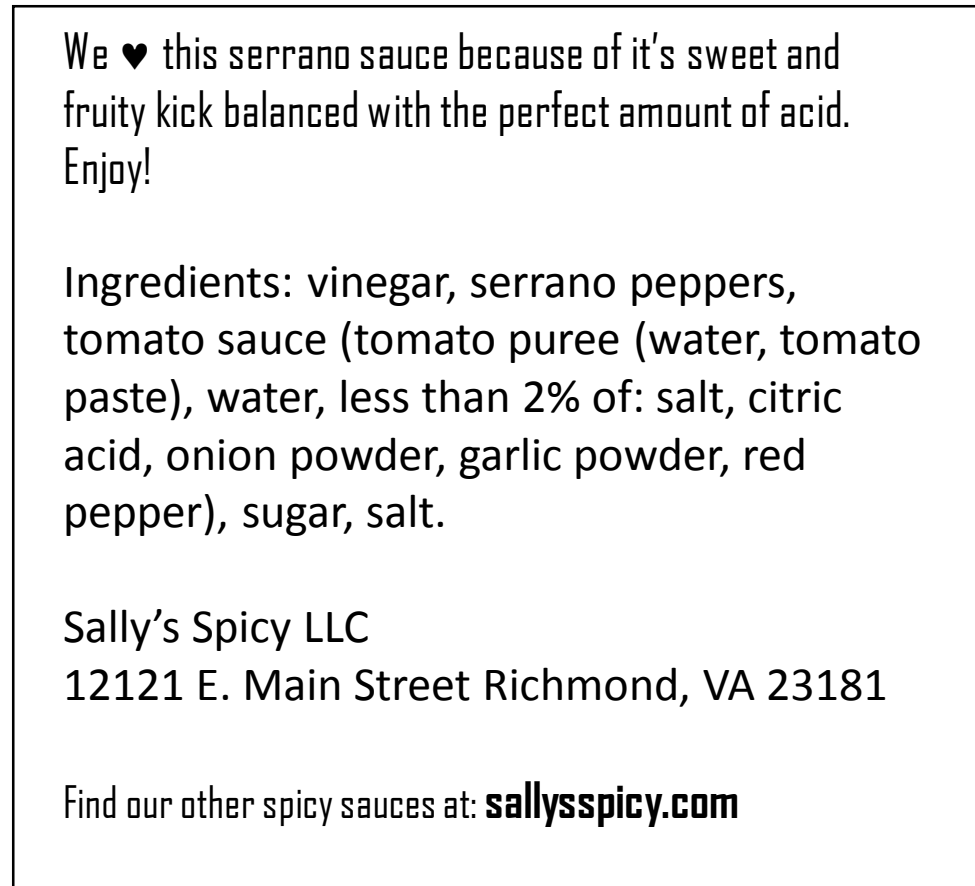
All statements made on the website are considered labeling and must also be in compliance.

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 • sallysspicy.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

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), butter (cream, salt), walnuts, granulated sugar, brown sugar (molasses), eggs, sodium bicarbonate, vanilla extract (vanilla bean extractives in water, alcohol), salt. Contains: wheat, soy, milk, walnuts, eggs

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

Net wt. 10 oz (283 g)

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 of your home.

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:

<http://www.afdo.org/foodprocessing> or you may contact the process authority in Virginia, Joell Eifert, Director of VT's Food Innovations Program. She can be reached by email (joell.eifert@vt.edu) or phone 540-231-2483.

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).

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 Innovations Program. She can be reached by email (joell.eifert@vt.edu) or phone 540-231-2483.

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

Products containing meat (beef, pork, lamb, wild game, etc.) or poultry (turkey, chicken, duck, geese, etc.) generally may not be made in the home kitchen and require a separate processing area.

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 Dairy Products 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. The 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, you must 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 home-based kitchen business, you are considered a manufacturer. Your VDACS inspection allows you to make food products at your home kitchen 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 is not allowed out of the private home kitchen.

Preparing for the Inspection

Items Needed: Thermometers

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

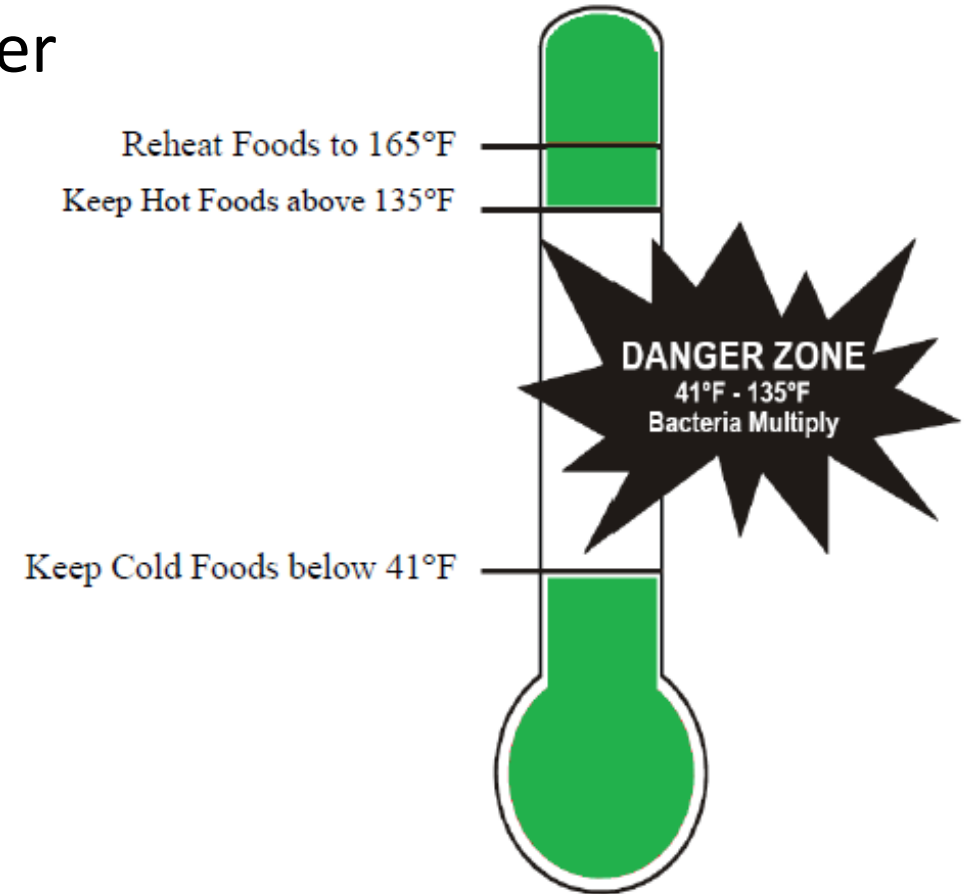


- A metal stem probe type thermometer that reads from 0°F to 220°F. This is necessary to take the internal temperature of food products.



Internal Food Temperatures

- Cold Holding (in refrigerator) – 41°F or lower
- Frozen Foods - 32°F or lower
- Hot Holding – 135°F or higher
- Cooking (seafood) – 145°F or higher
- Cooking (raw eggs) – 155 °F or higher



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.

Items Needed to Clean Hands

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



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. Hand wash 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.

Items Needed to Clean Hands

You will need to post a [handwash sign](#) at your handwash sink(s). This sign or poster must notify food employees to wash their hands and it should 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 finger nails and between fingers
5. Rinse hands thoroughly under running water
6. Dry hands

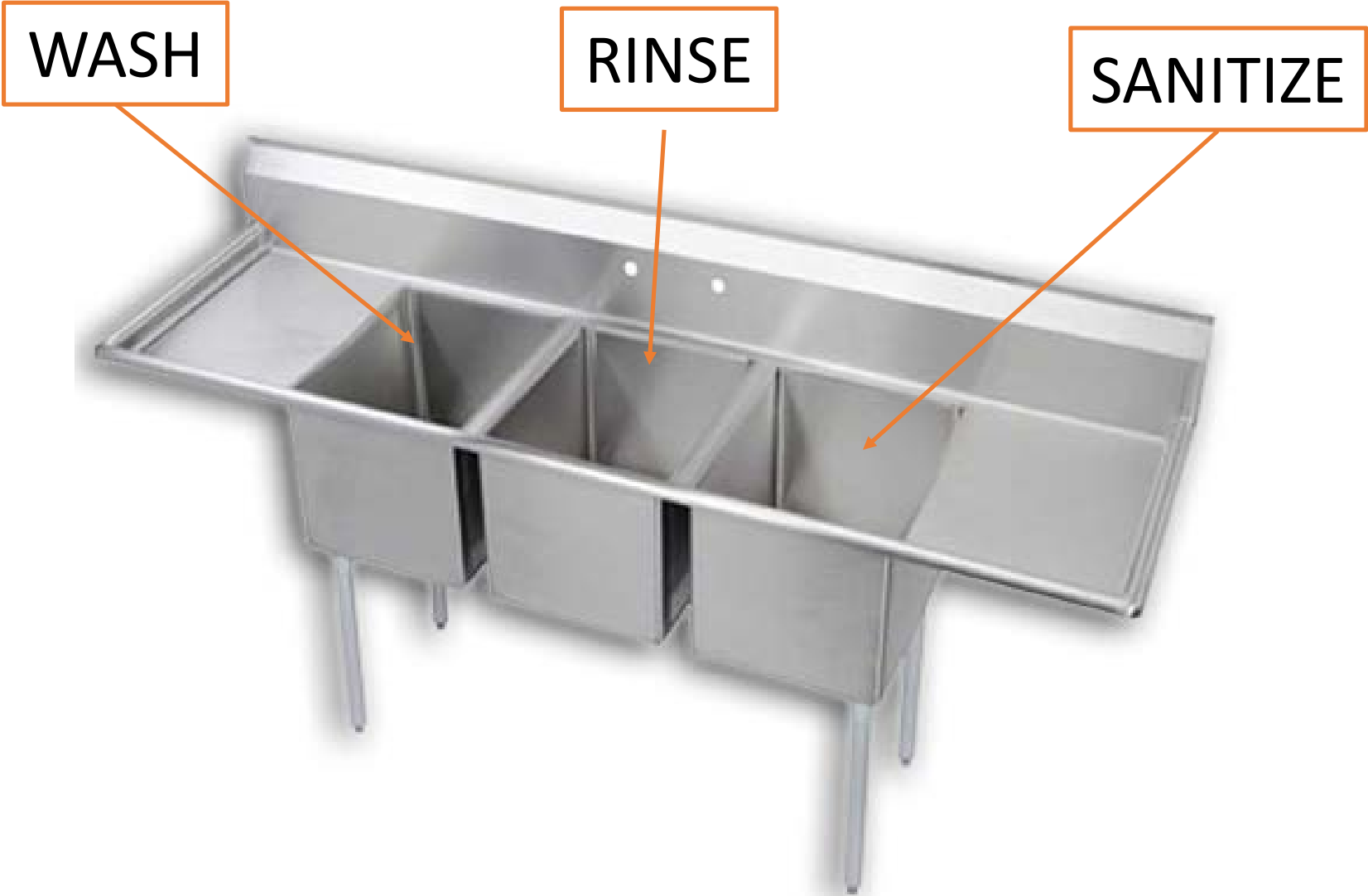


You can obtain a pre-made hand wash sign from a restaurant supply company. *Your inspector may also have a sign that they can leave with you at the time of your inspection.*

Items Needed to Clean Equipment

Warewashing sink – soiled utensils shall be washed, rinsed and sanitized before use. These steps are traditionally performed in a 3 compartment equipment sink. See the following slide for more information on how to wash, rinse and sanitize without a 3 compartment sink. Additionally, this sink shall be designated only for utensil/equipment cleaning.

Three compartment sink



Two compartment sink

WASH

RINSE

SANITIZE



Perform the WASH and RINSE steps in one basin, then use the second basin to submerge dishes in sanitizing solution for the SANITIZE step.

Items Needed to Clean Equipment

Warewashing Sink 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

Items Needed to Clean Equipment: Sanitizer

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

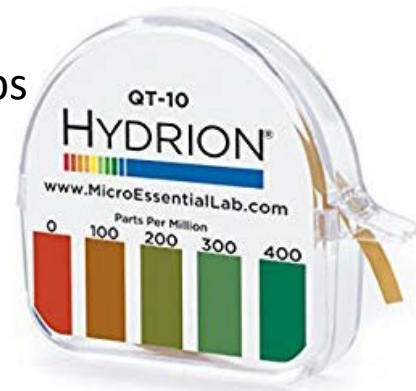
- **Chlorine (Bleach)** – This is the same type of bleach that you can buy at your local grocery or supermarket.
 - PROS – easy to find and inexpensive
 - CONS – strong odor and causes bleaching of clothes
 - Tips: look for unscented, not splash-less, not concentrated
- **Ammonia Based Sanitizer (Quaternary 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 chlorine, slightly more expensive than chlorine

Items Needed to Clean Equipment: Sanitizer Test Strips

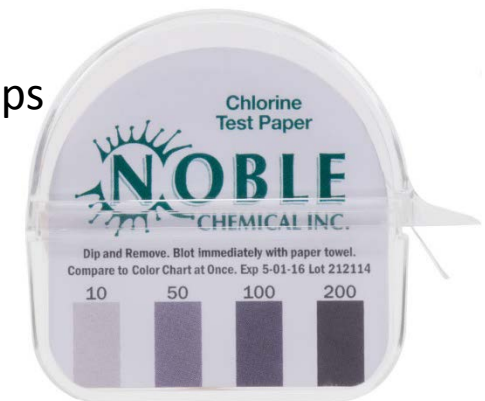
You will need to purchase sanitizer test strips.

- 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



Items Needed to Clean Equipment

You may also be able to use your automatic dishwasher to sanitize through a hot water sanitization process, instead of using chemical sanitization. However, the final sanitizing rinse of the dishwasher must reach a minimum of 165°F. You can use temperature sensitive tape (obtained at a restaurant supply company or online) to determine if the dishwasher can reach the appropriate temperature.

Your inspector will discuss these options with you during your inspection and may offer assistance on the proper procedure to wash/rinse/sanitize/air dry your equipment and utensils.

How To Clean Soiled Equipment

Use of sink only

- 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

Use of dishwasher

- Perform wash cycle
- Perform sanitize cycle. In order to sanitize, water must be 165°F or above.
 - *Option if water is not 165°F or above:* remove clean dishes and submerge in chemical sanitizer for at least 60 seconds
 - Air dry – Do not towel dry

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 **private/well water**, then you will need to have the water tested annually, indicating that your water is safe for consumption and safe to be used to clean your dishes. Keep records of all documentation to show to the inspector upon request.

Storing Your Food Products and Equipment/ Utensils

- All food products (packaged and unpackaged) 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 kitchen 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 eggs or seafood 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.

Storing Your Food Products and Equipment/ Utensils

All dry goods, refrigerated food products, equipment/utensils, packaging material, etc. that are used for your business must be stored separately from all other personal/household supplies. This may be accomplished by storing them in a kitchen cabinet or on a shelf that is reserved for your business items only, and designating space in your refrigerator (if applicable) for storage of cold items.

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.

Kitchen/Processing Area Lighting

The lighting in your 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 getting into 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 Home Kitchen Inspection

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

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 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 home kitchen has been inspected, your inspector will leave an inspection report with you. Although VDACS does not issue a permit or license like other agencies do, this inspection report is proof that your business is under inspection by VDACS and is an approved source. Many special events will require that you present this inspection report 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 **home 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 inspection report 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 inspection report to the health department inspector should be satisfactory. This will offer proof that your food products are coming from an approved food source (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 were approved to make the food products that were included in your original home-based kitchen business application **ONLY**.
- If you want 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 product.
- If you move to a new home or decide to make food products at another location such as a community kitchen, restaurant kitchen, someone else's home, etc., then 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. 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
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