



# General Guidelines for Food Producers

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The following guidelines are for Community Food Producers including but not limited to culinary gardens, community gardens, personal gardens, school gardens and egg producers that supply produce/eggs to food operations regulated by the County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health Services (DEHS) or directly to the public. Community food producers may sell or provide whole, uncut fruits or vegetables or unrefrigerated shell eggs directly to the public, to a permitted restaurant or a Cottage Food Operation if they meet all requirements imposed. Egg production is limited to 15 dozen eggs per month. The purpose of these guidelines is to help minimize microbial food safety hazards for fresh produce. By using Best Management Practices (BMPs) for California Small Farm Food Safety as described by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), operators will reduce microbial hazards for the produce that are grown, prepared and sold. The BMP documents can be found in the [California Small Farm Food Safety Guidelines](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/i_&c/sffsg.html) located at [http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/i\\_&c/sffsg.html](http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/is/i_&c/sffsg.html)

## SOIL & WATER QUALITY

- Ensure garden soil is free of contaminants. A toxic metals test may be required of soil if it is suspected to be contaminated. Lead and Arsenic among other heavy metals may transfer into the crops.
- Water used for irrigation must be potable and obtained from a public water system or wells that have been tested and shown to be free from pathogens. If a question arises regarding the quality of water to be used, it may be tested to ensure it is free of pathogens.
- Gray water or recycled water must not be used as a source for gardens.
- Water runoff from other irrigation practices unrelated to the garden or untreated rainfall water runoff must be prevented from coming into contact with the garden.
- Irrigation water from a non-permitted water system should be tested by a local laboratory to ensure that it is free from coliforms.



## SEPTIC SYSTEMS

- The location of the garden must not be on or within 10 feet of a septic system or leach field, animal housing, pastures, barnyards, or where it may be exposed to contaminated water runoff. Also, the agricultural site must be located away from building foundations and structures painted with lead paint.

## PRESENCE OF ANIMALS

- Efforts shall be maintained to exclude animals, including domestic animals, from the growing area of the garden.
- Animals waste must not be used in gardens.



## PESTICIDES

- Pesticides must not be applied on or around gardens without first contacting the San Bernardino County Agricultural Commissioner (CAC). Gardens claiming to be organic must register with the CAC prior to beginning operations. The CAC can be reached by calling 1-800-734-9459.

## COMPOST & FERTILIZERS



- Compost applied to gardens must be fully composted/aged and may not contain animal fecal material. Composted manure will only be used if purchased from a commercial outlet. Keep a buffer between the production field and manure/compost storage area. Keep the bin(s) as far away as possible.
- Commercial fertilizers must be properly used, according to the manufacturer's recommendations, to prevent human injury, and damage to soil and crops.

## GROWING & MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

- All seeds, seedlings and plants to be grown shall be procured from an approved source. This includes retail, wholesale and other firms approved by the Agricultural Commissioner. Inspection by the County Agricultural Commissioner ensures plants are free of pests that may present a hazard to local agriculture.
- Gardening and harvest tools and equipment must be maintained in a clean condition and stored in a sanitary location. Dedicated equipment should be solely used in the garden and not used for other purposes on the property. It is recommend sanitizing tools which come into contact with the plants at least once a day or more often. Collect the harvest in clean and sanitized containers.
- Vegetation at the edges of vegetable patches should be minimized to prevent harborage places for rodents and insects.
- The grounds surrounding the garden should be maintained in such a manner that pests are not attracted to the area, such as piles of decaying fruit and vegetables.
- Ensure all produce is washed with water from a potable source before being served or processed, as required by the California Retail Food Code. No washing is required for direct sale of whole uncut produce.



## WORKER SANITATION & TRAINING

- Workers harvesting produce from gardens must properly wash their hands before handling produce and be free of open cuts or wounds on their extremities.
- Restroom facilities with soap and warm water should be readily accessible to anyone working in a garden.
- Workers should protect produce from cross-contamination by ensuring that it does not come into contact with equipment, gloves or other articles that may become contaminated with compost or other materials.
- Ill workers, particularly those exhibiting symptoms such as nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, and elevated temperature must be excluded from the culinary garden, from handling the produce, equipment, and food contact surfaces.
- Workers that handle produce should understand and practice proper hygiene. A written training program should include:
  - Knowledge of basic sanitation and hygiene principles
  - Periodic refresher or follow-up training, depending on the worker's job
  - Verbal instruction and hands-on demonstration, as necessary
  - Documentation of training frequency and content



## RECORD KEEPING/LABELING/INSPECTIONS



- It is recommended to keep all records (food safety practices/packing labels/invoices/application of fertilizer and pesticides/water testing/mitigation of problems) for at least one year.
- Agricultural products must be labeled with the name and address of the community food producer. If the food is being sold on the production site, a sign may be used instead of individual labels if it includes the name and address of the producer.
- Community food producers are required to register with DEHS. All garden/egg production facilities; equipment, operations and records shall be subject to inspection by the County of San Bernardino, Department of Public Health, Division of Environmental Health Services (DEHS) upon request. Inspections, when required, will be billed at the current hourly rate.