



# Cottage Food Operations (CFO)

Public Health  
Environmental Health Services

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### 1. What is a Cottage Food Operation (CFO)?

A CFO is an enterprise at a private home where low-risk food products are prepared, packaged, and labeled for sale to consumers.

### 2. What is meant by "Private home"?

Private home means a dwelling, including an apartment or other leased space, where individuals reside.

### 3. Are there limitations on the size of CFO sales?

Yes. A CFO is restricted to the following gross annual sales amounts:

<b>\$35K</b> or less in gross sales in 2013	<b>\$45K</b> or less in gross sales in 2014	<b>\$50K</b> or less in gross sales in 2015 and beyond	<b>\$75K</b> or less in gross sales in 2021 for Class A	<b>\$150K</b> or less in gross sales in 2021 for Class B
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### 4. Can a CFO have employees?

Yes. A CFO can have one full-time equivalent employee (not counting family members or household members).

### 5. What kinds of cottage foods are permitted at a CFO?

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) established and maintains a list of approved cottage food categories on their website and will implement a process by which new foods can be added or removed from the list. [Click here](#) for a list of approved foods. Only the foods listed by the CDPH will be approved to be made in a CFO.

### 6. Is my CFO permit transferable?

No. Class A registrations and Class B health permits are not transferable between persons, locations, types of food sold, or types of distributions.

### 7. Do I need any special training or certification to prepare cottage foods?

Yes. A person who prepares cottage food products must obtain Food Worker certification from the County of San Bernardino within three months of being registered or permitted.

[Click here](#) to access the online training.

## 8. What are the two classifications of CFOs?

Class A	Class B
CFOs are only allowed to engage in <a href="#">direct sales</a> of cottage food.	CFOs may engage in both <a href="#">direct sales</a> and <a href="#">indirect sales</a> of cottage food.

## 9. What is the difference between Direct Sales vs. Indirect Sales?

<b>Direct Sale</b>	A transaction within the state of California between a cottage food operator and a consumer, where the consumer purchases the cottage food product directly from the CFO. Direct sales include, but are not limited to, transactions at holiday bazaars or other temporary events, such as bake sales or food swaps, transactions at farm stands, certified farmers' markets, or through community-supported agriculture subscriptions, and transactions made via the phone, internet, or any other digital method. A direct sale may be fulfilled in person, via mail delivery, or using any other third-party delivery service.
<b>Indirect Sale</b>	A transaction within the state of California between a cottage food operator, a third-party retailer, and a consumer, where the consumer purchases cottage food products made by the CFO from a third-party retailer that holds a valid permit issued by the local Environmental Health agency. Indirect sales include, but are not limited to, sales made to retail shops or to retail food facilities where food may be immediately consumed on the premises. An indirect sale may be fulfilled in person, via mail delivery, or using another third-party delivery service.

## 10. What documents are required to start a CFO?

<b>Planning/Zoning</b>	All CFOs need to obtain approval from their local city or county planning department. Depending on the jurisdiction, a CFO may be required to obtain either a Home Occupation Permit and business license from their local city planning department, or an Exemption Letter from San Bernardino County Code Enforcement Services. Planning department requirements may vary between jurisdictions.
<b>Environmental Health</b>	For " <b>Class A</b> " CFOs (direct sale only), <b>registration</b> with DEHS and submission of a completed " <a href="#">Self-Certification Checklist</a> " is required. For " <b>Class B</b> " CFOs (direct and indirect sales), <b>health permit</b> with DEHS and submission of a completed " <a href="#">Self-Certification Checklist</a> " is required.
Both <b>Class A and B</b> will require proof of residency via driver's license, or utility bill, etc.	
Both <b>Class A and B</b> operations once approved will require a yearly fee.	

### 11. How much will the registration or permit cost for the CFO?

Class A	Class B
Registration is currently \$199.00	Registration is currently \$271.00

### 12. How often will a CFO be inspected?

Class A	Class B
Class A kitchens and food storage areas (referenced in the law as the “registered or permitted area”) are not subject to initial or routine inspections.	Class B kitchens and food storage areas are inspected initially prior to permit issuance, and then annually thereafter.

#### Class A and B (Other inspections)

The local environmental health agency may access, for inspection purposes, the registered or permitted location where the cottage food operation takes place only if the representative has, on the basis of a consumer complaint, reason to suspect the adulterated or otherwise unsafe food has been produced by the cottage food operation or that the cottage food operation is found to be in violation of California food safety laws on cottage food operations.

### 13. Do CFOs have operational requirements?

Yes. All CFOs must comply with the following:

- A person with a contagious illness shall refrain from working.
- Proper hand-washing shall be completed prior to any food preparation or packaging.
- Water used in the preparation of cottage food products must be potable. This includes:
  - Washing, rinsing, and sanitizing equipment used in food preparation.
  - Water used as an ingredient of cottage food.
- No domestic activity in the kitchen during cottage food preparation.
- No infants, small children, or pets in kitchen during cottage food preparation.
- Kitchen equipment and utensils washed, rinsed, and sanitized before each use.
- All food contact surfaces washed, rinsed, and sanitized before each use.
- All food preparation and storage areas free of vermin and pests.
- No smoking in kitchen area during preparation or processing of cottage food.

### 14. Can a CFO sell cottage food at a Farmer’s Market or other approved community event outside the operator’s county of residence?

CFOs can only sell cottage food outside their county of residence when the local environmental health agency of the outside county allows it.

### 15. Can a CFO sell apple cider or press apples?

No. There are no beverages included in the list of food products allowed to be produced in CFOs, so pressing apples to make and sell apple cider is not allowed under a CFO registration or permit.

## 16. What are my food labeling requirements?

All cottage food products must be properly labeled in compliance with the Federal, Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. Sec. 343 et seq.). The label should include:

- 1 Name used to describe the cottage food
- 2 Business name of the CFO which produced the food product.
- 3 Address of where the CFO takes place.
- 4 Ingredients (must include sub-ingredients), in predominance of weight.
- 5 Declaration if food contains applicable food allergens such as milk, eggs, tree nuts, wheat, peanuts, and soybeans.
- 6 Net weight (count, weight, or volume) stated in (pound) units and metric units (grams).
- 7 The words **"Made in a home kitchen"** or **"Repackaged in a home kitchen"** in 12-point
- 8 Registration or permit number of Class A or B, which produced the food product.
- 9 Name of the county issuing the registration and health permit.



In a permitted retail food facility, cottage food products served without packaging or labeling shall be identified to the customer as homemade on the menu, menu board or other easily accessible/visible location.

**For additional information on CFOs including a list of approved food items visit the [California Department of Public Health](https://www.cdph.ca/)**

Or scan the QR code

