simcoe muskoka
DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT



GUIDE FOR

Home-Based Food Premise

IN SIMCOE MUSKOKA

This guide explains the minimum public health requirements for preparing and selling food from a home in Simcoe Muskoka.

Anyone who prepares and sells food from home must follow the Ontario Food Premises Regulation 493/17, a provincial food safety law. The area of your home where you prepare or store food for sale is considered a food premises.

WHAT THIS GUIDE HELPS YOU DO:

- Learn what to do before preparing and selling food from home.
- Understand basic kitchen requirements.
- Develop an operational plan.

BEFORE YOU START SELLING FOOD FROM HOME:

- ✓ Check zoning, fire and business license requirements.
- ✓ Tell the health unit you plan to operate your food business by completing and sending in the Food Premises Commencement Notification form.
- ✓ Check the chart on page 2 to find out if your food is low-risk or high-risk . Some foods are safer at room temperature. Others must be kept hot or cold to prevent harmful bacteria from growing.
- ✓ If you are canning or bottling food, you may need to send samples to a lab for testing.
- ✓ Make sure your kitchen meets the food safety requirements listed below.
- ✓ Get food handler certification if needed.
- ✓ Create a written operational plan. Example questions are provided below to help you with this process.

HELPFUL WORDS	WHAT IT MEANS
Approved supplier	A store or business that has been inspected and is allowed to sell food.
Operational plan	A written plan that explains how you will run your food business safely.
Temperature control	Keeping food hot or cold enough to stop germs from growing.
Sanitizer	A product used to kill germs.

WHAT YOUR KITCHEN NEEDS:

- ✓ Floors must be smooth, easy to clean, and able to resist water or spills.
- ✓ Walls and ceilings must be easy to clean and kept clean.
- ✓ The area should have enough ventilation, such as a fan or vent, and adequate lighting.
- ✓ A safe water supply must be available. Private well water must be tested regularly.
- ✓ Garbage and liquid waste must be disposed of safely.
- ✓ Equipment and utensils must be rust-free, safe for food use, and in good repair.
- ✓ All refrigerators, freezers and hot-holding equipment must have working thermometers.
- ✓ There must be enough storage space for all food items, including refrigerated, frozen and dry foods.
- ✓ All food ingredients must come from approved food suppliers or retailers.
- ✓ Records must be kept and provided to the health unit upon request.
- ✓ Food for sale must be stored separately from personal food.
- ✓ Pets are not allowed in areas where food is stored, transported or handled.
- ✓ All cooking utensils, such as pots, pans and spatulas, must be cleaned and sanitized. See the equipment requirements below based on food risk level.
- ✓ An approved sanitizer and matching test strips must be available.
- ✓ Keep records of pest-control activities, including measures taken to prevent mice, flies and insects.

IMPORTANT NOTE

- An inspection is not the same as a licence.
- You may still need other approvals, such as fire, zoning, permits or business licences from your municipality.

LOW-RISK FOOD	HIGH-RISK FOOD
• Usually does not need to be kept hot or cold. **Examples:** Breads and buns without meat or cream fillings, most baked goods without custard, chocolate, coffee, tea leaves, granola, nuts, brownies, muffins and cookies.	• Can allow harmful bacteria (germs) to grow more easily if they are not kept hot or cold. **Examples:** Meat, seafood, eggs, dairy products such as milk, cream, cheese, yogurt, cream pies, cheesecake, cream cheese icing, custard tarts. Cooked rice, potatoes and pasta.
Sinks you need: • A two-compartment sink or a dishwasher* that washes and sanitizes dishes. • A dishwashing sink may also be used for handwashing if food preparation and dishwashing are done at different times. • Clean and sanitize the sink before using it for dishwashing.	**Sinks you need:** • A handwashing sink that is only used for handwashing, with hot and cold running water, liquid soap and paper towels in a dispenser. • A two-compartment sink or a dishwasher* that washes and sanitizes dishes, and ideally a food preparation sink.

**Some home dishwashers may be allowed if they meet safety requirements and are used only for a small amount of dishwashing. Contact your health inspector for more information.*

QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU CREATE YOUR OPERATIONAL PLAN

1. Where will you buy your ingredients?

2. How will you bring your ingredients to your kitchen?

3. How many days a week do you plan to prepare food?

4. How much food do you plan to prepare on a typical day?

5. Do you plan to cater events?

6. What is the largest number of people you expect to serve?

7. How will you keep business food and equipment separate from the food and equipment your family uses every day?

8. Do you have any pets? If yes, how will you keep them out of the kitchen while you prepare food?

9. How will you keep other people from entering the kitchen while you prepare food?

10. Will you care for children or family members while preparing food for customers? If yes, what additional steps will you take to keep food safe from germs?

11. How will you package food to keep it safe during pickup or delivery?

12. What will you do if you get sick?

13. What sanitizer do you plan to use on surfaces that touch food, such as counters, cutting boards and utensils?

14. How do you plan to wash dishes and equipment?

15. How will you monitor for pests?

16. What are your opening and closing steps?

FINAL CHECKLIST

- ✓ I have sent in the notification form to the health unit.
- ✓ I know if my food is low-risk or high-risk.
- ✓ My kitchen meets the requirements.
- ✓ I have a cleaning and sanitizing plan.
- ✓ I have a plan to keep pets and other people out of the kitchen.
- ✓ I checked other requirements, such as zoning, fire safety, permits and business licences.