

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Alameda County

California · Oakland · FIPS 06001 · Population 1,663,823 ·
Crosodo Index #1687*

STATE BASELINE

Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758

STATE TIER

Good

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

Tiered (see notes)

CONFIDENCE

HIGH

LAST VERIFIED

2026-05-05

IMPORTANT — NOT LEGAL ADVICE

This report compiles publicly-available statutes, regulations, and county zoning rules into a research reference. It is **not legal advice** and is provided **without warranty** as to accuracy, completeness, or current applicability.

Cottage food law changes frequently. Counties may amend zoning, health departments may issue new permits, and state legislatures may update statutes after the publication date shown above.

Always verify rules directly with your state department of health/agriculture and your county health and planning offices before relying on them for any business or regulatory decision. Consult a licensed attorney for advice specific to your situation.

CALIFORNIA: ALAMEDA COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #1687* · FIPS 06001 · Oakland

Alameda County

Population 1,663,823 · State baseline: Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758 · **HIGH**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Alameda County Department of Environmental Health (ACDEH) administers both CFO Class A/B registrations/permits and the MEHKO program. CFO applicants must obtain approval from both ACDEH and the City Planning Department. MEHKO permit application fee is \$696; initial inspection required before permit issuance. Note: City of Berkeley has its own environmental health department and administers its own CFO/MEHKO program.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

No animals inside kitchen/dining areas during MEHKO operations (MEHKO SOP requirement). State baseline applies for CFOs.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Yes (CFO operators must obtain approval from the City Planning Department before ACDEH registration. Requirements vary by city. For unincorporated Alameda County, contact the county planning department. City of Berkeley has its own program and is excluded from ACDEH jurisdiction.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Conditional (CFO Class A: no routine inspection; upon complaint only. CFO Class B: annual inspection. MEHKO: initial inspection required before permit issuance; routine inspections scheduled thereafter.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Alameda County Department of Environmental Health (ACDEH) administers both CFO Class A/B registrations/permits and the MEHKO program. CFO applicants must obtain approval from both ACDEH and the City Planning Department. MEHKO permit application fee is \$696; initial inspection required before permit issuance. Note: City of Berkeley has its own environmental health department and administers its own CFO/MEHKO program.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	No animals inside kitchen/dining areas during MEHKO operations (MEHKO SOP requirement). State baseline applies for CFOs.
WATER SUPPLY	Private well users must submit water testing results with CFO application. Municipal water: state baseline applies.
HANDWASHING	State baseline applies
FOOD STORAGE	State baseline applies

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Conditional — CFO Class A: no routine inspection; upon complaint only. CFO Class B: annual inspection. MEHKO: initial inspection required before permit issuance; routine inspections scheduled thereafter.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes — CFO operators must obtain approval from the City Planning Department before ACDEH registration. Requirements vary by city. For unincorporated Alameda County, contact the county planning department. City of Berkeley has its own program and is excluded from ACDEH jurisdiction.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies by city

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	CFO: direct/indirect sales within California only. MEHKO: on-site dining, pickup, delivery by operator/staff. MEHKO food must be prepared and delivered same day. State preemption bars local restriction of CFOs.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	1 full-time equivalent for CFO (state baseline); MEHKO: 1 non-family employee (county ordinance per MEHKO SOP — max 40 hr/week)

Relevant county code

Alameda County Ordinance 6.68 (MEHKO); Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758 (CFO)

RESEARCH NOTES

Alameda County is a MEHKO opt-in county. MEHKO permit fee: \$696 (initial). ACDEH holds free monthly information sessions (first Wednesday, 9-10am). City of Berkeley operates its own separate EH program and is excluded from ACDEH jurisdiction. CFO applicants must obtain city planning approval before ACDEH registration. MEHKO governed by Alameda County Ordinance 6.68.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.acphd.org>

<https://www.acgov.org>

<https://deh.acgov.org/operations/home-based-food-business>

https://deh.acgov.org/operations-assets/docs/cottagefood/MEHKO_APP_SOP.pdf

Questions? Join the Crosodo Forum to discuss your county’s specific zoning rules at <https://crosodo.com/nb/california/alameda-county-discuss>

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Alameda County	Santa Clara County	Contra Costa County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	No animals inside kitchen/dining areas during MEHKO operations (MEHKO SOP requirement). State baseline applies for CFOs.	State baseline applies	State baseline applies
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Conditional	Conditional	Yes
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	CFO: direct/indirect sales within California only. MEHKO: on-site dining, pickup, delivery by operator/staff. MEHKO food must be prepared a...	Direct/indirect sales within California only (state baseline). MEHKO permits on-site dining, pickup, and delivery. MEHKO: food must be prep...	MEHKO: meals for dine-in, take-out, and delivery; MEHKO may also serve as a commissary for permitted food carts. CFO: direct/indirect sales...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes	Varies by city	Varies by city
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies by city	Varies by city	Varies by city
RESTRICTIONS	Alameda County Department of Environmental Health (ACDEH) administers both CFO Class A/B registrations/permits and the MEHKO program. CFO a...	Santa Clara County Department of Environmental Health (DEH) administers both CFO Class A/B registrations/permits and the MEHKO program, whi...	Contra Costa County adopted a MEHKO ordinance (Ordinance 2024-05) approved by the Board of Supervisors on June 20, 2024, effective July 1, ...
FOOD STORAGE	State baseline applies	State baseline applies	State baseline applies
POPULATION	1,663,823	1,916,831	1,162,648

State context — California cottage food law

Alameda County’s rules sit on top of California’s state cottage food framework. The state law sets the floor — counties can add but cannot remove protections.

<p>STATUTE Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758</p> <p>REGISTRATION REQUIRED Yes</p> <p>KITCHEN INSPECTION No</p> <p>INDIRECT SALES Limited (see notes) — Class B permit holders may sell indirectly through retail stores and restaurants statewide; Class A registrants are limited to direct sales only and may not sell through any retail or wholesale venue.</p>	<p>ANNUAL SALES CAP Tiered (see notes)</p> <p>FOOD HANDLER CERT Yes (specific course)</p> <p>DIRECT SALES ONLY No</p>
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For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the [California cottage food law report](#).

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=HSC§ionNum=113758

State dept cottage food page: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/CDPH%20Document%20Library/FDB/FoodSafetyProgram/Cottage%20Food%20Operations/CFO_Faq.pdf

Forrager.com: <https://forrager.com/law/california/>

Questions?

Join the Crosodo Forum to discuss Alameda County's specific zoning rules, permits, and what other home bakers are seeing locally.

<https://crosodo.com/nb/california/alameda-county-discuss>
