

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

San Mateo County

California · Redwood City · FIPS 06081 · Population 754,250
· Crosodo Index #1369*

STATE BASELINE

Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758 (Cottage Food Operations); Cal. Health & Safety Code §113825 (MEHKO)

STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE	LAST VERIFIED
Good	Tiered (see notes)	HIGH	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.

How to start — 60-second path

San Mateo County, California — permit, pickup, and label steps before the full county rules.

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes

STATE SALES CAP

Tiered (see notes)

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION

Yes

PETS

Standard sanitation; MEHKO requires food safety compliance

BEFORE YOU SELL FROM THIS ADDRESS

- ☐ **1. Menu** — Confirm each product under California cottage food rules (county cannot expand a state ban).
- ☐ **2. Pickup & zoning** — Home occupation and porch pickup cells above; HOA/lease may still block customer traffic.
- ☐ **3. Local tax / license** — Business license or sales tax certificate if your city/parish requires it (common even with no state food permit).
- ☐ **4. Training** — Food handler or state registration before market day.
- ☐ **5. Labels** — Disclaimer, allergens, ingredients, net quantity, producer info.
- ☐ **6. Call if unclear** — County health and planning for your exact address.

LABEL FIELDS TO INCLUDE

- ☐ Product name · producer name · address (or allowed alternative)
- ☐ Ingredients by weight · major allergens · net weight/quantity
- ☐ California home-kitchen disclaimer (see live label one-pager)

CONTINUE ONLINE

[Open the live county page →](#)

[California label one-pager →](#)

[Local notes & questions →](#)

Planning path only — not legal advice. Rules change. Always verify with state and local offices before selling.

CALIFORNIA: SAN MATEO COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #1369* · FIPS 06081 · Redwood City

San Mateo County

Population 754,250 · State baseline: Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758 (Cottage Food Operations); Cal. Health & Safety Code §113825 (MEHKO) · HIGH

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

- HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?
Yes (Two pathways: (1) CFO Class A/B under §113758; (2) MEHKO under §113825 — San Mateo County has permanently authorized MEHKOs (ordinance approved September 12, 2023). MEHKO annual permit fee: \$1,108 (effective November 2024). MEHKO: 30 meals/day, 60 meals/week, \$100,000 annual cap, food must be prepared/cooked/served same day.)
- SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?
No
- PETS ALLOWED?
Standard sanitation; MEHKO requires food safety compliance
- HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?
Conditional (For MEHKO: state law prevents cities/counties from requiring separate home occupation permits for MEHKOs — only local health department permit required. For CFO: state GOV §51035 preempts local zoning restrictions. Check with specific city (Redwood City, San Mateo, Daly City, South San Francisco, etc.) for any supplemental CFO or business license requirements. MEHKO guidance says also check with city for additional requirements.)
- ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?
Yes
- INSPECTION REQUIRED?
Yes (MEHKO requires initial inspection before permit issuance. CFO Class B requires initial inspection. Routine inspections may follow.)

Home kitchen rules

- HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED
Yes — Two pathways: (1) CFO Class A/B under §113758; (2) MEHKO under §113825 — San Mateo County has permanently authorized MEHKOs (ordinance approved September 12, 2023). MEHKO annual permit fee: \$1,108 (effective November 2024). MEHKO: 30 meals/day, 60 meals/week, \$100,000 annual cap, food must be prepared/cooked/served same day.
- SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN
No
- PET RESTRICTIONS
Standard sanitation; MEHKO requires food safety compliance
- WATER SUPPLY
Potable water; public municipal supply standard in most of the county
- HANDWASHING
MEHKO: Food Safety Manager certification required + food handler card for all food handlers. CFO: food handler certificate required within 3 months.
- FOOD STORAGE
Standard per state approved foods list (CFO) or California Retail Food Code (MEHKO)

Inspection & permitting

- INSPECTION REQUIRED
Yes — MEHKO requires initial inspection before permit issuance. CFO Class B requires initial inspection. Routine inspections may follow.
- HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT
Conditional — For MEHKO: state law prevents cities/counties from requiring separate home occupation permits for MEHKOs — only local health department permit required. For CFO: state GOV §51035 preempts local zoning restrictions. Check with specific city (Redwood City, San Mateo, Daly City, South San Francisco, etc.) for any supplemental CFO or business license requirements. MEHKO guidance says also check with city for additional requirements.
- LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE
Conditional

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	CFO Class A: direct sales only (\$75,000 cap). CFO Class B: direct + indirect (\$150,000 cap). MEHKO: direct-to-consumer only (dine-in, take-out, delivery); cannot sell at farmers markets or to food facilities; \$100,000 annual cap.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	1 non-family/household full-time equivalent (both CFO and MEHKO)

Relevant county code

Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758 (CFO); §113825 (MEHKO); San Mateo County MEHKO Ordinance (September 12, 2023)

RESEARCH NOTES

San Mateo County is one of the most MEHKO-forward counties in California. After a 2-year pilot starting July 2021, the Board of Supervisors permanently authorized MEHKOs on September 12, 2023. MEHKO annual permit fee is \$1,108 (effective November 2024; waived until October 2024 for pandemic relief). Application via MyEHS Portal (smchealth.org/myehs). MEHKO requires Food Safety Manager certification and food handler cards for all handlers. For CFO: separate pathway still available. State law prevents requiring home occupation permits for MEHKOs.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.smchealth.org>

<https://planning.smcgov.org>

<https://www.smcgov.org>

<https://www.smchealth.org/microkitchens-mehko>

<https://mehko.org/get-your-mehko-approved-in-san-mateo/>

Questions about this county? Local notes and a place to leave a question: crosodo.com/nb/california/san-mateo-county-discuss

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	San Mateo County	San Francisco County	Alameda County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Standard sanitation; MEHKO requires food safety compliance	Standard sanitation; not specifically addressed	No animals inside kitchen/ dining areas during MEHKO operations (MEHKO SOP requirement). State baseline applies for CFOs.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes	Conditional	Conditional
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	CFO Class A: direct sales only (\$75,000 cap). CFO Class B: direct + indirect (\$150,000 cap). MEHKO: direct-to-consumer only (dine-in, take-...	Class A: direct sales only (in person, phone, internet; mail/ third-party delivery permitted within California). Class B: direct plus indire...	CFO: direct/indirect sales within California only. MEHKO: on-site dining, pickup, delivery by operator/staff. MEHKO food must be prepared a...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Yes	Yes
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Conditional	Yes	Varies by city
RESTRICTIONS	Two pathways: (1) CFO Class A/ B under §113758; (2) MEHKO under §113825 — San Mateo County has permanently authorized MEHKOs (ordinance appr...	San Francisco is a consolidated city-county. CFO permits are administered by the SF Department of Public Health (SFPDH). Class A (direct sa...	Alameda County Department of Environmental Health (ACDEH) administers both CFO Class A/B registrations/permits and the MEHKO program. CFO a...
FOOD STORAGE	Standard per state approved foods list (CFO) or California Retail Food Code (MEHKO)	Standard food storage per state approved foods list	State baseline applies
POPULATION	754,250	851,036	1,663,823

State context — California cottage food law

San Mateo 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.

STATUTE

Cal. Health & Safety Code §113758

ANNUAL SALES CAP

Tiered (see notes)

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Yes

FOOD HANDLER CERT

Yes (specific course)

KITCHEN INSPECTION

No

DIRECT SALES ONLY

No

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.

For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the **California cottage food law report** on Crosodo, or open the live guide: crosodo.com/states/california.

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: https://leginfo.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 about San Mateo County? Local notes and a place to leave a question are on Crosodo. We monitor new threads — start with zoning, permits, or porch pickup.

crosodo.com/nb/california/san-mateo-county-discuss

Classifieds

Resources for cottage food & home bakers · crosodo.com/advertise

NATIONAL

SUPPLIES

Advertise here — Supplies

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

COURSES

Advertise here — Courses

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

INSURANCE

Advertise here — Insurance

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

LOCAL

Advertise here

Reach home bakers in San Mateo County, California. Supply stores, farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and bakery services welcome.

crosodo.com/advertise

Your business here

Local cottage food listings, kitchen rentals, co-packer referrals, and community events — post yours on Crosodo.

crosodo.com/nb/california/san-mateo-county-discuss

Free ad space available

Let us know if you're a non-profit or community organization. Farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and cottage food events near you welcome.

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