

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Caroline County

Maryland · Denton · FIPS 24011 · Population 34,248 ·
Crosodo Index #2450*

STATE BASELINE	STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE
MD COMAR 10.15.03.27	Good	50000	MEDIUM

LAST VERIFIED
2026-05-06

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.

MARYLAND: CAROLINE COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2450* · FIPS 24011 · Denton

Caroline County

Population 34,248 · State baseline: MD COMAR 10.15.03.27 · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Annual gross sales capped at \$50,000. Must produce in residential kitchen in Maryland. Must comply with all applicable county and municipal laws. Sales allowed directly to consumers (from home, farmers markets, public events, personal delivery, mail delivery) and to retail food stores (with prior MDH review and written approval). Interstate sales prohibited.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Local health department standards apply; typically animals must be excluded from food prep areas.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies (Caroline County (Eastern Shore) requires compliance with all applicable county and municipal laws per Md. Code Health-Gen. §21-330.1(e). Contact Caroline County planning/zoning for home occupation permit requirements. No county-specific cottage food ordinance identified beyond the state mandate.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Upon-complaint (No routine pre-operational inspection required for standard direct-to-consumer sales. MDH may inspect upon complaint. Retail store sales require MDH plan review and written approval before sales begin.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Annual gross sales capped at \$50,000. Must produce in residential kitchen in Maryland. Must comply with all applicable county and municipal laws. Sales allowed directly to consumers (from home, farmers markets, public events, personal delivery, mail delivery) and to retail food stores (with prior MDH review and written approval). Interstate sales prohibited.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	Local health department standards apply; typically animals must be excluded from food prep areas.
WATER SUPPLY	Potable water required.
HANDWASHING	Required per Maryland food safety standards.
FOOD STORAGE	Products must be stored on premises of the cottage food business. Shelf-stable non-potentially hazardous foods only.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint — No routine pre-operational inspection required for standard direct-to-consumer sales. MDH may inspect upon complaint. Retail store sales require MDH plan review and written approval before sales begin.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies — Caroline County (Eastern Shore) requires compliance with all applicable county and municipal laws per Md. Code Health-Gen. §21-330.1(e). Contact Caroline County planning/zoning for home occupation permit requirements. No county-specific cottage food ordinance identified beyond the state mandate.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct-to-consumer sales permitted. Retail store sales require prior MDH approval. Food safety training recommended but not required for standard sales; required for retail store channel.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Residential kitchen framework; outside employees not contemplated.

Relevant county code

MD COMAR 10.15.03.27; Md. Code Health-Gen. §21-330.1; Caroline County zoning ordinance (contact county for specifics).

RESEARCH NOTES

Maryland state baseline applied: COMAR 10.15.03.27, \$50,000 cap, no license required but must comply with county/municipal laws per Md. Code Health-Gen. §21-330.1(e). Caroline County is a small Eastern Shore county. The MDH guidelines (Updated_CF_Guidelines_2025.pdf) confirm cottage food businesses must contact local permits, licensing, and zoning departments. No Caroline County-specific cottage food ordinance identified; state baseline governs. Confidence medium.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/OFPCHS/pages/cottagefoods.aspx>

<http://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/cottagefood/Maryland.pdf>

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Caroline County	Dorchester County	Talbot County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Local health department standards apply; typically animals must be excluded from food prep areas.	Local health department standards apply; typically animals must be excluded from food prep areas.	Local health department standards apply; typically animals must be excluded from food prep areas.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint	Upon-complaint	Upon-complaint
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct-to-consumer sales permitted. Retail store sales require prior MDH approval. Food safety training recommended but not required for st...	Direct-to-consumer sales permitted. Retail store sales require prior MDH approval. Food safety training recommended but not required for st...	Direct-to-consumer sales permitted. Retail store sales require prior MDH approval.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies	Varies	Varies
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Annual gross sales capped at \$50,000. Must produce in residential kitchen in Maryland. Must comply with all applicable county and municipal...	Annual gross sales capped at \$50,000. Must produce in residential kitchen in Maryland. Must comply with all applicable county and municipal...	Annual gross sales capped at \$50,000. Must produce in residential kitchen in Maryland. Must comply with all applicable county and municipal...
FOOD STORAGE	Products must be stored on premises of the cottage food business. Shelf-stable non-potentially hazardous foods only.	Products must be stored on premises of the cottage food business. Shelf-stable non-potentially hazardous foods only.	Products must be stored on premises of the cottage food business. Shelf-stable non-potentially hazardous foods only.
POPULATION	33,320	32,557	37,663

State context — Maryland cottage food law

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

STATUTE MD COMAR 10.15.03.27	ANNUAL SALES CAP 50000
REGISTRATION REQUIRED Depends	FOOD HANDLER CERT Recommended
KITCHEN INSPECTION Upon-complaint	DIRECT SALES ONLY No
INDIRECT SALES Limited (see notes) — Sales at retail food stores (indirect) are allowed but require prior submission of labels and documentation of ANSI-accredited food safety course completion to the Maryland Department of Health before any retail sales can commence. The Department must notify the producer in writing that requirements are met before retail sales begin.	

For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the [Maryland cottage food law report](#).

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://regs.maryland.gov/us/md/exec/comar/10.15.03.27>

State dept cottage food page: <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/OFPCHS/Pages/Cottage-Food.aspx>

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

Questions?

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

<https://crosodo.com/nb/maryland/caroline-county-discuss>
