

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Howard County

Maryland · Ellicott City · FIPS 24027 · Population 332,011 ·
Crosodo Index #2184*

STATE BASELINE

MD COMAR 10.15.03.27; \$50,000 annual sales cap; no license required for direct-to-consumer; MDH review required for some sales channels; non-TCS foods only

STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE	LAST VERIFIED
Good	50000	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.

MARYLAND: HOWARD COUNTY

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HIGH

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Non-TCS non-perishable foods only; \$50,000 annual gross sales cap; labeling required; MDH compliance letter required for wholesale/grocery sales; local zoning must be verified)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Standard sanitation applies; no specific state pet rule

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Yes (Howard County Planning and Zoning requires a Home Occupation Application (\$25 fee) for home-based businesses operated from a residence. Application submitted online at howardcountymd.gov/planning-zoning/home-occupation-application)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Upon-complaint (MDH may investigate on complaint; initial inspection may be required for certain sales channels)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes — Non-TCS non-perishable foods only; \$50,000 annual gross sales cap; labeling required; MDH compliance letter required for wholesale/grocery sales; local zoning must be verified
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No
PET RESTRICTIONS	Standard sanitation applies; no specific state pet rule
WATER SUPPLY	Potable water required
HANDWASHING	Standard handwashing practices
FOOD STORAGE	Shelf-stable foods stored in sanitary conditions

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint — MDH may investigate on complaint; initial inspection may be required for certain sales channels
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes — Howard County Planning and Zoning requires a Home Occupation Application (\$25 fee) for home-based businesses operated from a residence. Application submitted online at howardcountymd.gov/planning-zoning/home-occupation-application
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Direct to consumer at home, farmers markets, events, online (Maryland only); wholesale to grocers requires MDH compliance letter; no out-of-state internet sales
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Not specified

Relevant county code

Howard County Planning and Zoning home occupation regulations

RESEARCH NOTES

Howard County confirmed: \$25 home occupation permit required from Planning and Zoning for home-based businesses. County has its own application portal. MD state cottage food rules apply on top of local requirement.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov>

<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/OFPCS/Pages/Cottage-Food.aspx>

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/planning-zoning/home-occupation-application>

https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/OEHFP/OFPCS/Documents/Updated_CF_Guidelines_2025.pdf

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Howard County	Frederick County	Anne Arundel County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Standard sanitation applies; no specific state pet rule	Not specified at county level; state rules require sanitary production environment	No specific state cottage food pet restriction; general sanitation standards
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint	Upon-complaint	Upon-complaint
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Conditional	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	No	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Direct to consumer at home, farmers markets, events, online (Maryland only); wholesale to grocers requires MDH compliance letter; no out-of...	Direct sales to end consumers; indirect sales (retail stores) allowed with MDH ID number and food handler certification. No wholesale via b...	Direct-to-consumer sales: home, farmers markets, public events, personal delivery, mail order within Maryland. Sales to retail stores requi...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes	Yes	Yes
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Yes	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Non-TCS non-perishable foods only; \$50,000 annual gross sales cap; labeling required; MDH compliance letter required for wholesale/grocery ...	Non-potentially hazardous foods only; \$50,000 annual sales cap (COMAR 10.15.03.02B(17-1)); must operate from a residential kitchen. Optiona...	Non-potentially hazardous foods only. \$50,000 annual gross sales cap. MDH review required for sales at retail stores (Class B equivalent); ...
FOOD STORAGE	Shelf-stable foods stored in sanitary conditions	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods only; standard food storage requirements apply	Standard home kitchen storage for approved non-PHF foods
POPULATION	332,011	273,829	588,109

State context — Maryland cottage food law

Howard 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 Howard County's specific zoning rules, permits, and what other home bakers are seeing locally.

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