

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Middlesex County

Massachusetts · — · FIPS 25017 · Population 1,623,109 ·
Crosodo Index #2589*

| STATE BASELINE | STATE TIER | ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE) | CONFIDENCE | LAST VERIFIED |
|--------------------|------------|--------------------------|------------|---------------|
| 105 CMR 590.009(D) | Okay | — | MEDIUM | 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.

MASSACHUSETTS: MIDDLESEX COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2589* · FIPS 25017 · —

Middlesex County

Population 1,623,109 · State baseline: 105 CMR 590.009(D) · **MEDIUM**

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Massachusetts has no county-level government with food safety authority — Middlesex County does not have an operational county government (county government was abolished in 1997). Retail Residential Kitchen (cottage food) permits are issued by local Boards of Health in each city/town. Operators selling directly to consumers must obtain a permit from their local Board of Health; wholesale sellers must obtain a state license from MA DPH Food Protection Program.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

State baseline applies

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Varies by city (Each city/town in Middlesex County (Cambridge, Lowell, Newton, Somerville, etc.) has its own Board of Health with its own permit fee and inspection requirements. No county-level home occupation permit — Middlesex County government was abolished in 1997.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Yes (Local Board of Health inspects before issuing the Retail Residential Kitchen permit (cottage food operation) and may conduct routine and complaint-based inspections. Wholesale operations inspected by MA DPH.)

Home kitchen rules

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED | Yes — Massachusetts has no county-level government with food safety authority — Middlesex County does not have an operational county government (county government was abolished in 1997). Retail Residential Kitchen (cottage food) permits are issued by local Boards of Health in each city/town. Operators selling directly to consumers must obtain a permit from their local Board of Health; wholesale sellers must obtain a state license from MA DPH Food Protection Program. |
| SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN | No |
| PET RESTRICTIONS | State baseline applies |
| WATER SUPPLY | State baseline applies; Board of Health may require lab documentation for pH ≤4.6 or water activity ≤0.85 for certain products |
| HANDWASHING | State baseline applies |
| FOOD STORAGE | State baseline applies |

Inspection & permitting

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| INSPECTION REQUIRED | Yes — Local Board of Health inspects before issuing the Retail Residential Kitchen permit (cottage food operation) and may conduct routine and complaint-based inspections. Wholesale operations inspected by MA DPH. |
| HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT | Varies by city — Each city/town in Middlesex County (Cambridge, Lowell, Newton, Somerville, etc.) has its own Board of Health with its own permit fee and inspection requirements. No county-level home occupation permit — Middlesex County government was abolished in 1997. |
| LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE | Varies by city |

Customer-facing rules

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP | Yes |
| ON-SITE SIGNAGE | Conditional |
| DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES | Retail residential kitchen: direct to consumer sales only; mail order prohibited. Wholesale residential kitchen: may sell to retailers/restaurants but needs state DPH license. Only household members may be employed in the operation. |
| MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME | Only household members may be employed (state regulation) |

Relevant county code

none — Middlesex County government abolished 1997; 105 CMR 590.009(D) and 105 CMR 500.015 apply through local Boards of Health

RESEARCH NOTES

Middlesex County Massachusetts has no operating county government (abolished 1997). The county name is used for geographic/census purposes. All cottage food regulation is at the city/town Board of Health level. Key cities in Middlesex County include Cambridge, Lowell, Newton, Somerville, Waltham, and Framingham — each with independent Boards of Health and varying permit fees and requirements. Some cities (notably Boston in adjacent Suffolk County) previously restricted residential kitchens but Middlesex cities generally have programs. Only household members may be employed; no commercial brokers/wholesalers may distribute. No mail order allowed for retail residential kitchens.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/residential-kitchen-questions-and-answers>

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/residential-kitchen-permit-information>

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

State context — Massachusetts cottage food law

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

| | |
|--|---|
| STATUTE 105 CMR 590.009(D) | ANNUAL SALES CAP — |
| REGISTRATION REQUIRED Yes | FOOD HANDLER CERT Recommended |
| KITCHEN INSPECTION Yes | DIRECT SALES ONLY No |
| INDIRECT SALES Yes — Massachusetts residential kitchens are treated as food establishments, so permitted operators may sell at any venue within the state including restaurants and retail stores, without the wholesale restriction that most cottage food laws impose. Mail order and catering are prohibited. Local boards of health administer permits and may impose additional restrictions. | |

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

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://www.mass.gov/regulations/105-CMR-59000-state-sanitary-code-chapter-x>

State dept cottage food page: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/residential-kitchen-permit-information>

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

Questions?

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

<https://crosodo.com/nb/massachusetts/middlesex-county-discuss>
