

## COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

# Mercer County

Pennsylvania · Mercer · FIPS 42085 · Population 110,600 ·  
Crosodo Index #2434\*

## STATE BASELINE

**3 Pa.C.S. §§5721–5737 (Limited Food Establishment); no sales cap; registration required (\$35/2-year); initial inspection required; limited indirect sales; not available in Philadelphia County**

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

**PENNSYLVANIA: MERCER COUNTY**

CROSODO INDEX #2434\* · FIPS 42085 · Mercer

# Mercer County

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**QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY**

**HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?**

Yes (Pennsylvania requires a Limited Food Establishment registration with PA Department of Agriculture. Mercer County is outside Philadelphia County, so LFE program applies. Initial on-site kitchen inspection required before registration.)

**SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?**

No

**PETS ALLOWED?**

Standard food safety GMP practices apply; inspection will assess kitchen cleanliness.

**HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?**

Varies (Mercer County and city of Mercer may have home occupation zoning requirements. No specific county overlay found. State LFE registration is primary regulatory requirement.)

**ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?**

Yes

**INSPECTION REQUIRED?**

Yes (Initial on-site inspection required before registration. Subsequent routine inspections apply. Submit application at least 60 days before operating.)

## Home kitchen rules

<b>HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED</b>	Yes — Pennsylvania requires a Limited Food Establishment registration with PA Department of Agriculture. Mercer County is outside Philadelphia County, so LFE program applies. Initial on-site kitchen inspection required before registration.
<b>SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN</b>	No
<b>PET RESTRICTIONS</b>	Standard food safety GMP practices apply; inspection will assess kitchen cleanliness.
<b>WATER SUPPLY</b>	Potable water required; well water testing may be required if not on public system.
<b>HANDWASHING</b>	Adequate handwashing facilities required and assessed at inspection.
<b>FOOD STORAGE</b>	Non-TCS shelf-stable products. Acidified/fermented foods have specific testing requirements.

## Inspection & permitting

<b>INSPECTION REQUIRED</b>	Yes — Initial on-site inspection required before registration. Subsequent routine inspections apply. Submit application at least 60 days before operating.
<b>HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT</b>	Varies — Mercer County and city of Mercer may have home occupation zoning requirements. No specific county overlay found. State LFE registration is primary regulatory requirement.
<b>LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE</b>	Varies

### Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Pennsylvania allows direct sales and limited indirect sales. Online sales permitted with in-state delivery.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	No specific state limit; local zoning may apply.

### Relevant county code

3 Pa.C.S. §§5721–5737

#### RESEARCH NOTES

State baseline applied (PA tier Good). Mercer County is in western Pennsylvania near the Ohio border. No county-specific URLs provided. Confidence medium.

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#### SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pda/food/limited-food-establishment.html>

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

## Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Mercer County	Lawrence County	Crawford County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Standard food safety GMP practices apply; inspection will assess kitchen cleanliness.	Not specifically stated in state law; kitchen inspection evaluates overall conditions.	Kitchen inspection evaluates overall conditions.
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Pennsylvania allows direct sales and limited indirect sales. Online sales permitted with in-state delivery.	Pennsylvania LFE allows direct and limited indirect sales (farmers markets, events, online with in-state delivery, retail stores). Some TCS...	Pennsylvania LFE allows direct and limited indirect sales within Pennsylvania framework.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Varies	Varies	Varies
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Varies	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Pennsylvania requires a Limited Food Establishment registration with PA Department of Agriculture. Mercer County is outside Philadelphia Co...	Pennsylvania Limited Food Establishment (LFE) registration required (\$35 for 2-year registration). Initial on-site kitchen inspection requi...	Same as all PA counties (except Philadelphia): Limited Food Establishment registration (\$35, 2-year), initial kitchen inspection required, ...
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS shelf-stable products. Acidified/fermented foods have specific testing requirements.	No specific statutory storage requirement beyond general food safety.	No specific statutory storage requirements beyond general food safety.
POPULATION	110,600	85,907	83,876

## State context — Pennsylvania cottage food law

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

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### STATUTE

3 Pa.C.S. §§5721–5737

### ANNUAL SALES CAP

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### REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Yes

### FOOD HANDLER CERT

No

### KITCHEN INSPECTION

Yes

### DIRECT SALES ONLY

No

### INDIRECT SALES

Limited (see notes) — Registration includes sales direct from the production site including internet sales. However, a separate Retail Food Facility License may be required for sales at events or Farmers Markets. Businesses aiming to sell across state lines might also need FDA registration. The registration covers home-based operations in residential kitchens as well as residential-style kitchens in alternate locations such as churches, fire halls, or remodeled garages. Not available in Philadelphia County.

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

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### STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/LI/consCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&t1=03&div=0&chpt=57>

State dept cottage food page: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pda/food/limited-food-establishment.html>

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

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## Questions?

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

<https://crosodo.com/nb/pennsylvania/mercer-county-discuss>

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