

## COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

# Prince William County

Virginia · Manassas · FIPS 51153 · Population 481,114 ·  
Crosodo Index #1685\*

STATE BASELINE	STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE	LAST VERIFIED
Va. Code §3.2-5130	Good	Tiered	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.

VIRGINIA: PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #1685\* · FIPS 51153 · Manassas

# Prince William County

Population 481,114 · State baseline: Va. Code §3.2-5130 · **HIGH**

## QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

**HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?**

Yes (Two tiers: (1) Non-acidified cottage foods (baked goods, candy, etc.) — no registration required, direct sales only, limited venues. (2) Acidified foods (jams, pickles, sauces) — registration with VDACS required. No annual sales cap. No inspection required at state level.)

**SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?**

No

**PETS ALLOWED?**

No specific state cottage food pet restriction

**HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?**

Yes (Prince William County requires a Home Occupation Certificate (HOC1) for home-based businesses per Zoning Ordinance Section 32-300.07. Home occupation is business conducted entirely within dwelling by residents, clearly incidental to residential use, no exterior evidence, no customers coming to home, no non-resident employees. Apply in person at Development Services Building (703-792-6830; zoningcounters@pwcgov.org). Must also obtain Trade Name Registration from Prince William County Judicial Center. Business License from Prince William County Finance Department may be required (703-792-6710).)

**ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?**

Conditional

**INSPECTION REQUIRED?**

No (No routine inspection required at state level)

## Home kitchen rules

**HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED**

Yes — Two tiers: (1) Non-acidified cottage foods (baked goods, candy, etc.) — no registration required, direct sales only, limited venues. (2) Acidified foods (jams, pickles, sauces) — registration with VDACS required. No annual sales cap. No inspection required at state level.

**SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN**

No

**PET RESTRICTIONS**

No specific state cottage food pet restriction

**WATER SUPPLY**

No specific water testing requirement in state cottage food law

**HANDWASHING**

No specific requirement in state cottage food law

**FOOD STORAGE**

Standard home kitchen storage for approved non-TCS foods

## Inspection & permitting

**INSPECTION REQUIRED**

No — No routine inspection required at state level

**HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT**

Yes — Prince William County requires a Home Occupation Certificate (HOC1) for home-based businesses per Zoning Ordinance Section 32-300.07. Home occupation is business conducted entirely within dwelling by residents, clearly incidental to residential use, no exterior evidence, no customers coming to home, no non-resident employees. Apply in person at Development Services Building (703-792-6830; zoningcounters@pwcgov.org). Must also obtain Trade Name Registration from Prince William County Judicial Center. Business License from Prince William County Finance Department may be required (703-792-6710).

**LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE**

Yes

### Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	No
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Virginia state law: direct sales to consumers at farmers markets, events, from home. Indirect sales through third-party retailers allowed with VDACS registration for acidified foods. No annual sales cap. Online sales permitted.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Prince William County Home Occupation: no non-resident employees allowed (only residents of dwelling unit)

### Relevant county code

Prince William County Zoning Ordinance Section 32-300.07 (Home Occupation Certificate), Va. Code §3.2-5130.

#### RESEARCH NOTES

Prince William County Home Occupation Certificate page retrieved directly from pwcva.gov. Zoning Ordinance Section 32-300.07 governs: business within dwelling, incidental to residential use, no exterior evidence, no customers at home, no non-resident employees. HOC1 application filed in person. Business License from Finance Department may be required. Virginia state cottage food (Va. Code §3.2-5130) has two tiers: non-acidified (no registration) and acidified (VDACS registration required). NOTE: Prince William County HOC explicitly says 'Home occupation is less intense than home employment and does not have customers coming to the home' – cottage food pickup at home may require special attention or the Home Employment permit instead. Confidence high: official county source retrieved.

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#### SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.pwcva.gov>

<https://www.pwcva.gov/departement/zoning-administration/home-occupation-certificate-office-within-residence>

<https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/dairy-kitchen-food-services-businesses.shtml>

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

## Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Prince William County	Loudoun County	Fairfax County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	No specific state cottage food pet restriction	No specific state restriction; standard food safety practices apply.	State baseline applies
INSPECTION REQUIRED	No	Upon-complaint	Upon-complaint
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional	Conditional	No
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	No	No	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Virginia state law: direct sales to consumers at farmers markets, events, from home. Indirect sales through third-party retailers allowed w...	Direct-to-consumer sales only. No resale, consignment, or sales to retail food establishments. Sales at farmers markets, roadside stands, h...	Sale and delivery must occur exclusively online or off-site — on-site retail customer pickup is not permitted for home-based food productio...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes	Yes	Yes
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Yes	Yes	Yes
RESTRICTIONS	Two tiers: (1) Non-acidified cottage foods (baked goods, candy, etc.) — no registration required, direct sales only, limited venues. (2) Ac...	Virginia cottage food law (Va. Code §3.2-5130) exempts non-TCS shelf-stable foods from licensing and inspection. Permitted items: candies, ...	Fairfax County requires a Home-Based Business Permit with a Home-Based Food Production Supplemental Form for all home-based food operations...
FOOD STORAGE	Standard home kitchen storage for approved non-TCS foods	Non-TCS shelf-stable products. No TCS foods permitted.	State baseline applies
POPULATION	481,114	420,773	1,145,354

## State context — Virginia cottage food law

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

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### STATUTE

Va. Code §3.2-5130

### ANNUAL SALES CAP

Tiered

### REGISTRATION REQUIRED

No

### FOOD HANDLER CERT

No

### KITCHEN INSPECTION

No

### DIRECT SALES ONLY

Yes

### INDIRECT SALES

No — Products must be sold in person in the Commonwealth to an individual for his own consumption and not for resale or consignment. They cannot be offered for sale to be used in or offered for consumption in retail food establishments. Sales venues are limited to: private home, temporary event (no more than 14 consecutive days), or farmers market. Internet advertising is explicitly permitted but sales must remain in-person and in-state.

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

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### STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/3.2-5130/>

State dept cottage food page: <https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/food-information-for-vendors-and-businesses-home-food-processors.shtml>

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

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## Questions?

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

<https://crosodo.com/nb/virginia/prince-william-county-discuss>

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