

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Stafford County

Virginia · Stafford · FIPS 51179 · Population 157,606 · Crosodo
Index #2810*

STATE BASELINE

Va. Code §3.2-5130

STATE TIER

Good

ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)

Tiered

CONFIDENCE

MEDIUM

LAST VERIFIED

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: STAFFORD COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2810* · FIPS 51179 · Stafford

Stafford County

Population 157,606 · State baseline: Va. Code §3.2-5130 · MEDIUM

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Conditional (Virginia has two pathways: (1) Va. Code §3.2-5130 cottage food exemption — no registration or inspection for direct-to-consumer sales of non-TCS shelf-stable foods (limited list including candies, jams, jellies, dried fruits, dry herbs, nuts, vinegars, popcorn, roasted coffee, cereals, granola, baked goods not requiring temperature control). Pickles/acidified vegetables capped at \$9,000/year. Must label 'NOT FOR RESALE — PROCESSED AND PREPARED WITHOUT STATE INSPECTION.' (2) VDACS Home Food Processing Operation permit (\$40/year) allows broader foods but requires inspection. Zoning approval required for either pathway.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

If pets are present, food processing and storage areas must be completely enclosed/separated from the rest of the home with a solid hinged door that can be latched (per VDACS Home Food Processing requirements). Under the cottage food exemption, no specific pet separation requirement.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Yes (VDACS application requires written documentation of zoning approval from the local zoning office before processing. Stafford County has zoning rules for home occupations. Must provide proof of zoning approval for the VDACS permit pathway. The §3.2-5130 cottage food exemption also benefits from zoning compliance.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Yes

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Upon-complaint (VDACS may inspect upon consumer complaint. No routine inspection for §3.2-5130 exemption; initial inspection required for VDACS Home Food Processing permit.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED

Conditional — Virginia has two pathways: (1) Va. Code §3.2-5130 cottage food exemption — no registration or inspection for direct-to-consumer sales of non-TCS shelf-stable foods (limited list including candies, jams, jellies, dried fruits, dry herbs, nuts, vinegars, popcorn, roasted coffee, cereals, granola, baked goods not requiring temperature control). Pickles/acidified vegetables capped at \$9,000/year. Must label 'NOT FOR RESALE — PROCESSED AND PREPARED WITHOUT STATE INSPECTION.' (2) VDACS Home Food Processing Operation permit (\$40/year) allows broader foods but requires inspection. Zoning approval required for either pathway.

SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN

No

PET RESTRICTIONS

If pets are present, food processing and storage areas must be completely enclosed/separated from the rest of the home with a solid hinged door that can be latched (per VDACS Home Food Processing requirements). Under the cottage food exemption, no specific pet separation requirement.

WATER SUPPLY

Private water supply requires coliform bacteria water test (less than 6 months old) for VDACS Home Food Processing permit. No testing required under §3.2-5130 exemption.

HANDWASHING

Adequate handwashing facility required per VDACS Home Food Processing application. Good practices apply under cottage food exemption.

FOOD STORAGE

Non-TCS shelf-stable foods only under cottage food exemption. Proper storage to prevent contamination.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint — VDACS may inspect upon consumer complaint. No routine inspection for §3.2-5130 exemption; initial inspection required for VDACS Home Food Processing permit.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes — VDACS application requires written documentation of zoning approval from the local zoning office before processing. Stafford County has zoning rules for home occupations. Must provide proof of zoning approval for the VDACS permit pathway. The §3.2-5130 cottage food exemption also benefits from zoning compliance.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Yes

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Under §3.2-5130 exemption: direct-to-consumer sales only; no resale to food establishments. Under VDACS permit: direct sales and some wholesale allowed. No interstate sales under either pathway.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Number of employees must be listed on VDACS Home Food Processing application. Home occupation rules may limit non-resident employees under Stafford County zoning.

Relevant county code

Stafford County Zoning Ordinance (home occupation provisions); Va. Code §3.2-5130

RESEARCH NOTES

Verified-large county. VDACS Home Food Processing permit application confirmed: zoning approval required, \$40/year fee, initial inspection, private water testing for wells. Virginia distinctive 'NOT FOR RESALE' label requirement applies. Stafford County URL verified. No county-specific cottage food code beyond state framework identified.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://staffordcountyva.gov>

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

<https://www.vdacs.virginia.gov/pdf/homefdapplication.pdf>

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

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

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Stafford County	Spotsylvania County	Prince William County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Conditional	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	If pets are present, food processing and storage areas must be completely enclosed/ separated from the rest of the home with a solid hinged ...	Not prohibited by state statute; kitchen must maintain sanitary conditions.	No specific state cottage food pet restriction
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Upon-complaint	No	No
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Yes	Yes	Conditional
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	No
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Under §3.2-5130 exemption: direct-to-consumer sales only; no resale to food establishments. Under VDACS permit: direct sales and some whole...	Direct sales only per state law. Sales from home, at farmers markets, roadside stands, online (local delivery), and similar venues. No resa...	Virginia state law: direct sales to consumers at farmers markets, events, from home. Indirect sales through third-party retailers allowed w...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Yes	Varies	Yes
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Yes	Varies	Yes
RESTRICTIONS	Virginia has two pathways: (1) Va. Code §3.2-5130 cottage food exemption — no registration or inspection for direct-to-consumer sales of no...	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods only. No registration required at state level for most cottage foods. Pickles and acidified vegetables capped at...	Two tiers: (1) Non-acidified cottage foods (baked goods, candy, etc.) — no registration required, direct sales only, limited venues. (2) Ac...
FOOD STORAGE	Non-TCS shelf-stable foods only under cottage food exemption. Proper storage to prevent contamination.	Shelf-stable non-TCS products only. Products stored in food-safe containers.	Standard home kitchen storage for approved non-TCS foods
POPULATION	157,606	141,097	481,114

State context — Virginia cottage food law

Stafford 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.

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.

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

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/>

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

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

Classifieds

Resources for cottage food & home bakers · crosodo.com/advertise

NATIONAL

SUPPLIES

Advertise here — Supplies

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

COURSES

Advertise here — Courses

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

INSURANCE

Advertise here — Insurance

Reach home bakers across the country. crosodo.com/advertise

LOCAL

Advertise here

Reach home bakers in Stafford County, Virginia. Supply stores, farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and bakery services welcome.

crosodo.com/advertise

Your business here

Local cottage food listings, kitchen rentals, co-packer referrals, and community events — post yours free on the Crosodo Forum.

crosodo.com/nb/virginia/stafford-county-discuss

Free ad space available

Let us know if you're a non-profit or community organization. Farmers markets, kitchen rentals, and cottage food events near you welcome.

Ads are paid placements. Crosodo does not endorse listed vendors. Verify all information independently. · To advertise: crosodo.com/advertise