

New Jersey Cottage Food Operator Application Instructions

All applications must be completed using an electronic device

The PDF application form includes dropdown selections that must be completed on an electronic device. The following instructions will help you complete your application for a Cottage Food Operator Permit in New Jersey.

Handwritten applications, pictures, images or HEIC format are not accepted.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: CHECK YOUR QUALIFICATIONS

Read the Cottage Food Operator Rule before you apply: <https://tinyurl.com/NJCFO>

1. Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods are **not allowed** under the Cottage Food Operator's Permit. If you wish to make and sell TCS foods, you must use a commercial kitchen. Contact your local health department to ask how you can use a commercial kitchen to make TCS foods: nj.gov/health/lh/community
2. Call your local zoning board and ask if you are allowed to operate a Cottage Food Operator business from your home.
3. A Cottage Food Operator may NOT do the following:
 - a. Sell cottage food products outside New Jersey
 - b. Ship cottage food products to a customer's house
 - c. Sell cottage food products to a retail store or wholesale establishment

SECTION I: APPLICATION INFORMATION

Application Date

Provide the date you are submitting the application.

Type of Request

- *New permit:* New cottage food application being submitted for operation
- *Renewal of existing permit:* previously licensed cottage food operator submitting for renewal. Include the permit/license number, which does not change.

SECTION II: APPLICANT INFORMATION

Applicant Name

The full legal name of the person applying as a Cottage Food Operator. This name will appear on the Cottage Food Operator Permit.

Business Trade Name or DBA Name

If the business operates under a separate trade name, enter it here. Information entered in this field will appear on the Cottage Food Operator Permit. This field is not required.

Applicant Residential Street Address

Enter the location of the kitchen at which the applicant will prepare cottage food products.

Mailing Address, Telephone Number and Email Address

Provide a direct, year-round mailing address, telephone number, and email address for official Department communications.

SECTION III: COTTAGE FOOD PRODUCT INFORMATION

This section contains a limited dropdown menu that must be completed using an electronic device ONLY.

Handwritten applications are not accepted.

Each separate 'Product Type' box that you select, if approved, will appear on the Cottage Food Operator Permit as an approved product type for that permit. Ensure that every product recipe that you plan to offer for sale is included in this section. Only products that are approved for an individual permit may be sold under that permit.

Use one product field for each product you plan to sell that shares a product name and major food allergens. Multiple flavors of the same product may be listed in the same field. If certain flavors include different major food allergens, list them in a separate product field. If you run out of room, fill out a second product field. An example is provided below.

Page 1 of the application offers space for four (4) separate products. If you need space for additional products, utilize the additional fields provided on page 3.

Product Type

Select one of the options on the electronic dropdown menu that best describes the product. If the product cannot be described by any of the available options, select *Other** and follow the instructions provided in N.J.A.C. 8:24-11 to request approval of a unique non-TCS food product.

Product Name





Write the name of the product being sold; you may abbreviate or generalize, using the space provided.

Major Food Allergens

Check the box next to every potential major food allergen ingredient that may be used in the product. Include major food allergens that appear in the ingredients of any manufactured product that will be used in the recipe.

Example Completed Product Fields

Below is an example of four correctly completed product fields:

SECTION III – COTTAGE FOOD PRODUCT INFORMATION					
Indicate the information below for the non-TCS food that the applicant will produce as a cottage food operator. Applicant should indicate each major food allergen that a product type is likely to contain, click all that apply. Enter more products on page 3. <i>*Note: Requests for approval of other non-TCS food products not listed may be submitted to the Department in writing pursuant to N.J.A.C. 8:24-11.</i>					
Product Type	Baked goods (including bread, rolls, biscuits, cakes, cupcakes, 	Major Food Allergens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Milk	<input type="checkbox"/> Peanuts	<input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish
Product Name	Chocolate Chip cookies, Oatmeal cookies, Sugar cookies		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tree Nuts	<input type="checkbox"/> Fish	<input type="checkbox"/> Soybean
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eggs	<input type="checkbox"/> Wheat	
Product Type	Baked goods (including bread, rolls, biscuits, cakes, cupcakes, 	Major Food Allergens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Milk	<input type="checkbox"/> Peanuts	<input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish
Product Name	choc chip muffins, pound cake, white bread, cinnamon rolls		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tree Nuts	<input type="checkbox"/> Fish	<input type="checkbox"/> Soybean
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eggs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wheat	
Product Type	Chocolate-covered nuts and dried fruit 	Major Food Allergens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Milk	<input type="checkbox"/> Peanuts	<input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish
Product Name	Chocolate covered almonds		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tree Nuts	<input type="checkbox"/> Fish	<input type="checkbox"/> Soybean
			<input type="checkbox"/> Eggs	<input type="checkbox"/> Wheat	
Product Type	Candy (including brittle and toffee) 	Major Food Allergens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Milk	<input type="checkbox"/> Peanuts	<input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish
Product Name	Caramel toffee, choc. covered oreos, choc covered pretzels		<input type="checkbox"/> Tree Nuts	<input type="checkbox"/> Fish	<input type="checkbox"/> Soybean
			<input type="checkbox"/> Eggs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wheat	

SECTION IV: APPLICANT REPRESENTATIONS AND CERTIFICATION

This section lists the operational standards to which a Cottage Food Operator must adhere in order to qualify for the Cottage Food Operator Permit. Select **Yes** or **No** for each statement. Each statement must have a selected answer or the application will be denied. Any unanswered statement or **No** selection may be grounds for denial of application. Willfully false answers may subject you to civil administrative penalties, denial of application and/or revocation of your permit.

Certification by Applicant of N.J.A.C. 8:24 Cottage Food Operator Standards

Electronic signatures are not required! Typing your name in the certification box will serve as acknowledgement of the Terms and Conditions of licensure by the Department. **Failure to complete the name and date fields will result in denial of application.**

PRODUCT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EACH NAMED PRODUCT, ICING, AND FILLING

For each different product name that you intend to sell under the Cottage Food Operator's Permit, as well as each filling and icing you intend to use, submit detailed answers to the following questions. A Food Safety Specialist will evaluate your answers to ensure that your product is non-TCS as required. Incomplete or vague answers that prevent a thorough safety review will result in a denial of your product.

You may include these answers in the body of your email or in a separate document attachment with your submission. Please answer all questions for each product you will prepare. You may list multiple flavors on the same questionnaire if the base recipe is the same.

Complete the following Product Questionnaire for each product, icing, and filling:

1. Name of Product, Filling, or Icing
2. Is this product information a trade secret? Trade secrets are not subject to the Open Public Records Act, therefore they are not accessible to the public.
3. List all ingredients that are or may be used in this recipe. Include the quantity of each, preferably by weight in ALL ounces or ALL grams.
4. Describe the step-by-step recipe instructions/process for making this product.
5. Where do your ingredients come from? Indicate the source of raw ingredients.
6. Submit a copy of the product label as it will appear on the finished product.

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION AND ATTACHMENTS

Water Bill or Lab Analysis

Submit a copy of your most recent city water bill for the location of the cottage food kitchen. If the location uses private well water, submit a copy of a microbiological analysis of the private well water that is conducted using sample collected no earlier than 60 days prior to the filing date of this application.

Food Protection Managers Certification

Submit a copy of your accredited food protection managers certificate. A list of accredited Food Protection Managers Certification programs is available on the following webpage: nj.gov/health/ceohs/phfpp/retailfood

SUBMIT APPLICATION PAYMENT

Check or Money Order Number/Payment Confirmation Number

The biannual application fee of \$100 is non-refundable and is due at the time of submission. This is an application fee that pays for the processing and review of your application by a Food Safety Specialist. Denied applications are not eligible for refund.

Online payment is strongly recommended. Advantages to submitting your payment and application online include:

- Faster processing time
- No processing delays due to unintended loss or separation of checks or money orders
- Immediate, verifiable electronic documentation that your payment was successfully submitted
- Easy, no-hassle corrections in the event you need to resubmit an application
- If you pay by e-check, there is **NO** extra processing fee

Online payment options include checks and most credit cards. (Discover, American Express, MasterCard, Visa) To make an online payment:

- A link to the online payment application is available on the Cottage Food webpage: <https://tinyurl.com/NJCFO>
- The following guidance will help you fill out the online payment application:
 - **Trade or Individual Name and Physical Address:** Must match the Applicant Name and Applicant Residential Street Address you provide in SECTION II of the Cottage Food Operator Application.
 - **Responsible Party Information:** The last name and first name of the contact person for any questions about the payment submission.
 - **Application Type Information:** Select *License/Permit/Certificate* in the dropdown.
 - **Pertinent Number:** If you are submitting a renewal, input your existing permit number and expiration date. If you are applying for a new permit, leave this section blank.
 - **Payment Information:** Indicate *Electronic Check Payment* or *Credit Card Payment*. The application fee of \$100 should be prefilled for you. A nominal processing service fee will be charged for credit card payments. There is no service fee for electronic check payments.
 - **Security Message:** The security message is a string of letters and numbers in the gradated box. Click *Refresh* if you cannot see the security message. Enter the security message in the indicated text field.
 - **Click *Continue* when you are finished.** Depending on your payment type selection, you will be directed to a check payment or credit card payment page where you can complete your online payment.
 - When payment is complete, you will be presented with a payment confirmation number. You will also receive an email receipt that includes your payment confirmation number. Copy your payment confirmation number to the *Payment Confirmation Number* box on the application.

If you do not have access to a credit card or checking account, paper checks or money orders are accepted. Write the number and date of the check or money order in the box provided on the application form. Make checks and money orders payable to *NJ Department of Health*. All checks and money orders must be dated and signed. State policy prohibits processing of money orders or checks that do not include signatures and legible dates.

If you are paying with a paper check or money order, mail your application

The application must be completed on an electronic device. Handwritten applications will be returned to the sender. If you submit your application via mail, do not submit via email unless instructed to do so by a representative of the Department. Printed, typed applications and paper checks may be mailed to the following address:

United States Postal Service (USPS):

**NJ Department of Health
Public Health and Food Protection Program
P.O. Box 369
Trenton, NJ 08625**

Courier (UPS/FedEx/DHL):

**NJ Department of Health
Public Health and Food Protection Program
135 East State Street
Trenton, NJ 08608**

FINALIZE AND SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

Once the form is completed, it must be saved to your device to begin submission

Ensure the completed form is saved as a file on your device before you submit to the Department.

To submit electronically, attach the form and additional required documentation to a new email

All emailed applications and documents must be submitted as file attachments. Due to security restrictions, this office cannot open links to files that are stored externally. The original files must be attached directly to the email.

Include the following information with your email:

- **To:** cfo@doh.nj.gov
- **Subject:** **Cottage Food Application: (Applicant Name)**
- In the body of the email, provide the name and direct contact information of the applicant.

Do not mail your application in addition to email

You will receive an automated response to confirm your application is received. If you submitted your application by email, do not also mail your application. Applications which are received in duplicate will create significant delays in processing time due to limited staff and resources. Please accept the automated response as confirmation that your application is successfully received and in process.

Allow 6-8 weeks for processing

Please allow time for processing with the consideration that this is a new project with minimal staffing available. A timeline has not yet been established. A listing of current issued permits is updated online at:
nj.gov/health/ceohs/phfpp/retailfood/cottagefood.shtml

Permits will be issued via mail

Approved permits will be mailed to the mailing address provided on the form. The issued date of the permit is the date the permit was printed for mailing. Please allow two weeks from permit issuance for receipt of the mailed permit.

Walk-in delivery of applications is NOT accepted. There is no receptacle at the office to accept walk-in applications or personal delivery by applicants. The office is not open to the public. To ensure your application is promptly delivered to the appropriate office, all paper applications must be submitted by mail or courier. If you would like to expedite the process or ensure the application is received as quickly as possible, submit your application via email.