

This document places emphasis on the basic food safety requirements for home food businesses operating within the jurisdiction of Peterborough Public Health. This document focuses on equipment needs and is not intended to replace published legislation. Operators are advised to contact their municipality to determine if additional licencing or zoning requirements apply.



A home food business is a food business that operates from a private home with the intent of selling food to the public. To operate legally, a home food business must receive approval from and be routinely inspected by public health.

Home food businesses often focus on preparing low-risk foods, like cakes, cookies, and other baked goods. It is possible to prepare higher-risk foods from a home food business, but the regulatory requirements are more demanding and will typically require substantial equipment upgrades.

[O. Reg. 493/17: FOOD PREMISES](#) sets the minimum food safety requirements for all “food premises” in Ontario, including home food businesses.

The regulation refers to “**potentially hazardous foods**” as foods that can support the growth of disease-causing micro-organisms. Potentially hazardous foods require time and temperature control to limit the growth of disease-causing micro-organisms. Common potentially hazardous foods include dairy products, eggs, meat, fish, and food mixtures (like stews and casseroles).

Low-risk foods can’t support the growth of disease-causing micro-organisms and typically include: bread, candy, most baked goods, jams, pickled foods, fresh fruits and vegetables.

The basic food safety and equipment requirements for home food businesses are broken down into the following categories throughout this document:

- A) Requirements for home food businesses **preparing *only* low-risk foods**
- B) Requirements for home food businesses **preparing potentially hazardous foods**

Please note that the minimum food-safety requirements listed below apply to home-based food businesses operating within the regions served by [Peterborough Public Health](#). Other requirements of the [Ontario Food Premises Regulation](#) may be applied, as necessary, at the Public Health Inspector’s discretion.

For further information or to set up an inspection, please call 705-743-1000 and ask to speak with the Public Health Inspector for your area.

Please note that all food premises require public health inspection and approval before operation.

Home Food Business: Basic Facility Requirements

A) For home food businesses **preparing *only* low-risk foods:**

1. A single-compartment sink, as a minimum. This sink must be equipped with hot and cold potable (drinkable) water under pressure, liquid hand soap and disposable paper towels. This sink will be used for hand washing during food preparation and as a wash sink afterwards. This sink must be plumbed in as a component of the fixed plumbing system.
2. All utensils must be washed and sanitized according to [O. Reg. 493/17](#). However, if the premises only has a single-compartment sink, this sink must be used for washing and rinsing, followed by sanitizing in a tub or bin large enough to submerge the utensils in an appropriate sanitizing solution.
3. If multi-service articles are used (*i.e., eating utensils or containers intended for repeated public use*), then the premises requires a three-compartment sink or a mechanical dishwasher meeting the requirements of [O. Reg. 493/17, section 20](#).
4. There must be at least one certified food handler overseeing food preparation during all times of operation.
5. Premises must have an accurate working thermometer in all refrigeration and freezer units and ensure proper storage of raw and ready-to-eat foods.
6. If the home has domestic animals, there must be a means to prevent the animals from entering the food preparation area while food preparation for the business occurs. This may include a door, blockade or baby gate, or a designated room that the animals can be secured in.

B) For home food businesses **preparing potentially hazardous foods:**

1. To clean and sanitize utensils, premises must use a mechanical dishwasher or a sink set-up that complies with the requirements set out in [Part 4 of O. Reg. 493/17](#). If multi-service articles are used (*i.e., eating utensils or containers intended for repeated public use*), then the premises requires a three-compartment sink or a mechanical dishwasher meeting the requirements of [O. Reg. 493/17, section 20](#).
2. Premises that have a satisfactory dishwasher, but use some items too large to fit in the dishwasher, must *also* have at least a two-compartment sink capable of washing and sanitizing all items.
3. Premises must have a separate handwashing basin situated for convenient access to food handlers, with an adequate supply of potable hot and cold running water under pressure, liquid hand soap and disposable paper towels. This handwashing sink must be in addition to any required utensil washing sinks.
4. Premises without a satisfactory dishwasher must have a two or three-compartment sink and a separate handwashing basin.
5. Premises must have an accurate working thermometer in all temperature-controlled units and ensure proper storage of raw and ready-to-eat foods. Premises must also have available and use an accurate probe thermometer to confirm the internal cooking, re-heating and hot-holding temperatures of potentially hazardous foods. Temperatures must be recorded a minimum of once daily. Operators must also keep receipts of all purchased food products for one year.
6. There must be at least one certified food handler overseeing food preparation during all times of operation.
7. If the home has domestic animals, there must be a means to prevent the animals from entering the food preparation area while food preparation for the business occurs. This may include a door, blockade or baby gate, or a designated room that the animals can be secured in.

A) Requirements for home-based food businesses preparing only low-risk foods

As per [O. Reg. 493/17: FOOD PREMISES](#)

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- Potable (drinkable) water supply.
- Food contact surfaces made of non-toxic and corrosion-resistant materials.
- Food contact surfaces are smooth, non-absorbent, free from cracks and crevices, and easy to clean and sanitize.
- All other kitchen surfaces (not intended for direct food contact) must be smooth, non-absorbent, and easy to clean.
- Adequate ventilation to ensure the elimination of odours, fumes, vapours, smoke, and excessive heat.
- Adequate lighting in food preparation and food storage areas.
- Kitchen and home must be maintained in a clean and sanitary manner.
- Operators must keep receipts of all purchased food products for one year.
- Use a separate, designated tub or bin to sanitize utensils. This container must be large enough to fully submerge utensils in a proper sanitizing solution. Use sanitizer test strips to test the concentration of the sanitizer being used.
 - The following are common sanitizers with appropriate concentrations listed:
 - Chlorine: at least 100 ppm
 - Quaternary ammonium compounds: at least 200 ppm
 - Iodine: at least 25 ppm
- Fully submerge utensils in the sanitizer solution for at least 45 seconds before air-drying.
- NOTE: If multi-service articles are used (i.e., reusable containers, dishes, or eating utensils are provided for customers), then the premise requires a three-compartment sink or a mechanical dishwasher meeting the requirements of O. Reg. 493/17, PART 4.

Protect Food from Contamination:

- Keep ready-to-eat foods separate from raw foods.
- Store chemicals separate from (or below) foods.
- Label chemicals clearly.
- Store foods off of the ground.
- Keep foods covered to avoid contamination (food grade containers, wraps, lids, stored in the fridge when not in use, etc.)
- Protect utensils, equipment, and take-out supplies from contamination.

Food Handler Hygiene:

- If you use gloves, use them properly (i.e., discard them between different uses and when contaminated).
- NOTE: hand sanitizers and/or gloves do not replace the need for proper hand-washing.
- Hair must be confined.
- Clean garments/aprons.
- Sick food handlers can't work with food (diseases causing stomach upset, diarrhea, and/or vomiting are very easy to transmit).

HANDWASHING SINK

- At a minimum, a single-compartment sink is required. This sink must be equipped with an adequate supply of potable hot and cold running water, liquid hand soap, and paper towels, and be used for hand washing during food preparation.
- A separate handwashing sink is preferable, though not required for premises preparing only low-risk foods.

SANITIZING UTENSILS

- All utensils must be washed and sanitized according to Part 4 of O. Reg. 493/17.
- If only one sink is available, the proper wash, rinse, and sanitization procedure must still be used to sanitize preparation equipment and utensils:
 - Wash and rinse utensils in the available sink before sanitizing.
 - Use warm soapy water to scrub utensils, and warm running water to rinse them.

TEMPERATURE CONTROL OF FOOD

- Keep cold "potentially hazardous food"* at 4°C (40°F) or below.
- Frozen foods must be maintained in a frozen state.
- Premises must have an accurate working thermometer in all refrigeration and freezer units and ensure proper storage of raw and ready-to-eat foods. Temperatures must be recorded at a minimum of once daily.
- Operators must keep receipts of all purchased food products for one year.

FOOD HANDLER CERTIFICATE

- There must be proof of at least one Certified Food Handler on-site at all times of operation.

PREPARING HOME KITCHEN FOR BUSINESS USE

- Before operating your home food business, the following must be performed:
- Pets must be prevented from entering the food preparation area while the business is operating.
 - Clean and sanitize the kitchen area before use:
 - Use hot soapy water and a clean cloth to scrub surfaces (i.e., countertops, sinks, sink handles, and other frequently touched surfaces in the preparation area).
 - Rinse using a separate, clean, damp cloth.
 - Sanitize dry, clean surfaces using an approved sanitizer. Follow manufacturer instructions and use sanitizer test strips to test the concentration of the sanitizer being used.
 - The following are common sanitizers with appropriate concentrations listed:
 - Chlorine: at least 100 ppm
 - Quaternary ammonium compounds: at least 200 ppm
 - Iodine: at least 25 ppm

* **potentially hazardous food** means "food in a form or state that is capable of supporting the growth of infectious or toxigenic micro-organisms and which requires time and temperature control to limit such growth." Examples include meat, dairy products, fish, eggs, gravy, food mixtures, etc.

B) Requirements for home-based food businesses preparing potentially hazardous foods

As per [O. Reg. 493/17: FOOD PREMISES](#)

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

- Potable (drinkable) water supply.
- Food contact surfaces made of non-toxic and corrosion-resistant materials.
- Food contact surfaces are smooth, non-absorbent, free from cracks and crevices, and easy to clean and sanitize.
- All other kitchen surfaces (not intended for direct food contact) must be smooth, non-absorbent, and easy to clean.
- Adequate ventilation to ensure the elimination of odours, fumes, vapours, smoke, and excessive heat.
- Adequate lighting in food preparation and food storage areas.
- Kitchen and home must be maintained in a clean and sanitary manner.
- Operators must keep receipts of all purchased food products for one year.

Protect Food from Contamination:

- Keep ready-to-eat foods separate from raw foods.
- Store chemicals separate from (or below) foods.
- Label chemicals clearly.
- Store foods off of the ground.
- Keep foods covered to avoid contamination (food grade containers, wraps, lids, stored in the fridge when not in use, etc.)
- Protect utensils, equipment, and take-out supplies from contamination.

Food Handler Hygiene:

- If you use gloves, use them properly (i.e., discard them between different uses and when contaminated).
- NOTE: hand sanitizers and/or gloves do not replace the need for proper hand-washing.
- Hair must be confined.
- Clean garments/aprons.
- Sick food handlers can't work with food (diseases causing stomach upset, diarrhea, and/or vomiting are very easy to transmit).

HANDWASHING SINK

- A separate handwashing sink must be conveniently located and used for handwashing only.** The handwashing sink must have potable hot and cold running water, liquid soap, and paper towels. (Please note: this 'separate handwashing basin' is *in addition* to the required 2 or 3-compartment sink or commercial dishwasher requirements set out in PART 4 of O. Reg. 493/17.)

SANITIZING UTENSILS

- A two or three-compartment sink of sufficient size or a dishwasher meeting the requirements of PART 4 of O. Reg. 493/17.
- If sinks are being used, the proper wash, rinse, and sanitization procedure must be used for preparation equipment and utensils.
- The following are common sanitizers with appropriate concentrations listed:
 - Chlorine: at least 100 ppm
 - Quaternary ammonium compounds: at least 200 ppm
 - Iodine: at least 25 ppm

- Use sanitizer test strips to test the concentration of the sanitizer being used.
- NOTE: If multi-service articles are used (e.g. reusable containers, dishes, or eating utensils are provided for customers), then the premise requires a three-compartment sink or a mechanical dishwasher meeting the requirements of O. Reg. 493/17, PART 4.

TEMPERATURE CONTROL OF FOOD

- Keep cold "potentially hazardous food"* at 4°C (40°F) or below.
- Keep hot potentially hazardous foods at 60°C (140°F) or above.
- All refrigeration and freezer units must be equipped with an accurate thermometer for temperature monitoring. Temperatures must be recorded at a minimum of once daily.
- Probe thermometers must be available to ensure the appropriate cooking and re-heating temperatures are being met.
- 74°C (165°F) is an appropriate cooking and re-heating temperature for **most** potentially hazardous foods. However, whole poultry must be cooked to at least 82°C (180°F). These temperatures must be recorded at a minimum of once daily during the operation of the business.
- Hot foods must be cooled quickly using an approved cooling method.
- Frozen foods must be maintained in a frozen state.

FOOD HANDLER CERTIFICATE

- There must be proof of at least one Certified Food Handler on-site at all times of operation.

PREPARING HOME KITCHEN FOR BUSINESS USE

Before operating your home food business, the following must be performed:

- Pets must be prevented from entering the food preparation area while the business is operating.
- Clean and sanitize the kitchen area before use:
 - Use hot soapy water and a clean cloth to scrub surfaces (i.e., countertops, sinks, sink handles, and other frequently touched surfaces in the preparation area).
 - Rinse using a separate, clean, damp cloth.
 - Sanitize dry, clean surfaces using an approved sanitizer. Follow manufacturer instructions and use sanitizer test strips to test the concentration of the sanitizer being used.
- The following are common sanitizers with appropriate concentrations listed:
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