

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

Whatcom County

Washington · Bellingham · FIPS 53073 · Population 226,523 ·
Crosodo Index #2313*

STATE BASELINE	STATE TIER	ANNUAL SALES CAP (STATE)	CONFIDENCE	LAST VERIFIED
RCW §69.22.010-.040	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.

How to start — 60-second path

Whatcom County, Washington — permit, pickup, and label steps before the full county rules.

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes

STATE SALES CAP

—

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Conditional

INSPECTION

Yes

PETS

Washington state cottage food rules prohibit anyone other than the permittee and persons under their direct supervision in the kitchen during processing. Pet presence in the kitchen during production is prohibited; standard food safety rules apply.

BEFORE YOU SELL FROM THIS ADDRESS

- ☐ **1. Menu** — Confirm each product under Washington cottage food rules (county cannot expand a state ban).
- ☐ **2. Pickup & zoning** — Home occupation and porch pickup cells above; HOA/lease may still block customer traffic.
- ☐ **3. Local tax / license** — Business license or sales tax certificate if your city/parish requires it (common even with no state food permit).
- ☐ **4. Training** — Food handler or state registration before market day.
- ☐ **5. Labels** — Disclaimer, allergens, ingredients, net quantity, producer info.
- ☐ **6. Call if unclear** — County health and planning for your exact address.

LABEL FIELDS TO INCLUDE

- ☐ Product name · producer name · address (or allowed alternative)
- ☐ Ingredients by weight · major allergens · net weight/quantity
- ☐ Washington home-kitchen disclaimer (see live label one-pager)

CONTINUE ONLINE

[Open the live county page →](#)[Washington label one-pager →](#)[Local notes & questions →](#)

Planning path only — not legal advice. Rules change. Always verify with state and local offices before selling.

WASHINGTON: WHATCOM COUNTY

CROSODO INDEX #2313* · FIPS 53073 · Bellingham

Whatcom County

Population 226,523 · State baseline: RCW §69.22.010–.040 · MEDIUM

QUICK VIEW FOR BAKERS IN THIS COUNTY

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED?

Yes (Washington state law (RCW §69.22) requires a biennial permit from the Washington State Department of Agriculture for cottage food operations. Permit fee is approximately \$125 (inspection) + \$75 (public health review) + \$30 (processing). Annual kitchen inspection is required. Home kitchen must be the operator's primary residence. Only the permittee or persons under their direct supervision may handle products or be in the kitchen during processing.)

SEPARATE KITCHEN REQUIRED?

No

PETS ALLOWED?

Washington state cottage food rules prohibit anyone other than the permittee and persons under their direct supervision in the kitchen during processing. Pet presence in the kitchen during production is prohibited; standard food safety rules apply.

HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT?

Conditional (Whatcom County (unincorporated areas): home-based businesses allowed in residential zones as accessory use; home occupation permit and/or business license may be required. Per Whatcom County Code Title 20 (Zoning), amended April 2025 (Ordinance 2025-020), home-based businesses are regulated by type (Type I through IV). Type I (no on-site clients, no permit needed in most zones) may apply to some cottage food operations. Type II/III require conditional use permits. Cities within Whatcom County (Bellingham, Lynden, Ferndale) have their own separate rules.)

ON-SITE / PORCH PICKUP?

Conditional

INSPECTION REQUIRED?

Yes (Annual basic hygiene inspections required by Washington State Department of Agriculture as a condition of permit. Permittee must sign document granting WSDA right of entry to home during normal business hours.)

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED

Yes — Washington state law (RCW §69.22) requires a biennial permit from the Washington State Department of Agriculture for cottage food operations. Permit fee is approximately \$125 (inspection) + \$75 (public health review) + \$30 (processing). Annual kitchen inspection is required. Home kitchen must be the operator's primary residence. Only the permittee or persons under their direct supervision may handle products or be in the kitchen during processing.

SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN

No

PET RESTRICTIONS

Washington state cottage food rules prohibit anyone other than the permittee and persons under their direct supervision in the kitchen during processing. Pet presence in the kitchen during production is prohibited; standard food safety rules apply.

WATER SUPPLY

No specific private water testing requirement cited in RCW §69.22 for cottage food; standard water supply requirements apply per Washington food code.

HANDWASHING

Food and beverage service worker's permit required under RCW chapter 69.06, which implies food handler training and hygiene standards including handwashing.

FOOD STORAGE

Standard food storage requirements per Washington food safety rules; products must be non-potentially hazardous.

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes — Annual basic hygiene inspections required by Washington State Department of Agriculture as a condition of permit. Permittee must sign document granting WSDA right of entry to home during normal business hours.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional — Whatcom County (unincorporated areas): home-based businesses allowed in residential zones as accessory use; home occupation permit and/or business license may be required. Per Whatcom County Code Title 20 (Zoning), amended April 2025 (Ordinance 2025-020), home-based businesses are regulated by type (Type I through IV). Type I (no on-site clients, no permit needed in most zones) may apply to some cottage food operations. Type II/III require conditional use permits. Cities within Whatcom County (Bellingham, Lynden, Ferndale) have their own separate rules.
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES	Washington state cottage food law permits direct-to-consumer sales at farmers markets, events, and from home. Online sales and mail order within Washington are limited (statute restricts internet/mail-order/retail sales outside state). Home pickup is allowed.
MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME	Only the permittee or persons under their direct supervision may be in the kitchen during processing per RCW §69.22. Whatcom County Type I home occupation: no on-site clients; Type II permits up to 2 employees with conditional use permit.

Relevant county code

Whatcom County Code Title 20, Section 20.80.970 (Home-Based Businesses); amended by Ordinance 2025-020 (April 2025)

RESEARCH NOTES

Washington state cottage food law is among the more burdensome: biennial WSDA permit with annual inspections and food handler certification required. Whatcom County zoning amended April 2025 to regulate home-based businesses under Code Title 20 Section 20.80.970 with 4 types. Bellingham (county seat) has its own rules; unincorporated county follows county-level rules. Washington B&O tax may apply to gross receipts. CityRuleLookup summary confirmed county-level home occupation permit requirement.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://www.whatcomcounty.gov/health>

<https://www.whatcomcounty.gov>

<https://agr.wa.gov/services/business-services/food-safety-and-licensing/cottage-food-operations>

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=69.22.040>

<https://whatcom.legistar.com/View.ashx?GUID=E5C51132-6F9B-47F6-B38D-ACEF8D23716A&ID=14108620&M=F>

<https://www.cityrulelookup.com/home-business/cottage-food/whatcom-county-wa>

Questions about this county? Local notes and a place to leave a question: crosodo.com/nb/washington/whatcom-county-discuss

Bordering counties — cottage food law

Regulation	Whatcom County	Skagit County	Okanogan County
HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	Yes	Yes	Yes
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	No	No	No
PETS ALLOWED	Washington state cottage food rules prohibit anyone other than the permittee and persons under their direct supervision in the kitchen duri...	No one other than the permittee or persons under their direct supervision may handle cottage food products or be in the kitchen during proc...	Persons other than the permittee and those under their direct supervision are prohibited in the kitchen during production per RCW §69.22. P...
INSPECTION REQUIRED	Yes	Yes	Yes
ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP	Conditional	Yes	Conditional
ON-SITE SIGNAGE	Conditional	Conditional	Conditional
DELIVERY / PICKUP	Washington state cottage food law permits direct-to-consumer sales at farmers markets, events, and from home. Online sales and mail order w...	Direct sales only; no internet or mail order sales permitted. Sales only within Washington state. No one other than permittee or persons un...	Washington state cottage food law permits direct-to-consumer sales at farmers markets, events, and from home. Online sales and mail order o...
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	Conditional	Yes	Conditional
LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE	Varies	Yes	Varies
RESTRICTIONS	Washington state law (RCW §69.22) requires a biennial permit from the Washington State Department of Agriculture for cottage food operation...	Biennial permit required with fees: \$125 inspection fee + \$75 public health review fee + \$30 processing fee (\$230 total biennial). All food...	Washington state law (RCW §69.22) requires a biennial permit from the Washington State Department of Agriculture for cottage food operation...
FOOD STORAGE	Standard food storage requirements per Washington food safety rules; products must be non-potentially hazardous.	Non-potentially hazardous baked goods, candies, jams/jellies/preserves/fruit butters, and other items identified by director by rule. No TH...	Standard food storage requirements per Washington food safety rules; products must be non-potentially hazardous.
POPULATION	226,523	129,480	42,243

State context — Washington cottage food law

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

STATUTE	ANNUAL SALES CAP
RCW §69.22.010–.040	—
REGISTRATION REQUIRED	FOOD HANDLER CERT
Yes	Yes
KITCHEN INSPECTION	DIRECT SALES ONLY
Yes	Yes
INDIRECT SALES	
No — Cottage food products may only be sold directly to the consumer. Internet sales, mail order, and retail sale outside Washington state are explicitly prohibited. Products may not be repackaged, sold, or used as an ingredient by a food processing plant, or sold by a food service establishment.	

For the full state-level analysis including the verbatim statute text, see the [Washington cottage food law report](#) on Crosodo, or open the live guide: crosodo.com/states/washington.

STATE-LEVEL REFERENCES

State statute: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=69.22.040>

State dept cottage food page: <https://agr.wa.gov/services/business-services/food-safety-and-licensing/cottage-food-operations>

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

Questions about Whatcom County? Local notes and a place to leave a question are on Crosodo. We monitor new threads — start with zoning, permits, or porch pickup.

crosodo.com/nb/washington/whatcom-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 Whatcom County, Washington. 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 on Crosodo.

crosodo.com/nb/washington/whatcom-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.

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