

COTTAGE FOOD LAW REPORT

District of Columbia

A comprehensive guide to the cottage food statute, sales rules, and county-level zoning and health-department overlays for home bakers operating under D.C. Code §7-742.02.

STATUTE	TIER	IJ GRADE	COUNTIES COVERED	LAST VERIFIED
D.C. Code §7-742.02	Okay	D	1	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.

Contents

Executive summary 3

Code of the District of Columbia §7-742.02 (Cottage food businesses);
implementing Cottage Food Amendment Act of 2013 (D.C. Law 20-63) — D.C.
Code §7-742.02 4

County-level rules (1 county) 6

#98 District of Columbia · Washington 6

Executive summary

This report covers the District of Columbia cottage food framework — the state statute, the regulatory body administering it, what producers can and cannot sell, and county-level rules layered on top of state law for the 1 District of Columbia county included in this dataset.

ANNUAL SALES CAP

none

REGISTRATION REQUIRED

yes

FOOD HANDLER CERTIFICATION

yes (specific course)

KITCHEN INSPECTION

yes

DIRECT SALES ONLY

no

INDIRECT SALES (RETAIL/ONLINE/WHOLESALE)

yes — As of 2020 amendments, DC allows direct, online, retail (excluding restaurants and grocery stores), and wholesale sales to food establishments (expanded further in 2025 by B26-0025); sales must remain within the District.

RESEARCH NOTES

The original enabling legislation is D.C. Law 20-63 (Cottage Food Amendment Act of 2013), codified at D.C. Official Code §7-742.01 et seq. The statute_url in the input (§48-110.01) appears to be an older citation; the current operative section is §7-742.02. DC underwent significant expansions: 2020 amendments (B23-0192 and B23-0269) removed the sales limit and allowed online and retail sales; 2025 B26-0025 added wholesale to food establishments. To register, operators must: (1) pay \$50 fee (valid 2 years), (2) complete a food safety manager course (not just a food handler course — must be CFPM-level), (3) obtain a Home Occupation Permit from DCRA/DLCP, and (4) apply for a Certified Food Protection Manager ID card (\$35, valid 3 years). DC is unusual in requiring manager-level food safety certification (not just a basic food handler course) and allowing optional pre-operational inspection. The input citation §48-110.01 may be from an earlier codification; verified current code is §7-742.02.

Code of the District of Columbia §7-742.02 (Cottage food businesses); implementing Cottage Food Amendment Act of 2013 (D.C. Law 20-63)

CITATION

D.C. Code §7-742.02

ENACTED

2014

LAST AMENDED

2025

CONFIDENCE

HIGH

Allowed foods

DC allows most non-potentially hazardous foods including baked goods, candies, condiments (honey, syrups, vinegars), dry goods, pastries, preserves, and snacks. The approved food list is specified in 25-K DCMR 103.5. Products not on the approved list may be submitted for department review with lab testing.

Prohibited foods

Prohibited items include perishable baked goods, acidified foods, low-acid canned foods, pickles, fruit butters, salsas, sauces, ketchup, mustards, juices, meat jerkies, and pet food. All TCS (time/temperature control for safety) foods are prohibited.

Labeling requirements

Labels must include the cottage food business identification number, product name, ingredients in descending order by weight, net weight/volume, allergen information per federal requirements, and the statement 'Made by a cottage food business that is not subject to the District of Columbia's food safety regulations' in at least 10-point contrasting type.

Statutory text — verbatim excerpt

Statute excerpt — verbatim

(b)(1) A cottage food business shall register with the Cottage Food Business Registry within the Department before beginning operation. (2) The Department may perform an inspection of the cottage food business before that business may sell its cottage food products. (3) The Department shall issue a cottage food business identification number and certificate to each registered cottage food business. Upon receipt of a cottage food business identification number and certificate, the cottage food business shall be authorized to produce, package, and sell the temperature control for safety food products on the approved food products list issued by the Department, set forth in section 103.5 of Title 25-K of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations (25-K DCMR 103.5). The cottage food business shall not produce, package, or sell any food products that are not allowed by the Department nor use any processes and activities that are not allowed by the Department. (c) The owner of a cottage food business may sell only cottage food products that are: (1) Stored on the premises of the cottage food business; and (2) Prepackaged with a label that contains the following information: (A) The cottage food business identification number; (B) The name of the cottage food product; (C) The ingredients of the cottage food product in descending order of the amount of each ingredient by weight; (D) The net weight or net volume of the cottage food product; (E) Allergen information as specified by federal labeling requirements; (G) The following statement printed in 10-point or larger type in a color that provides a clear contrast to the background of the label: 'Made by a cottage food business that is not subject to the District of Columbia's food safety regulations.'

Source: <https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/code/sections/7-742.02.html>

Official sources

Statute <https://code.dccouncil.us/dc/council/code/sections/48-110.01.html>

State dept page <https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/cottage-food-businesses>

Registration <https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/cottage-food-businesses>

Forrager.com <https://forrager.com/law/district-of-columbia/>

State dept of agriculture / health: **DC Department of Health**

County-level rules

The state statute above sets the floor. Each county may add a home-occupation permit, business license, or zoning rule on top of state law. The 1 District of Columbia county below are sorted by population (largest first).

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District of Columbia

Population 670,587 · State baseline: D.C. Code §7-742.02; 25-K DCMR 103.5 (approved foods list); no annual cap · HIGH

Home kitchen rules

HOME KITCHEN ALLOWED	yes — DC cottage food requires: (1) \$50 registration fee (valid 2 years) from DC Health; (2) Certified Food Protection Manager (CFPM) certification — not just food handler card; (3) Home Occupation Permit from DCRA/DLCP; (4) CFPM ID card (\$35, valid 3 years). Optional pre-operational inspection available. Kitchen must meet sanitation standards.
SEPARATE DEDICATED KITCHEN	no
PET RESTRICTIONS	Not specified; standard sanitation applies
WATER SUPPLY	Municipal water (DC Water) standard; potable water required
HANDWASHING	CFPM certification implies comprehensive knowledge of handwashing/sanitation
FOOD STORAGE	Standard food storage per DC cottage food regulations; 25-K DCMR 103.5

Inspection & permitting

INSPECTION REQUIRED	conditional — Optional pre-operational inspection available (not required). DC Health may inspect upon complaint. No routine inspections.
HOME OCCUPATION PERMIT	yes — DC requires a Home Occupation Permit from DCRA (Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs) / DLCP (Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection) as part of the cottage food registration process. This is a mandatory step. Contact DLCP at 1100 4th Street SW, Washington DC, or online at dlcp.dc.gov .

LOCAL BUSINESS LICENSE yes

Customer-facing rules

ON-SITE CUSTOMER PICKUP yes

ON-SITE SIGNAGE conditional

DELIVERY / PICKUP RULES Online and retail sales allowed (2020/2025 amendments). Direct-to-consumer, online, retail stores permitted. 2025 B26-0025 added wholesale to food establishments. No annual sales cap. Sales within DC.

MAX EMPLOYEES IN HOME unknown

Relevant county code

D.C. Code §7-742.02; 25-K DCMR 103.5; DLCP Home Occupation Permit regulations

RESEARCH NOTES

DC is unusual in requiring CFPM (Certified Food Protection Manager) certification — not just a basic food handler course — for cottage food operators. The Home Occupation Permit is a mandatory step in the registration process, making DC one of the clearer cases of explicit home occupation permit requirement for cottage food. No annual sales cap (removed in 2020 amendments). The 2025 amendment (B26-0025) added wholesale to food establishments. DC's cottage food law was created by D.C. Law 20-63 (2013) and significantly amended in 2020 and 2025.

SOURCES VERIFIED AT RESEARCH TIME

<https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/cottage-food-businesses>

<https://dlcp.dc.gov>

<https://dc.gov>

<https://dchealth.dc.gov/service/cottage-food-businesses>

Generated 2026-05-06 from data/research/state_cottage_food_statutes.csv and data/research/county_cottage_food_zoning.csv. This report is for research purposes only and does not constitute legal advice. Cottage food law is in active flux — re-verify all citations and rules against state and county .gov sources before relying on them for regulatory decisions.