

WORKBOOK • QUIZ • PDF

Food Safety Quiz for Cottage Bakers

Interactive study PDF: general food-safety questions plus Minnesota MDA Tier 1 training-style items. Answer key and full source citations at the end.

How to use this workbook

1. Print or fill digitally without peeking at the answer key.
2. Complete Part A (general), then Part B (Minnesota MDA study items) if relevant.
3. Check answers in Part C. Review each citation before market day.

Not a substitute for official state training, food handler certificates, or legal advice. Minnesota items are adapted for study from publicly available MDA training materials.

Part A — General food safety

QUESTION 1

What is the safest way to cool a large pot of soup before storage?

- Leave it on the counter overnight so it cools slowly
- Divide into shallow containers and refrigerate promptly
- Put the lid on tightly and leave it in the oven
- Freeze it while still boiling hot

QUESTION 2

Which practice best reduces cross-contamination in a home bakery?

- Use the same towel for hands and counters
- Wash hands, use clean tools, and keep raw eggs/meat away from ready-to-eat bakes
- Rinse utensils with warm water only
- Wipe counters with a dry cloth between batches

QUESTION 3

For most cottage food laws, which product is usually NOT allowed without commercial licensing?

- Shelf-stable cookies
- Dry spice blends
- Cheesecake that requires refrigeration
- Fruit jam processed for shelf stability (where state allows)

QUESTION 4

How long should you wash your hands with soap and water before handling food?

- About 5 seconds
- At least 20 seconds
- Until the water looks clean
- Hand sanitizer alone is always enough

QUESTION 5

What should appear on a typical cottage food product label?

- Only the product name
- Business identity, ingredients, allergens, net weight, and home-kitchen disclaimer (as required by your state)
- Just a price sticker
- Only a QR code to your Instagram

QUESTION 6

Which storage habit is safest for dry ingredients?

- Open bags on the floor of the pantry
- Sealed containers off the floor, cool and dry, labeled with dates
- Uncovered bowls next to the trash
- Mixed flour and cleaning chemicals on the same shelf

QUESTION 7

If a customer reports a foodborne illness after buying your bake, you should:

- Delete the review and ignore it
- Document the complaint, stop selling the batch if needed, and contact your local health authority for guidance
- Offer a free cookie only
- Assume it is impossible

QUESTION 8

True or false: "If it looks and smells fine, it is always safe."

- True
- False

Part B — Minnesota MDA training-style questions

QUESTION 9

Which of the following qualifies as a cottage food producer?

- A. Groups of persons
- B. Licensed retail food handlers
- C. An individual
- D. All of the above

QUESTION 10

What is the pH OR water activity level a food product must have to be sold under the cottage food exemption?

- A. pH of 4.1 and water activity of 0.90
- B. pH of 4.6 and water activity of 0.85
- C. pH of 5.0 and water activity of 0.80
- D. None of these are correct

QUESTION 11

Which of the example product(s) can be made and sold under the cottage food exemption?

- A. Roasted walnuts
- B. Pickled green beans
- C. Chocolate chip cookies
- D. All of the above

QUESTION 12

True or False? Food products containing cannabidiol (CBD) can be made and sold under the cottage food exemption.

- True
- False

QUESTION 13

Which of the example product(s) can be made and sold under the cottage food exemption?

- A. Cakes topped with cut fresh fruit garnish
- B. Cheesecake
- C. Charcuterie boards
- D. Canned, pickled cucumbers

QUESTION 14

Pet treats can be produced and sold for which animal(s)?

- A. Cats
- B. Birds, fish, and reptiles
- C. Dogs
- D. Both A and C

Part C — Answer key (general)

ANSWER 1

Divide into shallow containers and refrigerate promptly

Shallow containers cool faster and keep food out of the temperature danger zone (about 41–135°F / 5–57°C).

Source: CDC / FDA food safety temperature control guidance (Danger Zone).

ANSWER 2

Wash hands, use clean tools, and keep raw eggs/meat away from ready-to-eat bakes

Handwashing, dedicated clean tools, and separating raw and ready-to-eat foods are core food-safety practices.

Source: FDA Food Code principles; USDA FSIS cross-contamination guidance.

ANSWER 3

Cheesecake that requires refrigeration

Time/temperature control for safety (TCS) foods like cheesecake usually need a commercial kitchen or different license.

Source: State cottage food statutes; FDA TCS food definitions.

ANSWER 4

At least 20 seconds

CDC recommends at least 20 seconds of soap and water handwashing.

Source: CDC: When and How to Wash Your Hands ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)).

ANSWER 5

Business identity, ingredients, allergens, net weight, and home-kitchen disclaimer (as required by your state)

Most states require producer identity, ingredients, allergens, net quantity, and a home-kitchen / not-inspected statement.

Source: Crosodo state labeling matrix; state departments of agriculture.

ANSWER 6

Sealed containers off the floor, cool and dry, labeled with dates

Pest control, moisture control, and clear labeling protect product safety and inventory control.

Source: FDA retail food storage practices; extension food safety bulletins.

ANSWER 7

Document the complaint, stop selling the batch if needed, and contact your local health authority for guidance

Document, isolate product if appropriate, and work with authorities.

Source: Local health department complaint procedures; FDA foodborne illness response principles.

ANSWER 8

False

Many pathogens do not change smell, taste, or appearance.

Source: USDA FSIS / CDC foodborne pathogen education.

Part C continued — Answer key (Minnesota)

ANSWER 9

C. An individual

To qualify as a cottage food producer under Minnesota Tier 1 training materials, you must be an individual.

Source: Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Cottage Food Producer Registration Training (Tier 1), Jan 2022, Check Your Understanding.

ANSWER 10

B. pH of 4.6 and water activity of 0.85

Highest pH 4.6 for canned products under the exemption; highest water activity 0.85.

Source: MDA Cottage Food Producer Registration Training (Tier 1), Jan 2022.

ANSWER 11

D. All of the above

Roasted walnuts, pickled green beans, and chocolate chip cookies are listed as allowed examples in the MDA training.

Source: MDA Cottage Food Producer Registration Training (Tier 1), Jan 2022.

ANSWER 12

False

CBD is not an approved ingredient for food products under the exemption training materials.

Source: MDA Cottage Food Producer Registration Training (Tier 1), Jan 2022.

ANSWER 13

D. Canned, pickled cucumbers

Fresh cut fruit, cheesecake, and charcuterie are typically potentially hazardous; pickled cucumbers are the allowed example.

Source: MDA Cottage Food Producer Registration Training (Tier 1), Jan 2022.

ANSWER 14

D. Both A and C

MDA training addresses home-processed pet treats for dogs and cats.

Source: MDA Cottage Food Producer Registration Training (Tier 1), Jan 2022 (pet treat section).

Sources & citations

1. CDC — When and How to Wash Your Hands. <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
2. CDC / FDA — Temperature danger zone and safe cooling practices for TCS foods.
3. FDA Food Code — cross-contamination and hygiene principles (retail food safety framework).
4. USDA FSIS — foodborne pathogen and consumer food safety education.
5. Minnesota Department of Agriculture — Cottage Food Producer Registration Training (Tier 1), revised January 2022. Official PDF: https://www.mda.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/docs/2022-01/Updated%20Cottage%20Food%20Training_2.1%20January%202022_0.pdf
6. Minnesota MDA cottage food producer registration program page. <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/food/business/cottage-food-producer-registration>
7. Crosodo state cottage food law directory — <https://crosodo.com/states>
8. Crosodo state labeling research matrix — <https://crosodo.com/resources/label-templates>
9. Interactive web quiz companion — <https://crosodo.com/resources/food-safety-quiz>

Always verify current rules with your state department of agriculture and local health department. Agency materials may be updated without notice.