



LINKS

GDA— www.agr.georgia.gov

Documents available in PDF: General Rules, Basic Regulatory Requirements, Guidelines For Food Products Sold At Events Sponsored By Non-Profit Organizations, Food Sales Establishment License Application, Mobile Food Vehicle Regulations, Mobile Vehicle License Application.



FDA — www.fda.gov

21 CFR 101 (labeling regulations) Can be found on their website, as well as a small business exemption form for the Nutrition Facts Labeling Requirement. Recall announcements are posted on their website.



USDA — www.usda.gov

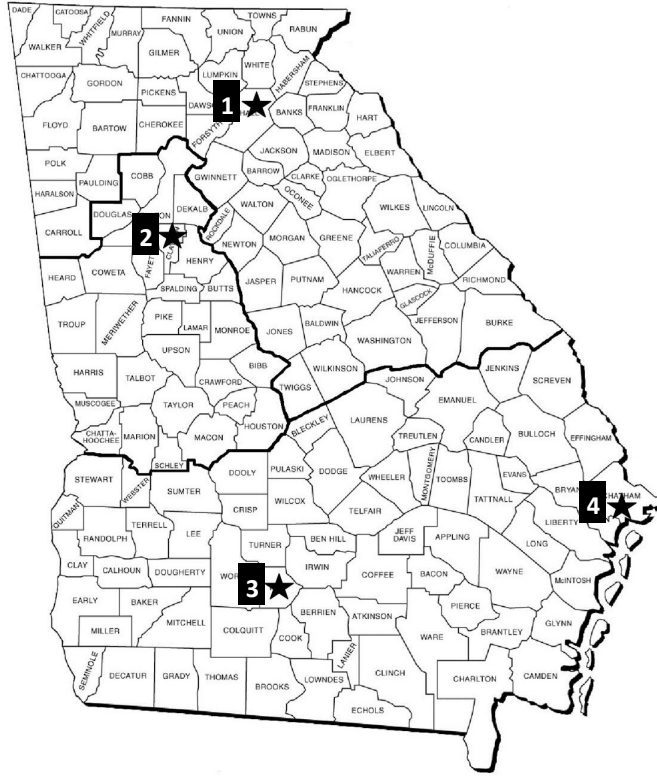
Additional information about labeling can be found on their website. They have information about the WIC Program, Organics, Country of Origin Labeling, and Food Safety Q & A (*Ask Karen*). Recall announcements concerning meat, poultry, and egg products are posted on their website.



The University of Georgia

UGA Department of Food Science & Technology— www.efsonline.uga.edu

Offers information on Nutrition Labeling, Process Approval (Acidified/Low-Acid Foods), Food Safety Publications, and information on Starting A New Food Business In Georgia.



Food Safety Field Forces

1—North District Office

*Food Safety Division
Poultry Grading Office*
1195 Jesse Jewell Pkwy
Gainesville, GA 30504
P: 770-535-5955
F: 770-531-6483

2—Metro District Office

Food Safety Division
Atlanta State
Farmers Market
16 Forest Pkwy Bldg 2 - 1
Forest Park, GA 30297
P: 404-363-7646
F: 404-362-2604

3—South District Office

Food Safety Division
3150 US Hwy 41 South
Tifton, GA 31794
P: 229-386-3489
F: 229-386-3365

4—Seafood Safety Office

Savannah State
Farmers Market
701 U.S. Hwy 80 West
Savannah, GA 31408
P: 912-963-2500
F: 912-966-7954

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Gary W. Black
Commissioner

Starting a Food Business



Food Safety Division
19 Martin Luther King Jr Dr SW
Room 306
Atlanta, GA 30334

Phone: 404-656-3627
Fax: 404-463-6428
www.agr.georgia.gov

Starting a Food Business

The Georgia Food Act

When you decide to start a food business, the first issue that must be considered is licensing. Is the establishment going to be **FOOD SERVICE** or **FOOD SALES**? Food service operations are regulated by county health departments. Food sales establishments are regulated by the Georgia Department of Agriculture. The Georgia Food Act requires anyone who intends to operate a food sales establishment in the state of Georgia to obtain a license from the Department. The only exemption to the licensing requirement is for food sold at non-profit events. This will be discussed in more detail later. For now, assuming you will require a license; there are regulations that address what equipment you will need.

FACILITIES

There are basic facilities required, regardless of where (home, retail store, or shared kitchen) you intend to operate. A three (3) compartment sink is required for cleaning. A handwash sink must be conveniently located to the processing areas and in the restroom. A restroom must be available for employees to use. A mop sink is required to dispose of mop water. Floors, walls, and ceilings must be smooth and easily cleanable, and the facility should be free of pests and their possible points of entry. Water must be from an approved source. Public water systems are sufficient, and the Department will test private water sources prior to licensing.

Hot water supply must be adequate to meet the peak demands of the establishment. Plumbing shall be designed, constructed, and installed according to local codes. Sewage must be conveyed through an approved public or individual disposal system.

Counties and municipalities may require grease traps, and should be consulted prior to licensing.

Equipment for hot and cold holding shall be of sufficient size and capacity to ensure that cold foods are held below 40 degrees Fahrenheit and hot foods are held at 135 degrees Fahrenheit or hotter.

Freezers must maintain food in a frozen state, hard to the touch. If you intend to operate a licensed establishment from your home, you will need to set up a separate kitchen with separate equipment. The domestic kitchen cannot be licensed by the Department as it is considered part of the living quarters. **You should first check with your local planning and zoning to ensure that you can operate a business from your residence.**

FOOD

Food must be of sound condition and safe for human consumption, and obtained from approved sources. Food prepared in an unlicensed facility must not be used or offered for sale in a food establishment. Rooms used to store food must not be used for living quarters.

LABELS

Food must be labeled according to the Code of Federal Regulations 21 CFR 101. Label reviews should be conducted by the Department prior to distributing a product, and if there is a fundamental change made to a previously approved label. See the **Links** section for more on labeling.

LICENSING

The Food Sales Establishment License application form is available online (see the Links Section), or you can call a District Office and the form can be faxed, mailed, or emailed to you. Prior to licensing, please contact the District Office that serves your area (see *the Food Safety Field Forces map*) and schedule a pre-licensing inspection to make sure that your facilities are adequate for your intended operation, and that you meet the facility requirements according to the regulations. There is a fee for the license. Depending on the risk category of your establishment, the fee will range from \$100 to \$300. The food license is renewed annually beginning on July 1st. Note that proof of licensing may be required by your county or municipality before issuance of a business license, or a beer and wine license.

FOOD SOLD AT NON-PROFIT EVENTS

There is an exemption from licensing in the Georgia Food Act which allows some foods, generally recognized as safe (“non-potentially hazardous foods”), produced in a domestic kitchen to be sold at non-profit events. These events must be sponsored by a 501(c)3 organization. Products made for sale at these events should be labeled with the common name of the product, an ingredients statement, and the name and address of the manufacturer. Certain foods governed under additional laws are not allowable under the exemption. These foods include: **Dairy Products, Meat Products, Eggs, Organic Foods, and Acidified / Low-Acid Foods.** For a list of the acceptable products, please visit the Department’s website (*see the Links section*).