



TOMÁS J. ARAGÓN, MD, DrPH
Director and State Public Health Officer

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor

Frequently Ask Questions: Cottage Food Operations and Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations

Cottage Food Operations (CFOs) are a low-risk operation based on a limited number of nonhazardous food products that can be stored. Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations (MEHKOs) are allowed to produce potentially hazardous foods but must be served the same day it is prepared without storage. Operations beyond the scope of a CFO or MEHKO are welcome to apply for a retail food permit from the local environmental health authority or a processed food registration from CDPH.

Question 1

Can a person operate both a CFO and a MEHKO in their residential kitchen?

Answer 1

No. One residence cannot have both a CFO and a MEHKO. The law does not allow a CFO and a MEHKO in the same residence. The definition of a MEHKO does not include a CFO (see HSC 113825(b)).

Question 2

Can a person operate multiple CFOs or multiple MEKHOS in their residence?

Answer 2

No. A cottage food operator is an individual who operates a cottage food operation in his or her private home and is the owner. (see Health and Safety Code section 113758).

A MEHKO is a food facility that is operated by a resident in a private home where food is stored, handled and prepared (see Health and Safety Code section 113825).

Both a CFO and MEHKO have limitations for the gross dollar amount allowed, number of employees, type of operation, allowed foods, etc. in a single residence. The law does not allow limits to be aggregated by multiple operations in the same residence.

Question 3

Could multiple people living in the same residence each operate a CFO or MEHKO in the same residence.

Answer 3

No. See Answer 1 and 2

