



MICROENTERPRISE HOME KITCHEN OPERATIONS GOOD NEIGHBOR PRACTICES



Promoting Safe and Thriving Communities

A Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation (MEHKO) is a food facility that is operated by a resident in a private home where food is stored, handled, and prepared for customers. Customers have the option to dine at the home, pick up their orders, or receive delivery by an employee of the MEHKO.

Since these operations are approved to operate in residential neighborhoods, there are potential impacts to the community that may arise from the operation of a MEHKO, such as impacts to an existing sewer/septic system, an increase in traffic or noise, impacts to available parking, impacts from improper trash disposal, and potential fire risks associated with the operation. This guidance document includes best practice tips to help MEHKO operators reduce or prevent these potential community impacts.

If you are interested in operating a MEHKO, please be a good neighbor, and follow the best practices below:

FAT, OIL, AND GREASE DISPOSAL

Fat, cooking oil, or grease (FOG) should be properly disposed of and should not be poured down the sink as these can clog drains and cause sewer pipes to back up and septic systems to fail. To reduce the impact to your sewer/septic system, consider the following options:

- Fat, oil, and grease should go from the pan to the trashcan.
- Cool down your cooking oil, grease, and/or fat, then pour them into a container with a secure lid.
- Wipe out pots and pans with a paper towel before doing dishes; you will use less soap and decrease the chance of clogs in your pipes.
- Dispose of food scraps in the trash or green waste recycling container, not down a garbage disposal, drains, or toilets.
- Mix FOGs in your trash with absorbent waste like paper, coffee grounds, or kitty litter.
- Pour FOGs into an old milk carton, juice container, or another disposable container.
- Put fat trimmings into the trash, not the garbage disposal.



TRAFFIC

The following may help reduce potential increases in traffic and keep your neighborhood safe:

- Remind customers to drive slowly and safely while in your neighborhood.
- Schedule customer food pick-ups with staggered times to reduce traffic congestion.
- Ensure customers coming to pick up meals do not block streets and regular traffic flow.



NOISE

Outdoor dining and customers picking up meals may cause additional noise. Help reduce noise impacts to your neighbors:

- Minimize the volume of amplified music and ask customers to speak quietly while picking up or eating food to avoid disturbing neighbors.
- Maintain routine business hours. Check with your local code enforcement or police/sheriff's department on specific business hour restrictions. For a list of local zoning contacts, click [here](#).
- Be mindful of noise generated by patrons dining in or picking up meals after 10 p.m.



PARKING

Help ensure your neighbors have available parking:

- Utilize onsite parking for customers. Have a dedicated spot in your driveway (where applicable) for customers to park.
- If you do not have a driveway, ensure that customers have easy access to parking, or arrange an appropriate spot to bring food items to customers.
- If parking is limited in your neighborhood, consider delivering the food items to customers.

TRASH

Help keep your neighborhood trash free:

- Do not overfill trash cans and ensure all trash bags are properly secured prior to throwing away.
- Dispose of trash in leakproof and rodentproof containers to prevent odors and pests.
- Sort and dispose of recyclables in proper bins.
- Provide a trash can for your customers to properly dispose of any trash and prevent trash from accumulating on the streets or your neighbor's property.
- If customers leave behind any trash on the lawn, sidewalk, or street, be sure to properly dispose of it.
- Contact your trash provider if needed to schedule additional trash pick-ups to prevent excess trash, or take broken appliances to the appropriate local recycling facilities.



FIRE PREVENTION

The following are good recommendations to further reduce the risk of fire at your home business. Check with your local fire authority for specific regulations for your area:

- Reduce the risk of fire near your home business by maintaining an effective fuel modification zone. Remove, clear, or modify combustible vegetation and other flammable materials within 100 feet of buildings or structures.
- Make sure emergency personal can find your home business. Address numbers should be installed at the driveway entrance and on the front wall of the residence. The address numbers should be plainly visible, a minimum of 4 inches in height with a 1/2"-inch stroke, and a contrasting background.
- Move outdoor cooking appliances away from your home or other structures. Verify whether your area has restrictions in place on the use of outdoor wood burning stoves/barbecues. All structures having a stove or barbecue should have a stovepipe equipped with an approved spark arrester (a device which prevents the emission of flammable debris from combustion sources such as fireplaces and wood burning ovens).
- Smoke alarms and Carbon Monoxide alarms should be installed in all homes. These devices can help alert you or your customers in the event of an emergency.
- Residences shall have a compliant fire extinguisher (minimum type K) available within the cooking area.



LAND USE

Only one MEHKO is allowed to operate per residence. Ensure the proper permits are obtained before operating and:

- If renting, verify with property owner that you are allowed to operate a MEHKO at your residence.
- If part of an HOA, verify with the HOA that you are allowed to operate a MEHKO at your residence.