



County of San Diego

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND QUALITY

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MICROENTERPRISE HOME KITCHEN OPERATION (MEHKO) QUICKFACTS

A **Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operation (MEHKO)** is a type of food service, like a mini restaurant, that is operated by a resident in a private home where food is stored, handled, and prepared and then served to customers. Below are quick facts about the MEHKO requirements, limitations, and the steps needed to start a MEHKO in San Diego County.



MEHKO Requirements

- A permit issued from the Department of Environmental Health & Quality must be obtained prior to operating a MEHKO.
- **One** full-time food employee, (not including a family member or household member) may work at the MEHKO.
- The MEHKO operator must successfully pass an approved and accredited food safety manager certification examination. Also, any person(s) involved with the MEHKO must complete food handler training.
- Food must be prepared, cooked, and served on the same day.
- People can dine at your home, get takeout, or have their food delivered.
- Food options that can be prepared include a wide variety of restaurant-style menus.

MEHKO Limitations

- Only **one** MEHKO can be permitted per residence. This must be the primary residence of the MEHKO operator.
- Food preparation is limited to a maximum of 30 meals per day or 90 meals per week. If operating a permitted mobile cart in conjunction with the MEHKO, the maximum is 80 meals per day or 200 meals per week.
- Gross annual sales are capped at \$100,000 as adjusted annually according to the California Consumer Price Index. If operating a permitted mobile cart in conjunction with the MEHKO, the gross annual sales cap increases to \$150,000.
- No signage or other outdoor displays for advertising are allowed.
- Food from a MEHKO cannot be sold to other food facilities, and a MEHKO cannot operate as a Cottage Food Operator or a Caterer.
- Only an employee of the MEHKO, or a family member, may deliver food to the consumer.
- MEHKOs may not produce, serve, or use raw milk, or serve raw oysters or any food that would require a HACCP plan/specialized process.
- A MEHKO that wishes to use their home as a commissary for their own permitted mobile cart operation may do so only after receiving approval from this department.

How to Open a MEHKO

- 1) Submit the following to our department for review: **a)** Food Facility Health Permit application, **b)** Standard Operating Procedure form, **c)** Proposed Menu, **d)** Food Safety Certificate, and **e)** Well water testing results (if on a private well).
- 2) Once all the above documents have been reviewed and approved by this department, and permit fees are paid, the Health Permit to operate a MEHKO will be issued.
- 3) An inspection of your home kitchen will be scheduled by an inspector and must be completed prior to starting your MEHKO operation. Your health permit will be delivered during this initial inspection.

For additional information, please visit the Department of Environmental Health & Quality's webpage at: www.sdcdehq.org or e-mail us at fndmehko@sdcounty.ca.gov.