

Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations (MEHKO)



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Background

- Prior to 2012, no home based food businesses allowed
- January 2013 – Cottage Food Operations
- September 2018 – MEHKO signed into law (Effective January 1, 2019)



Why was this law written?

- “Farm-to-Table” movement
- Economic opportunities for all socioeconomic statuses
- Provide “food deserts” access to healthy, home-cooked foods
- Cottage Food only allows for packaged, shelf-stable foods
- Small start-up costs
- Economic benefits to local communities



Program Details

- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's), Health Permit, initial inspection, annual routine inspections, complaints and food borne illness investigations
- Few limitations on the types of foods
- Customers dine in, pick up or have food delivered, just like a restaurant
- Food prepared and consumed on same day
- Food prep limited to 30 meals per day and 60 meals per week max
- One full-time employee, not including a family member or household member
- Not to exceed \$50,000 in verifiable gross annual sales
- Food Handler Training required
- Can use an Intermediary Food Delivery Service (GrubHub, Uber Eats, etc.)

Food Safety Concerns

- Contamination of equipment or surfaces
- Improper temperature control of food
- Unsanitary conditions
- Less knowledgeable food handlers
- No letter grade



MEHKO vs Restaurant

	MEHKO	Restaurant
Food Service: Sit Down, Dine-In, or Delivery?	YES	YES
Limitations on food service type?	YES No shellfish, HACCP required processes, or dairy production	NO
Alcohol service allowed?	YES	YES
Limitations on number of inspections?	YES	NO
Scheduled inspection?	YES	NO
Grade Card posted?	NO	YES

Other Concerns

- Waste water impacts
- Safe drinking water:
- Enforcement Limitations
 - Inspection
 - Annual gross income
 - Number of meals
- Compliance with applicable local noise ordinances
- No Business License requirements written into the law



Community Concerns

- No public notice or public input required
- Traffic
- Parking
- Visual Impacts
- Odors or BBQ smoke
- Special Events
- No limit on hours of operation
- Serving of Alcohol
- ADA Accessibility



Assembly Bill (AB) 377

- Clarifies approving agency to be governing body of the Local Enforcement Agency
- Additional food safety requirements
 - Facilities for sanitizing food equipment and utensils
 - No outdoor food display
 - No wood cutting boards
 - People not associated with business accessing kitchen



Program Implementation

- MEHKO must be authorized by a city or county before it can be implemented
- If authorized, DEH is the permitting regulatory authority
- MEHKO has not been authorized anywhere in the county or state

Program Implementation

- Continued communication with agency partners
- Continued engagement in statewide working group
- Monitoring progress of the urgency bill

Questions?



Thank you!

