

## Frequently Asked Questions Related to Wholesale Food Processing Operations

QUESTION: I want to open a food processing business requiring a 20C Food Processing License. How do I make my firm ready to open?

ANSWER: *Since there may be local building code requirements, it is advised you follow up with them to address any issues under their jurisdiction. As far as NYS Agriculture and Markets, the firm must have the necessary equipment and facilities to conduct the planned operations. In very general terms, the floors, walls and ceiling must be made of smooth and easily cleanable surfaces. Acceptable equipment washing and sanitizing facilities must be conveniently located to the food processing area(s). Hand wash sinks must be readily available in food processing areas as well as in the restroom(s). Hot and cold running water must be readily available at all sinks. The firm must have sufficient work space, refrigeration and storage for the planned operations.*

*Certain types of operations will require scheduled processes or process reviews from food processing authorities be completed and, where required, filed with the FDA prior to conducting the processing operations.*

QUESTION: Should I send you my plans for review?

ANSWER: *A plan review is not required by NYS Department and Markets for wholesale food processors. Often, the local code enforcement will have jurisdiction to ensure compliance with building requirements. If you have specific questions on your plans, you can contact the local office for Food Safety and Inspection.*

QUESTION: How long does it take to get the license in the mail?

ANSWER: *It varies depending on several factors. We recommend that you apply for your license at least 8 weeks prior to your planned opening date. Additionally, the establishment must have a satisfactory inspection on file before the license can be issued.*

QUESTION: If I move, is the license transferrable to the new location?

ANSWER: *No, the license is associated with your physical location. If you move the business, you need to apply for a new license and be inspected at the new location. Similarly, if you sell your business, the new owners must apply for the 20C Food Processing License in their company name.*

QUESTION: Does the license cover a limited number or type of food processing operations? What do I need to do if I would like to start conducting additional operations?

*ANSWER: if you have a 20-C food processing license, you are licensed to conduct a range of operations, however, you may be required to obtain Department approval to conduct certain types of food processing operations such as those requiring specialized training (acidified food or foods subject to HACCP regulations) or require additional approvals or variances, such as vacuum packing foods. If you have specific questions, you should call the local office for the Division of Food Safety and Inspection.*

QUESTION: If I've applied for the license, when can I start to operate?

*ANSWER: To begin conducting food processing operations, you must be inspected, in substantial compliance and be properly licensed.*

QUESTION: I am thinking of starting a company in which I would buy coffee beans from another company who is importing the coffee beans, and then act as the middle person distributing these beans to different customers. I plan to store the beans in my home in New Jersey. Would I fall under the 20C exemption?

*ANSWER: Contact the NJ Health Dept or Dept of Agriculture in New Jersey to verify if they allow cottage industry operations that include storage of coffee beans. It is also recommended that you contact the FDA as they have jurisdiction over interstate transportation of foods.*

QUESTION: Can firms who share the same space for food processing operate at the same time?

*ANSWER: No. Firms cannot operate together at the same time sharing space. This avoids cross contamination and allows for proper cleaning and sanitizing of food contact equipment.*

QUESTION: I will be operating from a shared kitchen which is already licensed and inspected. Do I still have to obtain a 20-C license for my business?

*ANSWER: Yes. Each business operating at the shared kitchen must apply for their own 20-C Food Processing license and must be inspected.*