Canning at Retail in Minnesota

Canning can be a safe and economical way to preserve and add value to fruits and vegetables. The most common biological hazards specific to canning include botulism toxin as well as yeast and mold (mycotoxins).

Hazard analysis critical control (HACCP) plans are required for canning at retail in Minnesota. You must follow Minnesota food code requirements and any applicable local ordinances when canning in your retail establishment.

This fact sheet highlights important requirements and safety considerations for food establishment operators who want to preserve food for storage at room temperature in Minnesota.

Approved recipe and process

You must have and follow an approved HACCP plan. Because of naturally-occurring variations in acidity (pH) between and among fruits and vegetables, it is important that you follow an approved recipe and process when canning these foods.

You may use a standard recipe and process from:

- Ball® Blue Book™
- USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning at www.csrees.usda.gov/newsroom/news/2011news/home_canning_guide.html
- National Center for Home Food Preservation at www.uga.edu/nchfp/
- A University Extension Service

You may use a custom recipe and process approved by a competent processing authority. A processing authority is a person or organization having expert knowledge of thermal processing requirements for foods in hermetically sealed containers, and who also has access to a testing facility for making such determinations.

Contact your inspector if you have questions about your recipe and process or a processing authority.

Commonly canned foods

Here are some examples of foods you may can at retail. If you don't see a food you would like to can, contact your inspector.

Jams, Jellies & Preserves
- Raspberry jam
- Pepper jelly
- Strawberry preserves

Naturally Acid Foods
- Raspberries, peaches or plums
- Flavored vinegars

Acidified Fruit & Fruit Products
- Apple butter
- Applesauce
- Watermelon pickles

Tomatoes & Tomato Products
- Crushed or whole tomatoes
- Tomato juice
- Salsa
- Barbeque sauce or ketchup

Pickled Vegetables
- Cucumber pickles
- Pickled beets or peppers
- Dilly beans

Fermented Foods*
- Fermented pickles
- Sauerkraut
- Kimchi

*You must have an additional and separate HACCP plan for the fermentation process.

Special requirements

If you want to can low-acid foods, you must follow special requirements found in Code of Federal Regulations, title 21 (21 CFR) at www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfCFR/CFRSearch.cfm.

Low-acid Foods
- Beans, corn, potatoes or squash
- Poultry, red meat or seafood

Documentation

Your recipe and process must be scientifically validated to confirm the process is safe.

- If your HACCP plan is based on a standard recipe, no additional scientific documentation is required.

- If your HACCP plan is based on a custom recipe, you must provide additional scientific documentation as required by the processing authority and/or regulatory agency. The data must show that your recipe and process provides safe food.

Remember, your recipe and process is part of your HACCP plan and cannot be changed without review and approval.

Standard operating procedures

You must include standard operating procedures (SOPs) in your HACCP plan. SOPs for canning at retail typically include:

- Processing equipment specifications, and pH meter specifications and calibration

- Container specifications and sterilization

- Fruit and vegetable preparation

- Processing steps

- Preparation of product slurry and pH testing

Monitoring and corrective actions

You must include a critical limit and corrective action for each critical control point (CCP) in your HACCP plan. For canning at retail, these typically include:

CCP	Critical Limit	Corrective Action
Thermal processing	Times/temperatures in approved recipe	Re-process or discard product
Finished product pH	pH 4.6 or lower	Discard product
Allergen labeling	Allergens identified	Re-label product

Wholesale, internet or interstate sales

If you want to wholesale your product, or sell your product via internet or across state lines, you will need to meet additional regulatory requirements.

For more information see www.mda.state.mn.us/about/divisions/dairyfood.aspx.

Definitions

Canning - A process used to preserve food in sealed jars for storage at room temperature.

pH - A measure of the degree of acidity or alkalinity of a solution.

Acid food - Food that has a natural pH of 4.6 or below.

Low-acid food - Any food with a pH greater than 4.6.

Acidified food - Low-acid food to which acid or acid food is added to reduce the pH to 4.6 or below.

Fermented food - Low-acid foods subjected to the action of certain microorganisms, which produce acid during their growth and reduce the pH of the food to 4.6 or below.

HACCP plan - A written document that is based on the principles of HACCP and contains the items required in Minnesota Rules, parts 4626.0420 and 4626.1735.

For More Information

Contact MDH Food, Pools, and Lodging Services Section at:

District Phone Numbers:
Bemidji – 218-308-2100
Duluth – 218-302-6166
Fergus Falls – 218-332-5150
Mankato – 507-344-2700
Marshall – 507-476-4220
Metro – 651-201-4500
Rochester – 507-206-2700
St. Cloud – 320-223-7300

Email:
health.foodlodging@state.mn.us

Contact Us:
www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/contactus.html

Web Resource:

Existing Food Facilities Planning to Can Fresh Foods for Sale or Service:

www.mda.state.mn.us/food/safety/~/media/Files/food/foodsafety/fs-canning.ashx