

## Working with a Process Authority

**Did a food inspector suggest that you get in touch with a Process Authority?** A **Process Authority** is someone with the technical knowledge, training, and years of experience to be able to effectively evaluate and approve your process or recipe. Most individuals or programs who serve as Process Authorities are affiliated with **state universities**.

A directory of approved **Process Authorities** is [here](https://www.afdo.org/directories/fpa/): <https://www.afdo.org/directories/fpa/>



**What can a Process Authority help you with?** Process Authorities specialize in helping companies manufacture safe food. Most often, a Process Authority will review your recipe and issue a **Scheduled Process**. A Scheduled Process will include the product formulation (ingredients) and the steps for safely manufacturing and distributing the product.

The Process Authority will ask for your recipe and product processing information. Process Authority work is confidential and will not be disclosed to other businesses.

**Product testing.** The Process Authority may have a laboratory that can test your product or may refer you to a commercial food testing laboratory for product testing. Generally, your food product will be tested for **pH**, and sometimes for **water activity**. While it's nice to know the 'shelf life' of your product, this is rarely required information. A 'Best Buy' date is a quality date and is not required by law on most food products.

Some testing centers can provide you with a **Nutrition Facts panel** for your product. **Unless** you make a nutrient content claim such as 'low sugar' or 'reduced fat', you are likely **exempt from** having to include a Nutrition Facts panel on your product label.

**Very small businesses** with less than 10 full-time employees, who sell less than 10,000 units (containers) of a product in a given year, and who make no content claims are **exempt from needing a nutrition facts panel** for that product. Each flavor counts as a new 'product' when counting the 10,000 units available for each year. For example, a very small business may manufacture up to 10,000 units of mild, medium and hot salsa and be exempt.

An **additional exemption** may apply to small businesses with less than 100 full-time employees manufacturing less than 100,000 units of a specific product each year and not making a nutrient content claim on that product. In this category, the business must, however, **file with the Food and Drug Administration each year**.

### New Label

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	<b>20%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 9g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	6%

\*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

- 1 The serving size now appears in larger, bold font and some serving sizes have been updated.
- 2 Calories are now displayed in larger, bolder font.
- 3 Daily Values have been updated.
- 4 Added sugars, vitamin D, and potassium are now listed. Manufacturers must declare the amount in addition to percent Daily Value for vitamins and minerals.

If you do include a nutrition facts panel on your product, it must be accurate. Generally, you will need to hire a laboratory to generate an accurate nutrition facts panel. Each flavor of a product will generally be analyzed separately.

An accurate **ingredient statement** is always required that lists all ingredients in the proper order and includes all sub-ingredients. A handout with helpful food labeling information is [here](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/FoodLabelingGeneral.aspx): [https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/FoodLabelingGeneral.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/FoodLabelingGeneral.aspx)

**What can you expect from the Process Authority?** Whether the Process Authority tests your product or not, you will need to supply them with product information that includes your ingredients and how you process each product. **Once a Process Authority has all the information that they need from you, it may take a week or several months to return a Scheduled Process to you.** Make sure you know what to expect.

**What is the cost for a recipe review?** This is a great question to ask the Process Authority. A standard cost is \$150/product, and this may include some product testing. Note: processors attending a University of Wisconsin training receive free Process Authority support. Call 608-263-7383 or email: [bhingham@wisc.edu](mailto:bhingham@wisc.edu) for more information.

Tips for working with a **Process Authority**:

- **Be organized!** Know what you want to manufacture and have a good idea that the products are safe. Knowing that your food products meet some food safety standards, e.g. low pH, will help ensure a successful review.
- **Attend training.** In some cases, you will need to attend any required training before working with a process authority.
- **Follow through.** Regardless of the process authority service that you choose, don't let a good idea stall because of lack of follow-through on your part. Failing to communicate clearly or stopping and restarting the recipe review process can be costly and may mean that your product review isn't successful.

Note: Staff at **commercial food testing labs** are generally **not qualified** to serve as process authorities.

**Training.** To manufacture certain products you will need to complete required training. For shelf-stabled canned or jarred products, this is the **Acidified Foods Manufacturing School** or the **Better Process Control School – Acidified**. Attending a training does not qualify you to serve as your own Process Authority. You'll find two online training programs available:

- [Acidified Foods Manufacturing School](https://foodbusiness.ces.ncsu.edu/acidified-foods-manufacturing-school/) – \$400 (100% online) **North Carolina State University** or here: <https://foodbusiness.ces.ncsu.edu/acidified-foods-manufacturing-school/>
- **Wisconsin Small Business Better Process School** - \$250 (online, quarterly). Designed for small businesses manufacturing acid/acidified canned foods and not involved in co-packing; fee includes work with a Process Authority) <https://foodsafety.wisc.edu>