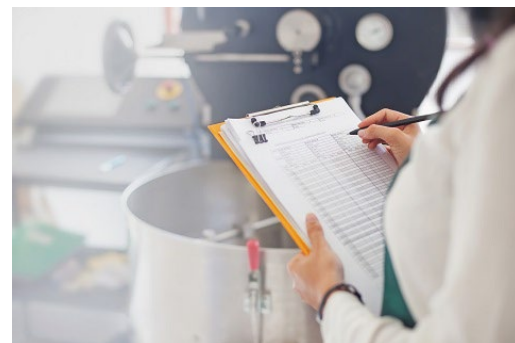


Canned or Bottled Foods: Working with a Process Authority

Training. Generally, a company that manufactures shelf-stable food and beverage products must have staff trained in the FDA Better Process Control School. Manufacturers of sauces and pickles may only be required to complete the portion of the training focused on acidified foods: **Acidified Canned Foods Manufacturing School** or the **FDA Better Process Control School – Acidified**. Approved training options are available in an online format through **North Carolina State University** ([100% online](https://foodbusiness.ces.ncsu.edu/acidified-foods-manufacturing-school/)) or <https://foodbusiness.ces.ncsu.edu/acidified-foods-manufacturing-school/>, or from **Consumer Brands Association** through Partner Schools and Courses [here](#).



Recipe or Process Review. Before manufacturing starts, you will have to work with a Process Authority on recipe or process review. A **Process Authority** is someone with the technical knowledge, training, and years of experience to be able to effectively evaluate your recipe and identify the critical food safety steps that will protect your business and help ensure manufactured foods are safe to consume. 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 will a Process Authority do? 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 the recipe and information about the equipment that used to prepare and bottle each food product. Process Authority work is confidential and information will not be disclosed to other businesses.

What is the cost for a recipe or process review? This is a great question to ask the Process Authority. A standard cost is ~\$150/product. Cost varies based on the complexity of the product and the testing needed. A recipe or process review is likely to take several weeks, so be sure to plan ahead. You may not manufacture a product until you have a Scheduled Process issued by a Process Authority.

Be sure to finalize your recipe and manufacturing process before submitting recipes for review. Generally, any changes to the Scheduled Process require another review by the Process Authority.

Product testing. The Process Authority may have a laboratory that can test your product, or they 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 is nice to know the ‘shelf life’ of your product, you are not required to place a ‘Best By’ date on the label. You should not need to have microbiology testing done. A properly processed and bottled/canned food or beverage will not contain live microorganisms that will grow in the product on the shelf.

Some testing centers can provide you with a **Nutrition Facts panel** for your product. This is **optional unless** you make a nutrient content claim such as ‘low sugar’ or ‘reduced fat’ or own a large business.

New Label

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
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.

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, with not more than \$500,000 in combined food and non-food sales to consumers in a 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 each 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 **file paperwork with the Food and Drug Administration each year**.

If you do include a nutrition facts panel on your product, it must be accurate. You will need to hire a laboratory to generate an accurate nutrition facts panel. Most often, each flavor of a product will need to be analyzed separately for Nutrition Facts information.

What information is required on a food product label? There is some information required on every food and beverage label.

- **Statement of Identity** (name of the food). The name of the food must appear on the front label, also known as the principal display panel. The name must be clear and not misleading. You may use a common name if your product conforms to the standard for that product, e.g. Strawberry Jam.
- **Statement of Responsibility**. The name and address of the manufacturer, packer or distributor must be listed on the label. At a minimum, the city, state, and zip code must be listed. The street address is required if the firm name and address are not listed in the current city directory or telephone book.
- **Net Quantity of Content**. Net quantity must be listed in both English and metric units. Beverages and pickles list net contents by volume, i.e. fluid ounces and mls. Solid and semi-solid foods or mixtures are listed by weight, i.e. ounces and grams. Note: The size or volume of the container is not the same as 'net contents.' A 16 fluid-ounce container of salsa will not contain 16- net ounces of salsa. You must have an accurate weight for the contents of each container.
- **Ingredient Statement**. Ingredients must be listed by weight, from most to least, including 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

If you are in Wisconsin, be sure to include a call to the Licensing Specialists as part of your product development process: 608-224-4923.

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.