

Canning or Bottling in Wisconsin: Training, Recipe Reviews and More

The University of Wisconsin **no longer has a processing authority on staff and no longer offers acidified foods training.** Because of these changes, here are tips to help your business move Forward.

In Wisconsin, the general sequence of events to manufacture canned or bottled foods or beverages is: Training → Recipe Review → Licensing Inspection → Production → FDA Filing

Training. If a company cans or bottles foods such as pickles, sauces, or drink mixes, regulations usually require that key personnel have completed an approved **Acidified Foods training.** There are now two training options: Acidified Canned Foods Manufacturing School or the FDA Better Process Control School – Acidified.

- Acidified Canned Foods Manufacturing School (100% online) through North Carolina State University [here](#).
- FDA Better Process Control School - see Partner School Courses linked on [this page](#).

NOTE: The Acidified Foods training is completed **once**. A certificate from the University of Wisconsin **does not have to be renewed**. Hang on to your certificate as proof of training!

Recipe or process review. Recipes for foods or beverages that are canned, bottled or packaged in flexible or semi-rigid container and that are shelf-stable must be reviewed by a **processing authority**. A processing authority is someone recognized as having the expertise to review your recipes and set the critical factors that ensure safe production. A national directory of processing authorities is available from AFDO: <https://www.afdo.org/directories/fpa/>

A processing authority reviews a recipe and outlines standards for production. Once the review is completed, a **Scheduled Process** will be issued to you. The Scheduled Process is the standardized recipe and may not be changed in any way without another review.

Choosing a processing authority. Several programs have particular expertise as processing authorities and/or experience working with small food and beverage processors. Process authority programs will do necessary product testing, usually for pH or water activity, so that the critical factors that ensure safety are identified and limits, such as maximum pH, are set. Contact the program that you choose and make arrangements to submit samples for testing and review.

Tips on choosing a processing authority [here](#).

- Kansas State Value Added Foods Laboratory – works with boiling water or steam canning processes. Will create nutrition facts panel (nutrition labeling) for an additional fee*. More information [here](#).
- North Carolina State University Entrepreneurial Program – works with inverted hot-fill hold processes. Will create nutrition facts panel (nutrition labeling) for an additional fee*. More information [here](#).

Cornell University (NY State) offers support for low pH boiling water processes (pH below 3.8); Market Fresh LLC (Minnesota) supports processing of products using inverted hot-fill hold processes. ***Note, a nutrition facts panel (nutrition labeling) is often optional for small businesses.** More information is [here](#).

Be aware that **the lead-time for completing a review may be weeks or even months.** Contact the program that you are interested in working with for more information.

Tips for working with a processing authority. There are things that you can do to ensure a successful product review and keep costs to a minimum.

- ❖ **Set the formulation.** The formulation, or ingredients, in a food or beverage will determine product pH and/or water activity. Finalize the formulation before you submit samples for review – changes to the recipe, once approved, are not allowed. Before you submit samples for an official process review, you'll want to understand product pH and/or water activity to ensure success. pH is easily measured in the development process using a simple, but effective pH meter. **More information is [here](#).**
- ❖ **Choose packaging.** Choose packaging material before submitting your food or beverage recipe for a review. Know the container type(s), container size(s) and closure(s) that you will be using. Packaging will be an important consideration for the processing authority to consider.
- ❖ **Set the thermal process.** The processing authority will ask you to indicate how you will process the product, generally how hot you will heat the product prior to filling and the type of heat-treatment post-packaging. You can find ideas on boiling water or steam canning processes [here](#); information on hot-fill hold process parameters is [here](#).

Once you have set the formulation, the packaging, and the thermal process. You should be ready to submit sample products to the processing authority.

In Wisconsin, if you haven't already done so, contact the Licensing Team. The Licensing Team for the state of Wisconsin will provide you with information on an acceptable processing facility and forms that must be completed for licensing. **608-224-4923 or datcpdfslicensing@wi.gov** Be ready to tell the Licensing Team: 1. What you will manufacture, 2. Where you will manufacture the product (facility location), and 3. Where you will sell the product.

Prepare for the licensing inspection. Preparing for the licensing inspection will help ensure a successful outcome.

- Locate an acceptable processing facility. The Licensing Team will share information on standards for a food production facility. More information is [here](#). The licensing inspection will take place at the processing facility.
- Assemble laboratory testing on food and beverage products and processing authority reviews.
- Set up a record-keeping system. You will need to maintain records to ensure that the critical factors outlined in the Scheduled Process are monitored (measured and recorded). Be ready to show sample record-keeping forms at the licensing inspection. Have a copy of your training certificate for the inspector (if required).
- Outline your company recall plan. In the event that you need to withdraw product from commerce, you are required to have a recall plan for your company.

Once you pass your licensing inspection, you may be given the 'green light' to manufacture. The **final step** – if you manufacture acidified foods, you are required to **register your facility with the FDA** (form 2541) and to **file scheduled processes with the FDA** (form 2541e). More info [here](#).

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