

The Starting Block Kitchen Incubator Application Guide

Guidelines for using The Starting Block Kitchen Incubator where food products are produced for re-sale:

1. Acidified foods, i.e. marinara sauce, salsa, pickled asparagus: best processed as refrigerated products. For shelf-stable acidified products, a scheduled process approval must be obtained and followed. We suggest contacting Dr. Kirk Dolan, Process Authority at MSU, 517-355-8474 x 119, dolank@msu.edu. The process authority reviews the recipe and classifies the product as low acid, acidified, formulated acid, or natural acid. This needs to be done with all pickled items, sauces, vegetables, salsas, etc... (anything canned that the maker wishes to be shelf stable). Dr. Dolan will provide a letter as to the nature of the product. Lab tests for shelf life and finished product pH will be needed. This can be done at a private laboratory. Summit Lab can test for pH. All producers of acidified foods must first attend Better Process Control School for acidified foods held at MSU in March and October or online through UC Davis http://ucfoodsafety.ucdavis.edu/Better_Process_Control_School_Online/ with an additional section taught by our MDARD Food Inspector.
2. Beef, Pork, Poultry, and Juice products follow a HACCP (Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Point) Plan. See The Starting Block Meat Processing Application Guide.
3. Other foods that can be produced include such products as: baked goods, candies, frozen foods, dry salts/seasonings, dried herbs/teas, and catered foods.

To become a user of The Starting Block Kitchen, you or your company must complete the following:

1. Label – Click on the ‘MDA Food Labeling Guide’ on our ‘Get Started’ website page or go to <http://www.michigan.gov>, enter ‘food labeling guide’ in the search box. Contact Pete Edmonds, 231-357-3167 or edmondsp@michigan.gov, the label review specialist for MDA in this region, for label review and information. He reviews the labels, not approves them.
Northern Label is a local labeling company in Hesperia, 231-854-6301.
2. Food and equipment safety and sanitation introduction at The Starting Block including:
 - U.S. Dept. of Ag video: “Food Safety is No Mystery”
 - Safety and Sanitation instruction, including: policies and procedures, kitchen rules, standard operating procedures, and equipment operation and cleaning instructions
 - Review & Sign: License Application, Intake Application, Kitchen Lease, Waiver of Liability, Confidentiality Agreement, Sanitation & Safety Rules, and Storage Agreement
 - Kitchen/Pre-licensing Orientation with Kitchen Manager: Schedule at least 2 kitchen sessions with Kitchen Manager, reviewing safety and sanitation, date coding, record keeping, and production steps. Bring clean dish cloths, paper towel, chlorine test strips, and a thermometer. Payment for kitchen use is due day kitchen is used.
3. Apply by mail or online at <https://aca3.accela.com/mdard/> and pay \$148 for a MDARD Food Establishment or Limited Wholesale Food Processor License. Call Customer Service, 800-292-3939 if you need help with the online process.
4. Contact Cathy Martin, food safety inspector, 1-800-292-3939 for date and time for licensing and The Starting Block kitchen for kitchen use. You will review your ingredients and label (referring label questions to Pete Edmonds) and demonstrate making your product. Bring your receipt of license payment. Payment for kitchen use is due on the day kitchen is used.
5. Complete the on-line FDA Registration of Food Facilities at <http://www.access.fda.gov>, click on “Food Facility Registration Module,” click on ‘New Account’ and complete.
6. Proof of product liability insurance coverage with a minimum of 1 million dollars per occurrence and 2 million dollars aggregate, with The Starting Block as additional insured. Contact your own insurance company or try Van Wyk Insurance Co. <http://www.vanwykcorp.com>, 616-942-5070 or agent, Mike Rothermel, 616-726-1069; Kieft Agency www.kieftagency.com, 800-291-4028 is another - contact agent, Ryan Kelly, 616-842-8270.
7. Key deposits of \$10 per key for kitchen, cabinet, and storage

Once you complete these steps and give us a copy of your license, you can schedule to use the kitchen and begin making your product in small batches. Kitchen is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

