

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 through The University of Tennessee's Better Process Control online course.
2. 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 – Search online for MDARD Food Labeling Guide or click on our 'Kitchen Facility' website page. Northern Label is a local labeling company in Hesperia, 231-854-6301. Print your labels after getting them reviewed by our MDARD inspector at the time of licensing.
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 1 or 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>. Pay MDARD \$186 (in 2022) for a FLP (limited food processor license for companies with under \$25,000 in sales). 'Establishment address' is 1535 Industrial Park Drive, Hart MI 49420. 'County' is 64 - Oceana. Call Customer Service, 800-292-3939 for help with the online process.
4. Once your application is processed and you are contacted by MDARD, contact Susan Teegardin, food safety inspector, 231-357-7330, to set up a date and time for licensing. Contact The Starting Block to schedule kitchen time for licensing. Susan will review your ingredients and label while you make your product. Bring your receipt of license payment. Payment for kitchen use is due on the day kitchen is used.
5. ***VERY IMPORTANT Complete the on-line FDA Registration of Food Facilities at www.access.fda.gov. Click on 'Login/Create Account,' then under 'New User' click on 'Create New Account' and complete. Also register for the Quality Food Attestation on the same site. Renew every 2 years, on the even years, between October and December.
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 Van Wyk Insurance Co. <http://www.vanwykcorp.com>, 616-942-5070. Kieft Agency www.kieftagency.com 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.