



# Food Safety Plan for Acidified & Fermented Foods

## Food Safety Plan Guidance

Before you get started, please review the following information.

### When is a food safety plan required?

A food safety plan is required if you are making acidified or fermented foods and are not using a recipe tested by the United States Dept. of Agriculture's National Center for Home Food Preservation or any state cooperative extension office. A food safety plan is not required for canned tomatoes or canned tomato products because the producer must follow exactly an approved recipe from the USDA National Center for Home Food Preservation or any cooperative extension office OR provide a lab-certified pH test for the recipe and any variations on the recipe.

### How many food safety plans do I need?

A completed food safety plan is required for each acidified or fermented product that undergoes a different production process. The food safety plan is focused on "processes" and not individual recipes. It is not required for every variation of a recipe. For example, if you make sweet pickles and sour pickles using the same pickling process, you only need one food safety plan. If you make kimchi and pickles, you need two food safety plans.

### Is a pH test from a laboratory required as part of my food safety plan?

Yes. You must submit lab-tested pH results with your food safety plan as evidence that your plan is safe. Your food safety plan may cover several recipe variations; however, you are only required to submit your pH test lab results for one recipe.

### How often must I complete a food safety plan?

The food safety plan must be re-submitted every three (3) years to the Winnebago County Health Department (WCHD) with your cottage food registration. In addition, WCHD should be notified of any updates to your plan made during that three year span. The addition of any new products also requires the submission of a new food safety plan. For example, if you have registered your cottage food operation to make kimchi, but want to add sauerkraut to your product line half way through the year, you will need to notify WCHD and complete a food safety plan for the sauerkraut.

### What are Critical Control Points?

Steps at which control can be applied and is essential to **prevent** or to **eliminate** a food safety hazard or to **reduce** it to an acceptable level.

### What are Critical Limits?

Critical limits are the acceptable levels in which your Critical Control Points must function. Critical Limits must be measurable. For example, the critical limit for the final pH of your product is 4.6 or below.

When critical limits are not met, your final product is at risk. A plan must be in place for corrective action. For example, what will you do when the refrigerated product is above 41°F? What will you do if the final product tests above 4.6 pH?

### Do I need to train friends, family, and employees that help me prepare my products?

Yes, anyone who prepares and packages food on your behalf must have their Certified Food Protection Manager Certificate (CFPM) and must be trained to follow the food safety plan you outline below.



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## COTTAGE FOOD SAFETY PLAN

Complete the questions below to create your Food Safety Plan. This food safety plan focuses on processes and not individual recipes. Please complete the following Food Safety Plan for each acidified and fermented food with a different production process.

1. Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of Cottage Food Operation: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Product Description: What category of products will this food safety plan be for? ***A separate food safety plan is required for each category of product with a different process.***

4. Recipe Ingredient List: Include a list of all ingredients in your recipe and possible variations (quantities, measurements, and varieties are not required). Indicate if ingredients are fresh or otherwise processed (dried, pickled, etc.). If using a processed food product as an ingredient (jam, pickled peppers, etc.), only include the name of the product and not the individual ingredients that make up that product.

5. Do you intend the product to be shelf stable, refrigerated, or frozen?

Shelf Stable                      Refrigerated                      Frozen

6. Please select the equipment you will use in the production process.

**Monitoring Devices**

Digital Thermometer                      Digital pH Meter  
pH Strips                      Additional: \_\_\_\_\_

**Utensils**

Large Metal Pots                      Metal Spoons                      Funnel  
Strainer                      Measuring Devices                      Knife  
Cutting Board                      Mandolin                      Vegetable Peeler  
Blender                      Canner                      Additional: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Describe your process for cleaning cooking equipment:



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8. Describe your production process with a flow diagram. See example below:

| Sample Acidified Food Flow for Pickles   | Include Your Flow Diagram Here |
|--|--------------------------------|
| <p style="text-align: center;">           Received whole vegetables<br/>           ↓<br/>           Washed, cut, refrigerated<br/>           ↓<br/>           Packed in jars<br/>           ↓<br/>           Covered with a hot brine<br/>           ↓<br/>           Process jars<br/>           ↓<br/>           Cool<br/>           ↓<br/>           Measure equilibrium pH<br/>           ↓<br/>           Label<br/>           ↓<br/>           Sell product         </p> |                                |

9. Describe how and where your products will be stored:

10. Describe how your products will be transported (if applicable):

### HAZARD ANALYSIS

A completed Hazard Analysis chart must be completed and attached. A *sample Hazard Analysis Chart and an easy to fill template* located at: <https://www.wchd.org/environmental-health/environmental-health-forms>

### VERIFICATION

I agree to follow the food safety plan described above and to inform WCHD in advance, via written notice, of any significant changes in the process or ingredients that may affect the accuracy or effectiveness of the plan, and to update my food safety plan accordingly.

I have included a copy of lab-tested pH results for at least one recipe that follows the production plan outlined above.

I certify, that I will ensure persons that are making food have a valid Certified Food Protection Manager Certificate (CFPM) and are trained to follow the food safety plan described above.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_