

Canning/Acidified Foods

Limited Food Establishment Producers may only “can” food products that reach a pH of 4.6 or less upon completion of the recipe (a combination of pH (acid level) and Available Water (Aw) may also be tested). Examples of Types of food products that might be approved include: salsa, chow-show, pickled beets, pickled vegetables, hot sauces, and barbeque sauce. Producers of Acidified Foods must have written recipes / formulas and procedures. You will need to provide a Process Flow for your products and have it approved by your Sanitarian prior to registration and sale of your product. This does not apply to Acid or Fermented Foods. If you are unsure if your product is considered an Acidified Food, please discuss with your Sanitarian.

***Product Testing for Acidified Food or Drinks**

Initially, the producer shall have each unique recipe/product tested by an independent commercial laboratory. The product must be tested for pH within 24 hours. This pH **must be 4.6 or below**. Additionally, the product must be checked for the final equilibrium pH 3 – 5 days after production to assure a final product pH of 4.6 or below. Note: Aw may be additionally tested to accommodate for the hurdle effect of pH and Aw interaction, if the initial resulting pH is at or above the 4.6 level. Note: Procedures for testing the low acid components within an acidified food should comply with 21CFR114.

Effective for newly registered facilities beginning January 1, 2014 and existing facilities by January 1, 2015:

- ✓ *If your final equilibrium pH is 4.0 or above*, you must have a properly calibrated pH meter and check the pH of every batch produced. Log sheets must be kept showing production date, batch #, pH and any corrective action taken if the pH was 4.6 or above. Producers may require a blender for some products, to effectively check pH, as the final equilibrium pH is tested using an evenly mixed product, and not by simply testing the acidifying solutions.
- ✓ *If your final equilibrium pH is 4.0 or below*, you are not required to test every batch, but must have either a properly calibrated pH meter or pH test paper to verify your pH on an ongoing basis, at a minimum of 4x/year. Your initial test, however, must be done by a commercial laboratory. Ongoing testing may be done with pH paper as long as the pH is below 4.0. Producers may require a blender for some products, to effectively check pH, as the final equilibrium pH is tested using an evenly mixed product, and not by simply testing the acidifying solutions.
- ✓ If your final equilibrium pH is above 4.40 you must have your product flow, recipe and process evaluated and approved by a Process Authority (A qualified person who has expert knowledge acquired through appropriate training and experience in the acidification and processing of acidified foods.)
- ✓ Anytime a recipe is altered or a new recipe is developed, the final product must be tested as described above.

- ✓ **All recipes must incorporate a Thermal Process (cooking) or lethal kill step. This thermal process does not apply to Acid or Fermented Foods. It also does not apply to acidified foods that are at or below pH 3.3. Products at or below 3.3: The product must be held at 77°F or higher for 48 hours prior to distribution.**

**FDA may require a Process Authority review, process filing, and batch testing for all products under their jurisdiction, regardless of pH. These requirements should be discussed with FDA.*

Other requirements for canning:

- Anytime a recipe is altered or a new recipe is developed, the final product must be tested as described above.
- New lids must be used and any reused jars must be thoroughly washed and sanitized.
- All labeling requirements on the containers must be met.
- ***Processors wishing to sell their products interstate, which included internet sales, should contact their local FDA (Food and Drug Administration) office and become registered to do so.**

Product Testing for Acid or Fermented Foods:

**Acid and fermented foods must have a final equilibrium pH of 4.6 or below. If your final equilibrium pH is 4.0 or below, you are not required to test every batch, but must have either a properly calibrated pH meter or pH test paper to verify your pH on an ongoing basis. Your initial test, however, must be done by a commercial laboratory. Ongoing testing may be done with pH paper as long as the pH is below 4.0. Producers may require a blender for some products, to effectively check pH, as the final equilibrium pH is tested using an evenly mixed product, and not by simply testing the acidifying solutions.*

Low Acid Canned Foods or Beverages

Low acid canned foods or beverages (with a pH above 4.6) may **NOT** be made from a limited food establishment or in any residential-style kitchen. This would include, for example, most soups, gravies, un-pickled vegetables, and fruits in syrups.