

## Small Food Business Startup Checklist MASSACHUSETTS

This startup checklist is designed to help guide you through launching or growing your small food business. Whether you're a specialty food manufacturer, mobile food truck or caterer, this checklist will provide a directory of the organizations and agencies you may need to contact to get your business up and running. This is not an exhaustive list, but should get you headed in the right direction for operating a food business in Massachusetts.

**1. Business Formation** - <https://www.legalzoom.com/> - sole proprietor, LLC or S Corporation, this site makes it easy to legally set up and register your business in Massachusetts.

**2. Business License** – you're required to secure a business license to operate a food business in Massachusetts. Business licenses are typically assigned in the town where you're planning to operate. In the case of a food truck or catering business, you simply need to have a primary business address in the town (this can be your home or commissary/licensed kitchen) where you'll be preparing your foods.

**Apply in Boston** -

[http://www.cityofboston.gov/images\\_documents/New%20Business%20Certificate%2042015\\_tcm3-44970.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/New%20Business%20Certificate%2042015_tcm3-44970.pdf)

**Apply in Middleborough** - <http://www.middleborough.com/clerk/documents.html>

(Select Business Certificates at the bottom of the page. This will download the application.)

**3. Insurance/Certificate of Liability** – you will need business insurance to run your food business. There are several insurance companies to choose from. Do your homework and get the right insurance for your business. In fact, some of your customers may require a certificate of liability in order to do business with them. You'll also need insurance to run your business in a commissary or licensed commercial kitchen. We like the folks over at The Hartford and they offer fair rates for small businesses - <https://www.thehartford.com/small-business-insurance>.

**4. Board of Health Certificate** – you are required to obtain a health certificate from your local Board of Health to run your food business. Even if you decide to work from a shared use kitchen or licensed commercial kitchen, you'll be required to secure a sign off from the local Board of Health.

**Apply in Boston** -

[https://www.cityofboston.gov/images\\_documents/Food%20Establishment%20Permit%20Application-11-15\\_tcm3-37112.pdf](https://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/Food%20Establishment%20Permit%20Application-11-15_tcm3-37112.pdf)

**Apply in Middleborough** - <http://www.middleborough.com/health/index.html> and [http://www.middleborough.com/health/Application\\_food\\_establishment\\_permit.pdf](http://www.middleborough.com/health/Application_food_establishment_permit.pdf)

**Apply in Boston (mobile operators)** -

[http://www.cityofboston.gov/images\\_documents/Mobile%20Food%20Establishment%20Plan%20Review%20Form.%20McAdams\\_tcm3-33294.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/Mobile%20Food%20Establishment%20Plan%20Review%20Form.%20McAdams_tcm3-33294.pdf)

**5. Hawker & Peddler License/Certificate to Peddle -**

[http://www.cityofboston.gov/images\\_documents/Hawkers&PeddlersLicenseApplication\\_tcm3-43067.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/Hawkers&PeddlersLicenseApplication_tcm3-43067.pdf) - you'll need a peddler's license to sell your products at a farmer's market or from a mobile food truck.

**6. Mobile Food Truck License/Permit -** <https://www.boston.gov/departments/small-business-development/how-get-food-truck-permit> - great resource for getting set up as a mobile food truck business.

**7. Mobile Food Truck Plan Review -**

[http://www.cityofboston.gov/images\\_documents/ISD\\_Mobile\\_Food\\_Establishment\\_Plan\\_Review\\_KD\\_tcm3-25600.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/ISD_Mobile_Food_Establishment_Plan_Review_KD_tcm3-25600.pdf) - great resource for planning your food truck business.

**8. ServSafe & Allergen Certifications -** <https://www.servsafe.com/> - food producers and providers are required to get their ServSafe & Allergen certifications if they will be handling food.

**9. Residential Kitchen Certification -**

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/environmental/foodsafety/residential-kitchens-faq-sheet.pdf> - great resource if you're planning to run a food business from your home.

**10. Resale License or Seller's Permit**

Mass TaxConnect - [https://mtc.dor.state.ma.us/mtc/\\_/](https://mtc.dor.state.ma.us/mtc/_/) - you're required to register your business and apply for a resale certificate (Seller's Permit) from the state of Massachusetts. Once registered, they will send you your 'Sales & Use Tax Registration Certificate' which allows you to sell your food products at retail. If you plan on selling your goods at a Farmer's Market or through a mobile food truck, you will also need a peddler's license

[http://www.cityofboston.gov/images\\_documents/Hawkers&PeddlersLicenseApplication\\_tcm3-43067.pdf](http://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/Hawkers&PeddlersLicenseApplication_tcm3-43067.pdf)

**11. FDA** – if you are setting up your own food production facility you'll need to register with the FDA -

<https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FoodFacilityRegistration/ucm2006832.htm>

**12. Organic Certification -** <http://baystateorganic.org/> - there are several certifying organizations to choose from. They vary in cost and turn-around time.

**13. Non-GMO Certification -** <http://www.nongmoproject.org/product-verification/> - there are several certifying organizations to choose from. They vary in cost and turn-around time.

**14. Gluten-Free Certification -** <http://www.nsf.org/consumer-resources/what-is-nsf-certification/gluten-free-certification> - there are several certifying organizations to choose from. They vary in cost and turn-around time.

**15. UPC/Barcodes -** <https://www.gs1.org/10-steps-to-barcode-your-product>

## More Services + Getting the word out about your business!

**Accounting** - <https://quickbooks.intuit.com/> - simple, affordable accounting to manage your business, customers and vendors. They often have introductory specials, saving you money.

**Credit Card Payments (online or mobile)** - <https://squareup.com/> or <https://www.paypal.com/us/home>.

**Faxing** - <https://app.hellofax.com/> - some of your vendors, suppliers or customers may still have facsimile machines. You can send or receive faxes from anywhere with this helpful online tool.

**Banking** – be sure to choose a bank that caters to small business. We also suggest you set up an account separate from your personal account. In order to set up your business account, you'll need to complete your business formation (#1 above). The bank will ask for proof of your Tax Id Number (EIN or Social Security), Business License and Business Formation Document with the state (Certificate of Limited Partnership or Certificate of Trade Name) in order to open an account. More here: <https://www.sba.gov/blogs/how-open-small-business-bank-account-online>

**Trademark** - <https://www.uspto.gov/> - if you're in the process of growing your business and would like to trademark your business or brand name(s), this is the place to get started. <https://www.legalzoom.com/> also offers trademark services.

**Post-Up Stands** - <https://www.postupstand.com/> - great source for tabletop displays, pop-up stands and more. Great quality and customer service.

**Vistaprint** - <http://www.vistaprint.com/> - great source for inexpensive brochures, business cards, postcards, giveaways and more. Fast turn-around times.

**Bluehost** - <https://www.bluehost.com/> - website hosting, email and domain name registration.

**Social Media** – Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and a Blog – these are great tools to get the word out about your business and how much your customers love you!

**Massachusetts Specialty Food Association** - <http://www.msfa.net/> - this organization does a great job promoting the many specialty food events and producers in Massachusetts.

**MA Food Processors Resource Manual** - <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/agr/markets/culinary-tourism/massachusetts-food-processors-resource-manual-generic.html>

## Additional Services:

**Packaging** – we can work with you on the best packaging type, design and ensure it stays fresh.

**Labeling** - <http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/> - we'll offer best practices and help you meet state/FDA guidelines on food labeling.

**Fulfillment/Shipping Services** – we can help with fulfillment, shipping and receiving.

**Co-Packing** – we offer end-to-end co-packing services for your dry or baked goods.

**Recipe Design & Development** – with 20+ years in food development, we offer professional guidance and development services to ensure your product is the highest quality.

**Inventory Management** – we can help set up a system for tracking your ingredients

**Small Business Consulting** – we're small business experts and can help you get up and running

**Shared Use Commercial Kitchen** – we offer a 2,400 sf commercial facility on the South Shore, great rates and flexibility.

Find more detail about our services at <http://boxfordbakehouse.com/shared-use-kitchen/>

What is required to become a **Shared Use Tenant**?

1. Visit to the Facility for an Initial Interview
2. Completed Application
3. Certificate of Insurance - Certificate of Insurance showing a minimum of \$1,000,000 occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate, with Bakehouse Enterprises, LLC and Hanover Pond LLC (building owner) listed as additionally insured.
4. Business License, or proof of business registration
5. Signed Kitchen Facilities Use & Operating Agreement
6. ServSafe & Allergen Certificates
7. Board of Health Certificate – town of Middleborough
8. Security Deposit + First Month Fees

Bakehouse Enterprises, LLC dba Boxford Bakehouse can provide proof of its certification as a licensed food processing facility.

**Transportation** - the **Middleborough/Lakeville MBTA station** is located at 125 Commercial Dr., Lakeville, MA 02347 and is approximately 1.5 miles from our Facility, or about a 30-minute walk and 5 minutes by car. Here's a [map](#). [Station Info](#).

**Shuttle** - <http://www.gatra.org/index.php/routes/middleborough/downtown-middleborough-shuttle/> there's a pick-up at the MBTA station at 11:05am most days. You can jump off the shuttle at Riverview Apartments, then it's a 6 min walk to the kitchen.

Last updated January 2019