

Smoking Foods for Preservation at Retail

Smoking foods is a practice which dates back thousands of years. This is accomplished by exposing the meat, poultry, or fish to smoke from burning wood, and is usually performed within a smokehouse or a variety of commercial smokers. Different types of wood impart different flavors on the product, with specific wood often used for certain foods. If the desired outcome of smoking is for flavor, there is no special requirement from the food establishment to perform this operation as it is *not* considered a special process. If the desired outcome is to increase the shelf life or create a shelf stable product, a HACCP Plan and a [Request for Variance](#) are required. While there are several types of smoking processes, this document will address the two primary types of smoking as seen in retail establishments:

Options for Smoking Foods

Cold Smoking

The food in this process is exposed to heat but is not cooked and remains raw. The flavor from the burning wood is imparted to the food often over a period of several days, and for this reason, these foods should be cured prior to undergoing the cold smoke process. This requires a HACCP plan.

Hot Smoking

Food is heat-treated at temperatures typically in the 135F – 170F range. To be considered a cooked product, the meat, poultry, or fish must reach the minimum required cooking temperatures as outlined in section 3-401.11 of the 2013 FDA Food Code. If the final product is intended to either have an extended shelf life or shelf stability, then a HACCP plan is required.

Documentation Requirements

To utilize these processes, food establishments must obtain a [Kentucky Request for Variance](#). The following documentation will be required:

- **HACCP plan:** Provide an adequate HACCP plan with copies of potential monitoring records.
- **Validated Process:** This is a document obtained from a certified laboratory, called a Process Authority, which will test both your process and your food to see if the result is safe and wholesome. Please go to <https://www.afdo.org/directories/fpa/> to locate a Process Authority.
- **Food Process Flow Diagram:** This will illustrate the flow of food throughout the process. It must include the food ingredients and their amounts as well as their CCP points.
- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** Step-by-step description of the entire process from start to the finished food product. Include ingredients/amounts, each preparation step, method(s) of storage/distribution and display for sale, labels (include use by date, etc.), lot identification code system and how you track each lot, and calibration of applicable instruments.
- **Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP):** These are the cross-contamination strategies and sanitation practices for your operation. State how things will be cleaned, how often, with what sanitizer and at what concentration, etc. Careful to include all surfaces (tables, cutting boards), as well as all pieces of equipment and utensils required for making the product.
- **Food employee and supervisory training plan:** This is a document which outlines how those involved in this special process will be trained in all procedures and plans associated with this process.
- **Floorplan:** Layout of the processing area; include equipment placement involved in the process. Does not have to be professionally created but should be as accurate as possible.
- Any other pertinent, applicable documentation to ensure the safety of the finished product.