To reduce the public health risk, federal and state regulations are in place to control the production of low-acid and acidified canned food products.
Cannery License Program

The timeline below provides an overview of the steps involved and approximate time required to obtain a Cannery License.

**Note:** Only continue on this timeline if Cannery license is required (based off of UC Lab results: S-letter)

**Send in 2 product samples to UC lab to determine if cannery license is needed**
- DAY 1
  - Send in organic PFR form
  - Update Organic System Plan (OSP) to include processing of product
  - Confirm w/certifying body (e.g.: CCOF, Oregon Tilth) if you have to change from a growers cert. to a handlers cert.

**Send in PFR inspection form + payment**
- DAY 2
  - Submit PFR Application Form, if needed
  - Submit Food Safety Fee form (or exemption)
  - Obtain food handlers certificate: Manager Level
  - Attend Better Process Control School

**Follow-up with CDPH-FDB if needed (if they haven’t contacted you to schedule inspection)**
- DAY 65
  - Schedule pre-production inspection of facility
  - Book the kitchen to rent it out for production needs
  - Make label mock up

**Schedule production space**
- DAY 90
  - Facility inspection
  - Farmers Market Temporary Food Facility (TFF) permit, if applicable
  - Receive written approval to produce in the facility

**Schedule Handlers’ Certification site inspection, if applicable**
- DAY 90-110
  - Make any corrections needed and schedule a re-inspection

**Have another in-person facility inspection to verify**
- DAY 110

**Send in 2 product samples to UC lab to determine if cannery license is needed**
- DAY 45

**Send in PFR inspection form + payment**
- DAY 60

**Follow-up with CDPH-FDB if needed (if they haven’t contacted you to schedule inspection)**
- DAY 65

**Schedule production space**
- DAY 90

**Schedule Handlers’ Certification site inspection, if applicable**
- DAY 90-110

**Send in 2 product samples to UC lab to determine if cannery license is needed**
- DAY 120

**Send in PFR inspection form + payment**
- DAY 140

**Schedule batch release inspection**
- DAY 140

**Site inspection & pass, ready for sale**
- DAY 160

**Send product**

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**FAQs**

How much will all of the regulatory fees cost?
It is difficult to predict the total cost of the Cannery license due to the fact that in-person inspections are required and the amount of time required for that is unknown. According to the CA Cannery Law text, (article three on Proration of Costs,) a process is in place for the state department to determine quarterly the costs of inspection fees and to prorate the cost to all cannery license holders.

Where do I go to get help establishing the process for my product (for example a heat penetration study)?
You can find a list of consultants to help with this type of work here: [http://ucofoodsafety.ucdavis.edu/Food_Industry_Contacts/Consultants/](http://ucofoodsafety.ucdavis.edu/Food_Industry_Contacts/Consultants/)
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Where can I learn more about food safety best practices for value added canning?
The UC Davis Food Safety webpage on Food Processing has lots of resources available.

What are the repercussions if we do not have a valid cannery license and we produced products?
According to the CA Cannery Law text, violators are subject to conviction of a misdemeanor, which involves a fine of $50-$1,000 or imprisonment in the county jail for up to six months.

Learn more about the CDPH’s Cannery Program online at [https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDC5Pages/FDBPprograms/FoodSafetyProgram/CanneryInspectionProgram.aspx](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDC5Pages/FDBPprograms/FoodSafetyProgram/CanneryInspectionProgram.aspx)

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**Cannery License Program Timeline**

The timeline below provides an overview of the steps involved and approximate time required to obtain a Cannery License.

**Note:** Only continue on this timeline if Cannery license is required (based off of UC Lab results: S-letter)

**Low-acid and acidified canned foods must be produced under highly controlled conditions to ensure safety. Low-acid canned products are composed of ingredients that have a naturally high pH (above pH 4.6). Acidified canned products are composed mainly of ingredients that have a moderately high natural pH to which an acid ingredient (e.g. vinegar, lemon juice) is added to bring the final equilibrium pH of the food to 4.6 or below. Improperly processed low-acid and acidified canned foods can lead to severe health consequences, including death, in individuals that consume them. This is due to the growth of the bacteria *Clostridium botulinum* in these improperly processed products. As this bacteria grows in food it produces a potent neurotoxin that can be lethal to humans and animals. To reduce the public health risk, federal and state regulations are in place to control the production of these types of foods.**

**Low-acid canned products must be thermally processed to inactivate spores of the bacteria *Clostridium botulinum* using a pressure canner or retort. Acidified canned products have an acid ingredient (e.g. vinegar, lemon juice) added to the product to bring the final equilibrium pH of the food to 4.6 or below. The pH of 4.6 or below will inhibit the germination of *Clostridium botulinum* spores and mild processing (boiling water canning, pasteurizing) will eliminate other microorganisms of public health concern in these products. Both low-acid canned foods and acidified canned foods must be produced under the California Department of Public Health’s Food and Drug Branch (CDPH-FDB) Cannery Inspection program. All products and processes must be evaluated by the University of California Laboratory for Research in Food Preservation (Process Authority in CA) for being adequate to control these improperly processed products. As this bacteria grows in food it produces a potent neurotoxin that can be lethal to humans and animals. To reduce the public health risk, federal and state regulations are in place to control the production of these types of foods.**

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**Products likely to require a Cannery License in California**

- Low-acid canned foods
  - Canned vegetables
  - Canned soups
  - Canned stocks

- Acidified canned foods
  - Canned tomato sauces with added vegetables
  - Canned salsa
  - Vinegar vegetable pickles (not fermented*)
  - Hot sauces (not fermented*)
  - Pickled eggs
  - Relishes

*This is not an exhaustive list and products may fall under different categories depending on the product formulation. The products listed here are given as general examples. All products need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the CA Process authority.

*Only items that are traditional fermented products to which no acid (vinegar, lemon juice, etc.) is added in the recipe are exempt from the CA pH Control Program

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