

(This document is intended to be a "Guideline" which describes in simple terms a number of basic requirements which must be met before licensing a small egg producer. For further assistance contact the District Office in your area.

BASIC REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSING A SMALL EGG PRODUCER

The Georgia Egg Law governs the production and sale of eggs. The egg processing facility must be licensed by the Georgia Department of Agriculture unless selling restricted eggs. All eggs offered for sale must be graded by a certified grader and appropriately packaged and labeled in accordance to the Georgia Egg Law and Georgia Food Act, rules and regulations.

Restricted Eggs:

Restricted eggs include the sale of eggs from a producers own flock at the site of production, on a door-to-door retail route, or at an established place of business owned and managed by the producer and sold directly to a household consumer as the end user. Provided that each such sale of restricted eggs shall be limited to no more than 30 dozen eggs and from a flock of 3,000 hens or less. The eggs shall contain no more loss and/or leakers than allowed in the official standards for U.S. Consumer Grade B shell eggs.

The producers of these restricted eggs will be regulated by the Georgia Department of Agriculture but not required to obtain a Food Sales Establishment License. The eggs must be candled by a licensed candler and follow labeling, transporting, and storing/displaying requirements.

Non-Restricted Eggs:

Non-restricted eggs include the sale of eggs from a producer who intends to sell eggs to retail store (not owned and operated by producer), to a restaurant and/or institution, or to a facility/individual for further sale. This type of egg producer will be required to obtain a Food Sales Establishment License with the Georgia Department of Agriculture and must follow all guidelines in this document including the facility restrictions.

Egg Grader's Certificate:

A person must receive an egg grader's certificate (Candling License) to sell both restricted and non-restricted eggs. The individual must pass the written and candling examinations. The information on egg grading classes is available by calling the district office in your area (county where the operation will be located).

The list of district offices and counties is enclosed. On line study materials:

The Georgia Egg Law and Supporting Regulations:

http://agr.georgia.gov/vgn/images/portal/cit_1210/9/20/120821208The%20Georgia%20Egg%20Law%20and%20Supporting%20Regulations.doc.pdf

The USDA Federal Egg Grading Manual:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/AMSV1.0/getfile?dDocName=STELDEV3016336>

District and Counties:

http://agr.georgia.gov/00/article/0,2086,38902732_0_40972745,00.html

Facilities:

Receive approval from proper zoning authority for land use and comply with all other governing agencies.

Contact with the appropriate District Office is strongly recommended prior to the beginning of any construction.

A private home, a room used as living or sleeping quarters, or an area directly opening into a room used as living or sleeping quarters may not be used for conducting food establishment operations.

Living or sleeping quarters located on the premises of a food establishment shall be separated from rooms and areas used for food establishment operations by complete partitioning and solid self-closing doors.

Facility Requirements:

The area used to produce eggs must be approved by the Department before receiving a Food Sales Establishment License.

A refrigerator is required to store eggs prior to distribution. The refrigerator must maintain an ambient temperature of 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

Pest Control:

Adequate measures shall be in place to preclude contamination by insects, rodents, and other pests: within the area/physical facility and its contents; and on the contiguous land or property.

Sinks:

One sink with cold and hot running water is required.

Water:

Water shall be obtained from an approved public or private source.

The water source and system shall be of sufficient capacity and pressure to meet the water demands of food establishment.

Hot Water:

Hot water generation and distribution systems shall be sufficient to meet the peak hot water demands throughout the food establishment.

Plumbing:

A plumbing system shall be designed, constructed and installed according to local code.

Floor drains may be required under some conditions and shall be installed as regulations and local codes require.

A plumbing system and hoses conveying water shall be constructed and repaired with approved materials.

Sewage:

Sewage shall be disposed through an approved public or individual disposal system.

County or municipal sewer system evaluation may be required to approve a grease trap, or to allow an exemption.

Outside Premises:

The premises shall be free of excessive vegetative growth and debris.

The outdoor walking and driving areas shall be surfaced with materials that minimize dust, facilitate maintenance, prevent muddy conditions, and shall be graded to drain.

Exterior surfaces of establishment buildings and associated structures shall be of weather-resistant materials.

Packaging & Labeling Requirements:

The label should be affixed at the time of candling and packaging. The label must be at least 2" x 4" on a case and both case and carton should have letters not less than ¼ of an inch.

When eggs are sold in cartons, the cartons must show the date packed or an expiration date, which shall not exceed 45 days from the date packed and the grade and size, together with the name and address of the packer and safe handling instructions. The state of origin may also be given.

All packages of raw, shell eggs not treated to destroy Salmonella must carry the following safe handling statement:

<p>SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS: To prevent illness from bacteria: Keep eggs refrigerated, cook eggs until yolks are firm, and cook foods containing eggs thoroughly.</p>
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The statement must appear on the label prominently, conspicuously, and in a type size no smaller than 1/16". The statement must appear in a hairline box with the words "safe handling instructions" in bold capital letters. This statement can be placed on the principal display panel (PDP), information panel or may be placed on the inside lid of egg cartons if the statement "Keep Refrigerated" appears on the principal display panel (PDP) or information panel.

40-3-1.01 Open Dating on Egg Cases and Egg Cartons.

All eggs which are sold, offered for sale or stored for sale at retail or wholesale shall use an Open Date to express the packing date or expiration date.

(a) Definitions.

1. Open Date: Means the use of letters (for the month) together with number(s) (for the day of the month).

2. Pack Date: Means the date the eggs were washed, candled, and packed.
3. Expiration Date: Means the last date the eggs shall be sold at retail or wholesale.
 - (b) Manner of Expressing the Open Date: Open dating shall consist of a combination of three letters (for the month abbreviation) and number(s) for the day of the month. Example: JUN 10
 - (c) Manner of Expressing the Pack Date: A pack date shall be the use of an Open Date (as defined in 40-3-1-.01(b) of these Regulations) with no words, numbers, or letters preceding or following the Open Date. Example: JUN 10
 - (d) Manner of Expressing the Expiration Date: An Expiration Date shall be the use of an Open Date (as defined in 40-3-1-.01(b) of these Regulations) preceded by the abbreviation "EXP" (Example: EXP JUN 10) or the use of an Open Date (as defined in 40-3-1-.01(b) of these Regulations) preceded by the term "Sell By," (Example: Sell By JUN 10). The Expiration Date shall not exceed forty-five (45) days from the date the eggs were washed, candled, and packed.
 - (e) Prohibited Act: The following act and the causing thereof are hereby prohibited.
 1. Eggs are not to be sold or offered for sale at retail or wholesale after the expiration date.
 2. Eggs are not to be sold or offered for sale that do not meet the U.S. Standards, Grades, and Weight Classes for Shell Eggs Part 56, Subpart C. Paragraphs 56.216 and 56.217 established pursuant to the Federal Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946.

Transportation and marketing of eggs:

Eggs must be transported, stored and displayed in refrigerated equipment holding a temperature of 45 degrees Fahrenheit or below.