

ACIDIFIED FOODS AT RETAIL INDUSTRY GUIDANCE

Section 5K-4.0050, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.)

Acidified foods are food products which start out with a pH greater than 4.6, then specific ingredients (usually vinegar or an acid) are added to lower the pH to less than 4.6 so pathogenic growth is controlled by pH rather than proper refrigeration temperatures. This allows the final packaged product to be held at room temperature. Acidified food preparation requires more stringent controls than what is currently in the FDA Food Code, as it is considered a high-risk process.

If the product is stored at 41° F or less, it does not fall under the category as an acidified food.

The Department requires that a Special Process Approval (SPA) application be completed and submitted with all supporting documentation as stated in the instructions for evaluation and acceptance. For all acidified processes a validated process is required along with an acceptable HACCP plan and other required documents. All other applicable laws and rules apply.

Documentation Requirements:

- **SPA application**
- **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 www.afdo.org/foodprocessing 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. Be 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.**



Please submit all required materials along with a completed Special Process Approval application to:
RetailHACCPspa@FDACS.gov

If after review all submitted materials are acceptable, the operator will receive written notification from the Department stating the SPA has been granted and what supporting documents the Department has accepted. These documents must be kept on site where acidification is taking place and made available to the regulatory authority upon request. The inspector will review the documentation and ensure the establishment is implementing the accepted plans/procedures and retaining monitoring records as required to document proof of control.

1-800 HELP FLA
FDACS.gov

FDACS-P-02165 09/22

