



## PROCEDURES FOR OBTAINING A PET FOOD



All processed pet food sold in California is subject to the California Pure Pet Food Act of 1969 and the regulations promulgated pursuant to the Act. In addition, the California Department of Public Health (Department) recognizes the Association of American Feed Control Officials, Inc. (AAFCO) **OFFICIAL PUBLICATION** as the definitive reference for pet food ingredients and labeling. Any pet food label that complies with AAFCO guidelines for pet food ingredients and labeling will be considered in compliance with California law. The **OFFICIAL PUBLICATION** may be ordered from the AAFCO website.

### PET FOOD MANUFACTURERS LOCATED WITHIN CALIFORNIA:

1. A valid Pet Food Processor License is required for the manufacture of processed pet food in California. Manufacturing includes operations such as packing, re-packing, and labeling. A separate license is required for each pet food processing facility.
2. The Pet Food Processor License/Registration application form can be found on our [webpage](#).
3. If the processed pet food product is labeled "Organic", or any ingredient is identified as "organic" in the ingredient list on the product's label, the manufacturer must also obtain a valid Organic Processed Product Registration (OPPR).
4. The OPPR application form can be found on our [webpage](#).
5. "Processed pet food" means food that is heated, dried, semi-dried, or canned during the manufacturing process and intended for household pets including dogs, cats, birds, fish, reptiles, and other animals kept strictly for companionship. Processed pet food includes special diet, health foods, supplements, treats and candy for pets.
  - a. Manufacturers of fresh or frozen pet foods are required to obtain a license from the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety Branch (MPES). Please refer to the MPES website for more information.
  - b. Food for horses and for cattle, swine, rabbits, goats, poultry or other animals raised for food is not pet food.

6. In order to obtain a license to manufacture processed pet food in California, a person must submit a completed application (CDPH 8676) + a representative label for each form of pet food to be manufactured at the licensed facility + the license fee of \$254.00. Submit the application materials to:

California Department of Public Health  
Food and Drug Branch  
Attn: Cashier  
P.O. Box 997435, MS 7602  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7435

7. The license application, fee, and labels will be reviewed. Incomplete applications cannot be processed, so please make sure to submit all required materials, including product labels.
8. A pre-licensing inspection of the facility may be conducted at the sole discretion of the Department.
9. Upon completion of the document review and/or inspection findings, the Department will issue or deny the license. If minor deficiencies are identified, the applicant will be provided an opportunity to correct the violations so the license can be issued. If a Pet Food Processor License is denied, the applicant will be notified and provided opportunity for appeal of the denial in accordance with California Government Code requirements.
10. The Pet Food Processor License is valid for a 2 year period, and requires renewal on a biennial basis.
11. Please note that processed pet food is not on the Approved Food Products List for Cottage Food Operations. Processed pet food must be prepared in a commercial kitchen, and not in a residence.

**OUT-OF-STATE MANUFACTURERS - WHEN THE PROCESSED PET FOOD IS DISTRIBUTED OR SOLD WITHIN CALIFORNIA**

1. Out-of-state processed pet food manufacturers are required to obtain a valid Pet Food Processor Registration prior to distribution of the product inside California. Manufacturing includes operations such as packing, re-packing, and labeling. A separate registration is required for each out-of-state pet food processing facility when the processed pet food is distributed or sold within California.
2. Importers of fresh or frozen raw pet food and fresh or frozen raw meat or poultry intended for use in pet food manufacture in California are required to be licensed by the CDFA, Meat, Poultry and Egg Safety Branch as Pet Food Importers. Please refer to the MPES website for more information.

3. "Processed pet food" means food that is heated, dried, semi-dried, or canned during the manufacturing process and intended for household pets including dogs, cats, birds, fish, reptiles, and other animals kept strictly for companionship. Processed pet food includes special diet, health foods, supplements, treats and candy for pets.
4. The Pet Food Processor License/Registration application form can be found on our webpage.
  - a. Fresh or frozen pet foods are subject to oversight by the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). Please refer to the CDFA website for more information.
  - b. Food for horses and for cattle, swine, rabbits, goats, poultry or other animals raised for food is not pet food.
5. In order to obtain a registration as an out-of-state processed pet food manufacturer, a person must submit a completed application (CDPH 8676) + a representative label for each form of processed pet foods to be distributed or sold in California + a copy of a certificate (health permit) issued by a federal, state, or local county health agency for the facility where the processed pet food was manufactured + a complete list of the pet food ingredients contained in each product, in order of predominance by weight + the registration fee of \$254.00. Submit the application materials to:

California Department of Public Health  
Food and Drug Branch  
Attn: Cashier  
P.O. Box 997435, MS 7602  
Sacramento, CA 95899-7435

6. Upon review of the application, fee, health permit, labels and ingredient list(s), the Department will issue or deny the registration. If minor deficiencies are identified, the applicant will be provided an opportunity to correct the violations so the registration can be issued. If registration is denied, a letter explaining the reason for denial will be provided to the applicant.
7. The Processed Pet Food Registration is valid for a 2 year period, and requires renewal on a biennial basis.

**NOTE TO CALIFORNIA DISTRIBUTORS OF PROCESSED PET FOOD:**

Your processed pet food product cannot be distributed in California if the manufacturer of the processed pet food does not hold a valid Pet Food Processor License/Registration issued by the Department.

You may obtain a Processed Food Registration (PFR) as a distributor of processed pet food products if you are warehousing the processed pet food at a commercial facility within California. The PFR application and additional information is available on our website.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For more information about processed pet food licensing and registration in California, please call the Department at (916) 650-6500.

[The California processed pet food regulations](#) can be found at:

( [https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=IAD5302E0D60611DE88AEDDE29ED1DC0A&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=\(sc.Default\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=IAD5302E0D60611DE88AEDDE29ED1DC0A&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default)) )