

Frequently Asked Questions

What is FDB's Processed Food Registration Program (PFR)?

General foods such as; bakery products, noodles, seafood (except molluscan shellfish), fruit juices, snacks, nuts, oils, processed or packaged vegetables, candy, etc. are regulated by the PFR program.

The registration is a basic license issued to firms that allows them to legally manufacture, package, label, or warehouse food in California. The PFR provides evidence to your customers and regulatory agencies that you are licensed and inspected by FDB.

The registration fee is set based on three major factors: 1) the size of the facility, 2) number of employees, and 3) your firm's activities (e.g., manufacturing or warehousing). The registration fees are received by FDB and deposited into a special account. The funds are used to support the Food Safety Inspection Program.

Are small businesses exempt from PFR?

The law provides no exemptions to PFR based on the size or annual sales of your firm.

Am I exempt from PFR if I am registered with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)?

No. California law requires that your firm be registered with FDB if you manufacture, process, or store food products in California.

The FDA registration is a requirement of the federal Bioterrorism Act. The registration will provide information on the origin and distribution of food products to aid in the detection and response to threats to the U.S. food supply. Registration information also will help FDA notify firms that may be affected by an actual or potential threat. There are no fees for the FDA Registration. For details, please visit FDA's website.

Are importers and brokers required to obtain a PFR?

Importers and brokers are not required to obtain a PFR unless they are engaged in the manufacturing, processing, or warehousing of food.

What processing activities are exempt from PFR?

You are not required to have a PFR if your activities only consist of food processing activities covered under another license issued by FDB. These licenses include:

- Cold Storage or Refrigeration Facility
- Frozen Food Locker Plant
- Low-acid Food Cannery
- Shellfish Handling and Marketing Certificate

- Water: Bottled Water Distributors License
- Water: Bottling Plant License
- Water: Hauler's License
- Water: Private Water Source Operator's License
- Water: Retail Water Facility License
- Water: Vending Machine Operator

Additionally, you are not required to have a PFR if your activities only consist of food processing activities including:

- Producing, packing, labeling, or holding (warehousing) agricultural food products in their raw or natural state. This includes fruits or vegetables that are washed, colored, or otherwise treated in their unpeeled natural form.
- Retail food facilities, (e.g., restaurant or grocery store) that sell food directly to consumers and have valid permit issued by a local health department.
- Processing under a Winegrower's license or Wine Blender's license issued by the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control.
- Processing milk and dairy products or meat and poultry products under a valid license issued by the California Department of Food and Agriculture.
- Temporarily holding, non-potentially hazardous, processed foods for up to 7 days.

How can I obtain a PFR application?

There are three ways to obtain a Processed Food Registration application:

1. Fill out the online application
2. Send an email to FDBInfo@CDPH.CA.GOV
3. Call the Food and Drug Branch and ask to speak to the Processed Food Registration Desk at (916) 650-6500.

When should I apply for a Processed Food Registration (PFR)?

The process from application through inspection and approval can take several weeks to complete. Businesses should submit a PFR application 30 to 60 days before they want to begin manufacturing or warehousing of food products.

What business address should I put on the application?

The business address is the location of processing or distribution activities. The mailing address can be any location where mail is received.

How do I determine the proper PFR fee?

Manufacturing, Repacking, Labeling, and Salvaging

The PFR fee for these activities is based on the facility size and number of employees. Payment codes for this category can be found on the back of the application, designated D-M.

To find the proper fee:

- Locate the size of your facility. There are three distinct size categories:
 - Operations that have no facilities. (Code D)
 - Operations with facility sizes from 0 - 5,000 sq. ft. (Codes E-G)
 - Operations with facility sizes greater than 5,000 sq. ft. (Codes H-M)
- Locate the code matching the number of employees at your facility. The payment code is located on the line to the far right. For example: A 7,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility with 29 employees has a fee corresponding to Payment Code "J."

Warehouses

The PFR fee for warehouses is based on facility size only. Payment codes are located on the back of the application and designated as A, B, or C.

To find the proper fee:

Locate the size of your facility and determine the appropriate Payment Code (A-C). The proper fee is located to the right. For example: A 7,000 sq. ft. warehouse facility has a fee corresponding to Payment Code "B."

What is the HACCP fee?

State law requires Seafood dealers and Juice processors to develop Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) programs to assure the safety of their products. The HACCP regulations are found in the Code of Federal Regulations:

- Seafood HACCP regulations (21 CFR, Part 123)
- Juice HACCP regulations (21 CFR, Part 120)

The HACCP fee supports with the review and evaluation of HACCP plans for these commodities. There are no exemptions to the fee.

What is the Food Safety Fee?

The legislature established a Food Safety Education and Training program in the Food and Drug Branch to provide food safety education and training for the processed food industry. The program is supported entirely by the \$100 Food Safety Fee.

Are there exemptions from the Food Safety Fee?

The legislature provided the following exemptions from the Food Safety Fee:

- Firms involved exclusively in flour milling, dried bean processing, or the drying or milling of rice,
- Small firms with gross annual wholesale revenues from their registered processed food business of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) or less are exempt from paying the Food Safety Fee.

How do I apply for the Food Safety Fee exemption?

Firms must submit a "Food Safety Fee Exemption Request" form with their Processed Food Registration (PFR) application. The exemption request must be submitted annually when the PFR is renewed.

To request a Food Safety Fee Exemption, please contact FDB's Food Registration Desk at (916) 650-6500 or download the form from the Food Certificates, Licenses, and Registrations website and select the Food Safety Exemption Request Form 8694.

What should I do with the attached commodity codes list?

PFR applicants must identify all of the finished product types manufactured or stored within the facility. The commodity code list must be returned with the PFR application.

How long is the PFR certificate valid?

The PFR registration is valid for one year. Renewal Notices are generally provided 60 – 90 days prior to expiration. However, it is the firm's responsibility to assure that their registration remains current and renewed prior to expiration. Registrations are not transferrable to other persons. Any change in facility/business ownership or relocation requires a new registration.

What happens after I submit my PFR application?

Submission of the PFR application does not authorize a firm to begin food processing. Additional steps must be completed before a firm is authorized to process and distribute food products.

Once a firm's application and fee have been processed by FDB, you will be contacted by an FDB Investigator to arrange for a pre-registration "readiness inspection". Inspection schedules are based on the priorities and workload of the investigator assigned to conduct it. Inspections should be conducted within 30 days.

What laws and regulations govern the manufacture, storage and distribution of food?

For a list of laws and regulations, please visit the Food Safety Program page.