

# MICROENTERPRISE HOME KITCHEN OPERATION (MEHKO) ORDINANCE

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SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH  
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HEALTH SERVICES**

# Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations (MEHKOs)

- **AB 626**

- Became effective January 1, 2019, including a MEHKO as a type of food facility in the California Retail Food Code.
- Authorizes the use of home kitchens for small-scale, food production and direct food sales by home cooks.
- Gives the County “full discretion” to authorize MEHKOs in its jurisdiction.

- **San Mateo County Resolution & Pilot:**

- January 2019, Board approved a resolution expressing support.
- July 20, 2021, Board approved a 2-year pilot



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# MEHKO Requirements

- **30** meals/day or **90** meals/week max.
- **\$100,000** in gross annual sales/year max.
- Onsite dining, delivery, food cart sales or takeout.
- Onsite cooking classes, food demonstrations.
- May employ up to one employee.
- Permitted use of residential property per zoning, building and fire codes.
- No exterior advertisements.
- Food safety training required.
- Cart storage onsite, if approved by EHS.





# Pilot Ordinance

- Board approved ARPA funds to start up the program and provide free health permits during 2 year pilot
- 31 entrepreneurs (84% women)
- Menus included Indian vegetarian tika masala, Hawaiian kalua pork, Salvadoran pupusas, Brazilian BBQ, Filipino pancit bihon, Yucatan panuchos, Hong Kong-style noodles, among others
- Provided the County and cities the opportunity to assess the benefits of MEHKOs before permanently adopting.
- Provided data to help determine long-term staffing needs and estimated costs for a permanent MEHKO program



# Next Steps

- Make Ordinance Permanent:
  - Would legalize and permit Microenterprise Home Kitchens countywide.
  - Would provide a permanent option for people to start a micro food business as a hobby or as a starting point for a future in the restaurant industry.
  - Annual permit fee: \$1,108
- Offset with another year of fee credits for MEHKO businesses.



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# Resources & Outreach

- **Webpage:** [smchealth.org/microkitchen](http://smchealth.org/microkitchen)
- **Social Media:** Facebook, Twitter, Nextdoor
- **Email:** [mehko@smcgov.org](mailto:mehko@smcgov.org)
- **MEHKO Online Resources:**
  - Training video
  - Training materials (Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese)

**MICROENTERPRISE HOME KITCHEN OPERATION (MEHKO)**  
A permitted mini restaurant that operates in a residential kitchen.

**OPERATORS ARE REQUIRED TO:**

- Be a **RESIDENT OF THE HOME** and responsible for the operation
- Limit operation to **30 MEALS PER DAY, AND 60 MEALS PER WEEK** with a \$50,000 annual sales cap
- DELIVER FOOD** to the consumer directly
- Get **INTERNET FOOD SERVICE INTERMEDIARIES** approved by CA Department of Public Health
- Prepare, cook, and serve all food on the **SAME DAY**
- Pass an approved accredited **FOOD SAFETY EXAM**
- Have any person involved with the operation obtain a **FOOD HANDLER PERMIT** from an approved provider



**MEHKO APPLICATION STEPS:**

- 1 CONTACT** Environmental Health Services at (650) 372-6200, or visit [smchealth.org/microkitchen](http://smchealth.org/microkitchen).
- 2 SUBMIT A MEHKO APPLICATION** with the applicable fee, and an **INSPECTION WILL BE SCHEDULED** within 5 business days.
- 3 Upon approval** of documents and an in-home inspection by the County, a MEHKO IS APPROVED TO OPERATE.

**OPERATORS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO:**

- EMPLOY MORE THAN ONE FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE**
- Produce, serve, or use raw milk, serve raw oysters or any food that would require a **HAZARDOUS CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL CONTROL POINTS (HACCP)**
- RESELL FOOD** to other food facilities
- DISPLAY ANY SIGNAGE** or other outdoor advertising

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [SMCHEALTH.ORG/MICROKITCHEN](http://SMCHEALTH.ORG/MICROKITCHEN)**

  **SAN MATEO COUNTY HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Environmental Health Services | Food Program  
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# Questions?



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