



Public Information

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Environmental Health Division
800 South Victoria Avenue, Ventura, CA 93009 • 805 654-2813 • <http://www.ventura.org/rma/envhealth>

General Requirements for Produce Stands

General Requirements

A produce stand, also referred to as a farm stand, Agricultural Sales Facility, or roadside stand, is a detached accessory structure used to sell or display:

- whole produce
- raw unprocessed fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds
- shell eggs
- ornamental plants
- limited quantities of pre-packaged foods.

Applicable permitting and operational requirements depend upon the size of the facility, where it is located, where the produce is grown, and the types of produce and other food products sold.

Prior to construction all stands must obtain a Zoning Clearance from the Planning Division and a building permit from the Building and Safety Division. Stands smaller than 400 square feet may qualify for a streamlined building permit in accordance with Ventura County Building Code, Section 105.4. Stands where the structure and the display area are accessible to the public and are smaller than 500 square feet qualify for a Zoning Clearance from the Planning Division. Larger stands may be required to obtain a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) from the Planning Division.

A Health Permit issued by the Environmental Health Division is required, except as described in the following section.

A permit or license from other County agencies may also be required before operating. These other agencies' requirements are briefly described on the other side of this information sheet.

Because this information sheet is not a complete list of requirements, you should prepare a brief written description of your produce stand and contact each agency for their specific requirements.

Sampling of produce may be allowed provided the operator has obtained a Health Permit and certain other requirements are met.

After each of the following requirements, the reference to the appropriate permitting, approval, or enforcement agency is identified as follows:

- Building & Safety Division - (B&S)
- Environmental Health Division – (EHD)
- Planning Division – (PD)

Requirements for Produce Stands Where the Structure Does Not Exceed 400 Square Feet, and/or the Structure and the Display Area Combined Do Not Exceed 500 Square Feet:

- Only one stand is allowed per legal lot. (PD)
- The stand must be accessory to the crop production on the same lot. (PD)
- The stand must be set back at least 30 feet from the road right-of-way, 30 feet from adjacent property lines, and 60 feet from other buildings on the same lot. (PD) (B&S)
- Safe ingress and egress must be maintained. (PD)
- Must have at least 3 on-site parking spaces. (PD)
- Signage must total no more than 45 sq. ft. (PD)
- Any accessory structures must meet applicable standards. (PD)
- The seller must obtain a Zoning Clearance. (PD)
- A minimum of 65% of the longest wall must be open during business hours. (B&S)
- The stand is limited to single story light wood frame structure (type V-B construction). (B&S)
- On-site food processing is prohibited. (EHD) (PD)
- Limited food preparation in the form of samples of produce grown or produced in Ventura County may be allowed. (See next page) (EHD)
- The total display area of pre-packaged non-potentially hazardous food offered for sale that was not grown or produced in Ventura County is limited to 50 sq. ft. (EHD)
- Produce stands may sell produce that is grown or produced outside of Ventura County but cannot offer samples (EHD)
- If the stand includes any electrical or plumbing work, permit(s) for that work are required. (B&S)
- The seller must obtain a Health Permit to operate. (EHD)

Exception: A producer that operates a stand that only sells whole produce and/or shell eggs, and is located on premises controlled by the producer, is exempt from obtaining a Health Permit to Operate.

**Requirements for Produce Stands
Where the Structure Exceeds 400 Square Feet
and/or the Structure and Display Area
Exceed 500 Square Feet**

Produce stands that do not meet the requirements of a small stand (400 square feet or less) or wish to sell produce other than produce grown or produced in Ventura County and other food or non-food products must meet the following requirements:

- The seller must obtain a Conditional Use Permit if the stand is over 500 square feet. (PD)
- Submission of plans for review as a “Mercantile” occupancy, including inspection of construction for approval. (B&S)
- The seller must obtain a food facility plan check, construction approval, and a Health Permit. (EHD)
- Only one stand per legal lot. (PD)
- The stand must be accessory to the crop production on the same lot. (PD)
- The total sales and display area must not exceed 5000 sq. ft. (PD)
- The stand must be setback at least 30 feet from the road right-of-way. (PD)
- Safe ingress and egress must be provided. (PD)
- The stand must be single-story and must not exceed 20 feet tall. (PD)
- Processed foods or non-agricultural items must not exceed 20% of inventory. (PD)
- An approved handicapped accessible restroom provided within the facility, with potable water and acceptable wastewater disposal, may be required based upon the specific project description. (EHD) (B&S)
- The stand must be fully enclosed by exterior walls (EHD)

Sampling at Produce Stands

Sampling of whole produce that is grown or produced in Ventura County may occur subject to the following general requirements (EHD):

- Samples must be kept in approved, clean, covered containers and distributed in a sanitary manner.
- Clean, disposable plastic gloves shall be used when cutting food samples.
- Food intended for sampling shall be washed in potable water.
- Potable water shall be available for sanitizing and hand washing as approved by the EHD.

- Utensils and cutting surfaces must be smooth, nonabsorbent, and easily cleanable; or single-use articles must be utilized.
- Potentially hazardous food samples such as raw seed sprouts, melons, or cut tomatoes must be maintained at or below 45°F and disposed of within two hours after cutting.
- Wastewater shall be disposed via a connection to a public sewer system or in a manner approved by the EHD.

Note: *This is not a complete list of requirements. For more information specific to sampling at your produce stand, please contact the EHD.*

Other Agency Requirements

Agricultural Commissioner’s Office

No permit is required for a produce stand; however, produce sold from the stand must meet certain requirements related to “maturity”, quality, source and packaging. Please contact the Agricultural Commissioner’s office for specific requirements.

Tax Collector

A business license is required for all produce stands. Please contact the Tax Collector’s office for more information.

Ventura County Sheriff

An Itinerant Merchant’s License is required for all produce stands. Please contact the Ventura County Sheriff for more information.

Weights and Measures Division

The use of any weighing or measuring devices requires a Registration Certificate. In addition, there may be requirements for package labeling. Please contact the Weights and Measures Division for more information.

Agency contacts:

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| Agricultural Commissioner | 805/933-2926 |
| Building and Safety Division | 805/654-2771 |
| Environmental Health Division | 805/654-2813 |
| Planning Division | 805/654-2488 |
| Tax Collector - Business License | 805/654-2653 |
| Ventura County Sheriff - Licensing | 805/654-2371 |
| Weights and Measures Division | 805/654-2444 |