



Background, Policies and Procedures

Background

The University of Idaho Food Technology Center commercial kitchen has been created to offer business, processing and educational assistance to aspiring food entrepreneurs and small-scale food processors. There are many obstacles to overcome when trying to bring a food product into the marketplace, one in particular is finding a licensed commercial kitchen or processing space to manufacture food products. The UI Food Technology Center commercial kitchen offers an affordable shared-use kitchen and pilot plant with on-site food processing assistance. Our mission at the UI Food Technology Center commercial kitchen is to provide the knowledge and resources needed to help local entrepreneurs succeed in the development of their food venture.

For those entrepreneurs not familiar with food industry regulatory requirements or business requirements, the Food Technology Center offers an introductory course entitled “*Developing Your Food Product Idea: a blueprint for startup and pre-venture food companies*”. This course serves as a prerequisite for use of the commercial kitchen if the entrepreneur has no prior food processing experience or needs assistance meeting the minimum requirements of the Food and Drug Administration.

Application Procedure

For entrepreneurs or small food processors wishing to utilize the services of the Food Technology Center, the first step is to complete the commercial kitchen application. The application will be reviewed by the Food Technology Center staff to determine whether or not the potential tenant will be allowed to utilize the commercial kitchen. There are a few requirements that must be met in order to produce commercially viable food products in the commercial kitchen. These requirements are outlined in the following section of this packet.

Once the application has been reviewed and approved, an official user agreement between the tenant and the Food Technology Center will be discussed and completed by both parties. This agreement will outline the services to be provided and the terms of the agreement for use of the commercial kitchen.

Requirements

In order to manufacture products for retail sale at the Food Technology Center, the tenant must exhibit the following:

- Product Liability Insurance: Each tenant must show proof of product liability (minimum \$1 million of coverage) to manufacture products for retail sale.

- Food Processors License: A valid State of Idaho Food Processors license issued by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare must be in possession and current to manufacture retail products.
- Business Plan: Within three months of beginning work at the FTC, an operational business plan must be prepared by each tenant manufacturing retail products and reviewed by the FTC. Preparing and updating a formal business plan allows the Food Technology Center to assess the needs and successes of the businesses using the commercial kitchen.

Orientation

All commercial kitchen tenants will be required to attend a mandatory kitchen orientation to cover operating policies. The orientation will be offered as necessary based on demand by new tenants.

The orientation will serve to resolve any new tenant questions and will also cover food and equipment safety and sanitation standards required by the facility.

Scheduling

Kitchen space will be scheduled by the Food Technology Center Manager and will be scheduled on a first come, first reserved basis. Space will be scheduled on a monthly beginning the final Monday of each month. Any space not occupied in the monthly schedule can be scheduled on a first come, first reserved basis. In order to assure available space, it is important to plan in advance and schedule as early as possible.

Equipment

The equipment located in the Food Technology Center is commercial grade and has been approved by the National Sanitation Foundation and is suitable for commercial food production. Equipment available includes steam kettles, convection ovens, ranges, commercial food processors, freezers, etc. If there is any piece of equipment not present that you may need, please inquire with the manager of the Food Technology Center.

The equipment at the Food Technology Center will only be used to produce products for human consumption unless authorized by the manager of the Food Technology Center. If this policy is violated, the tenant will lose his/her privileges for using the kitchen

Storage

The Food Technology Center houses 200 ft² of both refrigerated and frozen walk-in cooler space along with 2000 ft² of dry storage space. Tenants are encouraged to purchase materials for specified production runs to prevent the need for large amounts of storage space. If storage space is needed beyond scheduled kitchen times, the tenant will be charged per day for storage.