



# Starting a small-scale urban food production business in the City of Victoria

Small-scale urban food production businesses play an important role in improving community access to healthy and local food and providing local economic opportunities. To successfully start and manage an urban food production business here are a few things you need to consider.

## 1) Learn about what you can produce

Small-scale commercial urban food production includes raw, unprocessed fruits and vegetables, mushrooms, flowers, seeds, nuts, herbs, seedlings, plant cuttings, eggs and honey. Review the *Small-Scale Commercial Urban Food Production Handbook* at [victoria.ca/foodproduction](http://victoria.ca/foodproduction) to learn about what you need to know and think about before getting started.

## 2) Decide where you want to sell your products

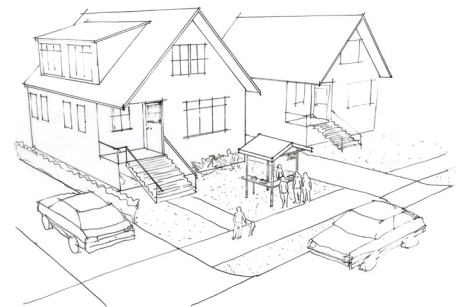
Products can be sold at a food stand in the front yard of the property where they are produced. If the zoning allows, it may also be possible to sell products in an on-site restaurant, shop or other food related business. Products can also be sold off-site at farmers markets, restaurants, grocery stores, and other approved commercial outlets.

## 3) Find a site

Urban food production is permitted in all City zones. You do not have to live on the site where urban food production takes place. Sites can include vacant lots, rooftops, and residential yards.

## 4) Determine if you need a permit for your structure

Urban food production activities can involve the building, modification or maintenance of infrastructure such as greenhouses, walk-in coolers, root cellars, tool sheds, covered areas or, coops. Depending on your project, you may need to apply for a building, plumbing, electrical, sign or development permit. To find out if you need a permit, contact Permits and Inspections at [permits@victoria.ca](mailto:permits@victoria.ca) or 250.361.0344.



*Food stands are permitted for on-site sales. A business licence must be obtained and regulations apply.*

## 5) Apply for a business licence

To sell your products on-site, you must obtain an annual business licence for \$100, or a 3-month business licence for \$25.

To sell your products off-site, you need to obtain an annual business licence for \$100.

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

### Business Hub

E [bizhub@victoria.ca](mailto:bizhub@victoria.ca)

T 250.361.0629

### Hours

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Monday to Friday

1 CENTENNIAL SQUARE, VICTORIA, BC V8W 1P6 | [victoria.ca/bizhub](http://victoria.ca/bizhub)





## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Is my business located in the City of Victoria?

- Greater Victoria is comprised of 13 municipalities. Use the City of Victoria's VicMap tool to determine if your business location is in the City of Victoria at [victoria.ca/map](http://victoria.ca/map).

### 2. What do I need to apply for an urban food production business licence?

- Read the City's *Small-Scale Commercial Urban Food Production Handbook* to determine if you need approval from Island Health to sell your products.
- Comply with applicable zoning regulations.
- Sketches, photographs and a site plan for any structures (greenhouses, sheds, other) associated with the business. Obtain permits if applicable. Food stands of allowed dimensions do not require a building permit.

### 3. What if I want to sell something other than raw, unprocessed fruits and vegetables, mushrooms, flowers, seeds, nuts, herbs, seedlings, plant cuttings, eggs and honey?

- Your business does not fall in the small-scale commercial urban food production category. Contact the Business Hub at [bizhub@victoria.ca](mailto:bizhub@victoria.ca) or 250.361.0629 to help determine your needs and identify next steps.

For more information on the City's food system programs and opportunities, visit [victoria.ca/foodproduction](http://victoria.ca/foodproduction)

## Helpful Resources

### City of Victoria

The City's *Small-Scale Commercial Urban Food Production Handbook* provides detailed information on:

- What you need to know to get started
- Applicable regulations
- Tips and resources to help your urban food production business foster positive neighborhood relationships

### Island Health

Island Health provides relevant health regulation information for food products.

- [viha.ca](http://viha.ca)  
[gateway\\_office@viha.ca](mailto:gateway_office@viha.ca)  
250.519.3401

### Compost Education Centre

The Compost Education Centre offers information and workshops on compost management, gardening, rainwater harvesting, building small greenhouses, soil testing, and more.

- [compost.bc.ca](http://compost.bc.ca)  
250.386.WORM (9676)

### LifeCycles Project Society

The LifeCycles Project Society helps people to grow their own food and have better access to fresh local foods in the city.

- [lifecyclesproject.ca](http://lifecyclesproject.ca)  
250.383.5800

### Minimize Pesticide Use

To minimize pesticide use, the City's website has tips to prevent garden pests without the use of pesticides and to encourage beneficial insects.

- [victoria.ca/pesticide\\_reduction](http://victoria.ca/pesticide_reduction)

### Public Markets

The City's list of Public Markets can help you find marketing opportunities.

- [victoria.ca/publicmarkets](http://victoria.ca/publicmarkets)

### Business Portal

The City's Business Portal provides resources for new businesses.

- [victoria.ca/business](http://victoria.ca/business)

## City of Victoria Contacts

**Business Hub** for general enquiries.

- [bizhub@victoria.ca](mailto:bizhub@victoria.ca)  
250.361.0629

**Business Licensing** when ready to apply for a business licence.

- [businesslicence@victoria.ca](mailto:businesslicence@victoria.ca)  
250.361.0572

**Permits and Inspections** to find out if you need a permit.

- [permits@victoria.ca](mailto:permits@victoria.ca)  
250.361.0344

**Development Services** for information on development permits and applicable zoning regulations.

- [victoria.ca/development-services](http://victoria.ca/development-services)  
[zoning@victoria.ca](mailto:zoning@victoria.ca)  
250.361.0382

Please visit the Business Hub at City Hall to learn more.

The Business Ambassador is available to walk you through the steps of opening an urban food production business in Victoria.