

## Frequently Asked Questions for Processed Pet Food License

### Q1. What is a processed pet food?

A: Processed pet foods include a variety of foods such as treats, candies, jerky, dry/moist/wet foods, special diet foods, health foods, canned food, gravies, broths, dietary supplements, milk supplements for consumption by household pets. These are foods typically have been cooked, dried, or canned.

### Q2. Do I need a license to make processed pet food?

A: Yes. Any person manufacturing, packaging, labeling, re-packaging/re-labeling or warehousing pet food in California must obtain a Pet Food Processor license prior to distributing pet foods. In addition, out of state manufacturers and warehouses are also required to obtain a license from the department prior to importing pet foods into California.

### Q3. Can I make pet treats from home?

A: No. A processed pet food, including treats, cannot be made in a residential home. All processed pet foods must be made in an approved facility. Acceptable types of facilities include: private or shared commercial kitchens, restaurant/church/school kitchens, commercial facilities. Please check with your local health department for additional restrictions.

### Q3. Do I need a license if I am only warehousing pet food?

A: Yes, a Pet Food Processor license is also required for anyone solely warehousing pet food within California as well as anyone importing pet food into California.

## **Q4. How much does a Processed Pet Food License cost?**

A: The cost for a Processed Pet Food License is \$166 and must be renewed yearly.

## **Q5. What must I do to obtain a license?**

A: To obtain a Processed Pet Food License, you must:

1. Submit completed Pet Food Processor License/Registration application with fee
2. Submit pet food labels with the application (for large volume labels, or digital files, please contact us by email for further instructions)
3. For out of state manufacturers only: Submit with your application, a health certificate issued by a local, county, or state health department that has jurisdiction to regulate food.

License application and information can be found in the link below:

[Pet Food Processor/Registration Application](#)

[Procedures for Obtaining a Pet Food License \(ca.gov\)](#)

## **Q6. Can I label my processed pet food “human grade”?**

A: Yes. As of 8/26/2024, the pet food regulations were amended to update labeling requirements on human grade and natural. Regulations outlining the requirements for both “human grade” and “natural” can be found online at [Processed Pet Food Regulations](#). Pet foods labeled as “human grade” must comply with human food regulations under [21 CFR Part 117 -- Current Good Manufacturing Practice, Hazard Analysis, and Risk-Based Preventive Controls for Human Food](#). Pet foods labeled as “human grade” must be clear in their label that food is intended for pet consumption.

“The terms “fit for human food,” “fit for human consumption,” continue to be prohibited in the labels or in advertisements of a processed pet food”.

## **Q7. Where can I find more information on labeling processed pet food?**

Pertinent laws and regulations can be found on our website [Food Safety Program](#). A pet food manufacturer must comply with all state and federal laws and regulations. Additional sources can be found at:

[Pet Food Labels - General | FDA](#)

[The Association of American Feed Control Officials \(AAFCO\) > Nutritional Labeling  
Eight required labeling items \(aaeco.org\)](#)