



URBAN AGRICULTURE POLICIES & PROCESSES: 101

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Learn which urban agriculture activities are allowed in the City of St. Louis and which departments and divisions you may need to work with before getting started!



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FIRST: ARE YOU SELLING ANYTHING?

Start here to see if you need a business license for your operation.

All businesses must obtain a graduated business license to do business in the City unless they are exempt. Not all urban agriculture activities are considered business activities.

When do you need a business license?		
Categories	License Required	NO License Required
Selling produce	Cut produce at farmers markets	Whole, uncut product at farmers markets
Selling value-added products ^[1]	Selling value-added products NOT covered by Missouri Cottage Food Law	Selling value-added products that ARE covered by Missouri Cottage Food Law ^[2]
Selling prepared foods and meals	Any prepared foods (e.g., chilies, stews, grab-and-go dinners)	
Selling honey and bees	Bees	Honey on-site at your home garden, community garden or urban farm
		Honey solely at farmers markets
Selling eggs	Eggs to restaurants, grocery stores, other businesses	Eggs on-site at your home garden, community garden, or urban farm
		Eggs solely at farmers markets
Selling chickens and other fowl (be sure to read about the laws governing chickens and fowl, pg 3)	Any fowl (note: selling more than 12 young fowl is prohibited in the City of St. Louis; see more, pg 3)	
	Adult chickens	
Selling compost (be sure to read about the laws governing composting, pg 5)	Commercial production of composting	

Also note Excerpt from 8.07.041 - Specific organizations exempted.

"Farmers, which for purposes of this chapter shall mean those individuals or organizations who cultivate land or crops, raise animals, or keep bees, and offer said agricultural products or products produced therefrom for **sale directly to consumers solely at farmers' markets**. As used in this chapter, the term **"farmers' market"** shall mean: a market that is privately or publicly owned or operated at which space is rented, leased or otherwise provided to farmers to sell their agricultural products and products produced therefrom directly to consumers."

Relevant Departments and Divisions:

- License Collector's Office: [License Collector's Office \(stlouis-mo.gov\)](http://stlouis-mo.gov)
- Building Division: [Building Division \(stlouis-mo.gov\)](http://stlouis-mo.gov)
- Department of Health: [Health Department \(stlouis-mo.gov\)](http://stlouis-mo.gov)

REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU ARE SELLING ANYTHING, HERE ARE ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS & RESTRICTIONS FROM THE BUILDING DIVISION & HEALTH DEPARTMENT:



Growing and harvesting of produce without use of greenhouse(s)

- All good to go!
- No need to engage with the Building Division or Health Department



Growing and harvesting of produce with use of greenhouse(s)

- Building Division: zoning conditional use permit. (see MCE's [guide](#) to greenhouses) ^[3]
- Health Department: N/A



Producing value-added products covered by Missouri's Cottage Food Law

- Building Division: N/A
- Health Department: Cottage Food Waiver



Producing value-added products not covered by Missouri's Cottage Food Law

- Building Division: commercial occupancy permit
- Health Department: Either a Regular Food Establishment Permit or Temporary Food Establishment Permit (see MCE's [guide](#) to temporary food permits) ^[4]



Selling whole uncut produce

- Building Division: commercial occupancy permit if selling to restaurants, stores, etc.
- Health Department: N/A



Selling cut produce

- Building Division: commercial occupancy permit
- Health Department: either a Food Establishment or Temporary Food Permit



Selling prepared foods

- Building Division: commercial occupancy permit
- Health Department: either a Food Establishment or Temporary Food Permit



Selling bees (see laws about raising bees, pg 4)

- Building Division: commercial occupancy permit
- Health Department: N/A



Selling eggs at an on site stand - no permits (see info about [Building Commissioner's Memo](#), June 2017) ^[5]

Sale of eggs solely at farmers' market - need farmers' market permit from Health Department

([Ordinance 71106](#); ^[6] also see MCE's [guide](#) to temporary food permits {overview 2020}) ^[7]

Selling eggs at or to other markets besides a farmers' market - need occupancy permit from Building Division



Selling chickens (see laws about raising chickens, pg 4)

- Building Division: occupancy permit
- Health Department: N/A

NOTE: 10.20.140 - Sale of Young Fowl - It is unlawful to sell, give or award, or offer for sale, gift or award, eleven or less of any fowl under one month of age.



Selling rabbits

- Building Division: occupancy permit
- Health Department: N/A

NOTE: 10.20.150 - Sale of Rabbits - It is unlawful to sell, give or award, or offer for sale, gift or award, any live rabbit less than six weeks of age unless such sale, gift or award includes the sale, gift or award of the dam. (dam = mother)



GENERAL RULES FOR OWNING ANIMALS AND COMPOSTING

10.20.015 - Keeping of Certain Animals Prohibited

Animals that cannot be raised in residential or commercial operations: roosters, Africanized honey bees, Asian Carp or large farm animals.

"Large farm animal" means any cattle, sheep, goat, swine, except for Vietnamese Pot-Bellied Pigs which may be kept pursuant to Section 10.20.015 of this part.

Raising of bees

- "Honey bee": a member of the genus *Apis* distinguished by the production and storage of honey. Excluded from this definition are **Africanized honey bees which are prohibited** within the City of St. Louis. ([10.20.010 - Definitions](#))
- **No permits required, but must abide by city law:**
- No person or organization can have more than **five hives** ([15.140.010 - Limited](#))
- No coops or cages housing bees, Aqua Farm or fowl may be located in front yards. (10.20.016 - Regulation of animal housing.)

Raising of chickens (see MCE's [Overview of BB52- Chickens](#))^[8]

- **"Fowl"** means chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese, pigeons, quail, pheasants, and other fowl, domesticated or wild, excluding roosters. ([10.20.010 - Definitions](#))
- **Roosters are not permitted** in the City of St. Louis. Ordinance 70608 ([10.20.015](#))
- On one residential parcel, you can raise 8 chickens or less without any permit; still must abide by Ordinance 70608. On one residential parcel, you can raise more than 8 chickens if you obtain a small farm animal permit from health department or qualify for an exemption ([10.20.015](#)). If you have contiguous 20,000 square feet or more of land and live within one quarter mile from the land, you may have one more than the allowable 8 chickens per each additional 1,000 square feet to a maximum of twenty chickens.

CHICKEN OWNERSHIP Examples: If you have 25,000 square feet of contiguous land, you can have 13 chickens = 8 chickens for the first 20,000 sq. ft. + 5 additional chickens for the additional 5,000 square feet. If you have 32,000 square feet, you can have 8 chickens for the first 20,000 sq. ft. + 12 additional chickens for the additional 12,000 square feet. If you have more than 32,000 square feet of contiguous land, you are still capped at 20 chickens unless you qualify for an exemption. See Ordinance 70608 for more details.

10.20.016 - Regulation of animal housing

A. No coops or cages housing bees, Aqua Farm or fowl may be located in front yards.

B. All small farm animals or Aqua Farms shall be provided with a covered, predator-proof coop or cage or other shelter that is thoroughly ventilated, designed to be easily accessed and cleaned, and of sufficient size as determined by the Health Commissioner to permit free movement of the animals. A minimum of two (2) square feet per animal of space inside such a structure is required or (2) pounds of aquatic animal per cubic feet of water or 1 pound per 3.74 gallons of water.

C. A maximum of fifty (50) square feet of space inside the coops shall be permitted.

D. All coops or cages shall not be closer than 1.5 feet from any property line; except when there is a solid-surface fence sufficient to prevent the small farm animal or any part thereof or any waste produced by such animal from passing through to the adjacent property, in which case all coops and cages shall not be closer than 10 feet from all residential dwellings on adjacent parcels.



COMPOSTING

Backyard residential composting - no permits required



Commercial production of composting material

Building Division: Require commercial occupancy permit and a conditional use permit is required and can only occur in "K unrestricted district" only.

Zoning has interpreted commercial composting to fall under "Fertilizer manufacture and potash refining."

See [26.60.025](#) - Conditional uses.

Note nuisance concern for commercial composting:

[11.58.190](#) - Bone, fat or glue business

The business or any part thereof, of any or either of them, of bone crushing, bone boiling, bone grinding, bone burning, bone drying, fat burning, fat boiling, fat rendering, fat drying, gut cleaning or the making of glue or the manufacture of fertilizing material of any kind or description, from any dead animals or parts thereof, or any boiling of offal, swill, fat or grease of any description which shall be done or carried on in an offensive, unclean or defective manner in any building, yard or lot of ground within the limits of the City shall be deemed a nuisance.



DEFINITIONS & IMPORTANT LINKS

^[1] **value-added products** are products that generally have increased in value due to processing.
(usda.gov - <https://bit.ly/3t3rXKe>)

FOR EXAMPLE (<https://bit.ly/2MqnT5K>):

- A change in the physical state or form of the product (such as milling wheat into flour or making strawberries into jam).
- The production of a product in a manner that enhances its value (such as organically produced products).

^[2] **Missouri Cottage Food Law:** Under this law, individuals can only sell their products directly to consumers, which includes sales from home and at events. They can only sell baked goods, jams, jellies, and dry herbs, which is relatively limited compared to other states. Cottage food operations can sell up to \$50,000 of products per year. (<https://bit.ly/39Bh1LY>, also see <https://bit.ly/39xTr2z>)

^[3] **MCE's Guide to Greenhouses:** <https://bit.ly/3owooZf>

^[4] **MCE's Guide to Temporary Food Permits:** <https://bit.ly/3ctiO7O>

^[5] **Building Commissioner's Memo:** <https://bit.ly/36qc4Ug>

^[6] **St. Louis-MO Gov Ordinance 71106:** <https://bit.ly/2MmsXlz>

^[7] **MCE's Guide to Temporary Food Permits (Overview 2020):** <https://bit.ly/3csquHt>

^[8] **MCE's Overview of BB52- Chickens:** <https://bit.ly/2MI5AsK>

St. Louis City Code of Ordinances (searchable by numerical code): <https://bit.ly/3rlFvz5>

Photos courtesy of:

Three Springs Farm (eggs & hens)

Nourish STL (soup)