

Included here is a list of regulatory agencies with which agricultural businesses are most likely to interact.

Do you know the differences between [Statutes, Regulations and Ordinances](#)?

CalGold

A one-stop shop to assist you in finding permit information for business enterprises. Users choose the city or county and type of business and [CalGold](#) provides a large list of permits that *may* be required as well as contact information for the agency/municipality to obtain more details.

City

If your operation is located within an incorporated area of Sonoma County you will need to register with that municipality and there may be additional permits required.

County

	<p>Department of Agriculture: Ag Commissioner; weighing and measuring devices; Certified Producer Certificates (to allow selling at farmers markets); proper labeling (produce); Approved Produce Gardener Certificate.</p>
	<p>Permit Sonoma (aka PRMD): Land use permits, building, water resources, waste disposal, renewable energy, Ag Zoning Ordinances. For large projects, a Pre-application Meeting is recommended.</p>
	<p>Department of Health Services: Health codes for food safety, public water supply, septic systems and waste disposal; issues Retail Food Facility and Cottage Food permits; dairies; state small water systems.</p>
	<p>Auditor, Controller, Treasurer, Tax Collector: Collects taxes for different taxing agencies within county.</p>
	<p>Clerk, Recorder, Assessor: Fictitious Business Name Statement - required if surname or owner name is not part of the business name.</p>
	<p>Economic Development Board: dedicated to helping your business success. They provide a variety of resources for businesses.</p>

Regional

	<p>Air Resources Board: Burn permits, air quality permits (and exemptions). Sonoma County districts include Northern Sonoma County and Bay Area. Check the maps to determine your district.</p>
	<p>Water Boards: Public Water Systems; agricultural plans (i.e. dairies, settling pond, ag processing) approves plans and issues permits (and waivers). Sonoma County districts include: Bay Area (southern part of the county) and North Coast (majority of county).</p>

State

	<p>Food & Agriculture: Milk processing permits (i.e. cheese, yogurt, ice cream, etc); Egg Handler permit; state licensed meat facilities; organic registration; certified producer certificate and CSA registration (scroll down for Community Supported Ag).</p>
	<p>Public Health: Enforces health and safety code. Permits and inspects wholesale food processing facilities – Processed Food Registration and Cannery operations.</p>
	<p>Franchise Tax Board: Personal and Business Income Tax.</p>
	<p>Board of Equalization: Sellers permit and sales/use tax.</p>
	<p>Economic Development: Employee State-Tax Registration: Required if you have employees.</p>
	<p>OSHA: Occupational health and safety: employers must have a health and safety plan.</p>
	<p>Alcoholic Beverage Control: Liquor license to make and/or sell alcohol.</p>
	<p>Secretary of State: forming a corporation or limited liability company.</p>

Federal

	<p>US Department of Agriculture: Food Safety & Inspection Service (meat harvesting and processing) and labeling of meat and poultry products.</p>
	<p>Internal Revenue Service: Tax ID Number (TIN) for the business; Employer Identification Number (EIN):required if you have employees and the business doesn't have a TIN.</p>
	<p>Food & Drug Administration: Companies that manufacture, process, pack, or store food, beverages, or dietary supplements must register with FDA.</p>
	<p>Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau: Making and selling alcoholic products. See their online permit tutorial.</p>

Statute, Regulation or Ordinance

The United States Constitution is the supreme law of the land. No federal or state law may violate it. Federal laws (statutes), enacted by the United States Congress, must be followed by every state in the country. If a state law contradicts a federal law, the federal statute preempts the state law, and the state will be required to abide by the federal statute. However, federal laws do not cover all areas of the law, and in those instances, state or local laws will control.

Similarly, within a state, the state constitution represents the highest legal authority. The state may then enact state statutes, which apply to everyone within the state. State statutes cannot violate the state constitution, the federal constitution, or federal law.

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Statute

An act of a legislature that declares, proscribes, or commands something; a specific law, expressed in writing.

A statute is a written law passed by a legislature on the state or federal level. Statutes set forth general propositions of law that courts apply to specific situations. A statute may forbid a certain act, direct a certain act, make a declaration, or set forth governmental mechanisms to aid society.

A statute begins as a bill proposed or sponsored by a legislator. If the bill survives the legislative committee process and is approved by both houses of the legislature, the bill becomes law when it is signed by the executive officer (the president on the federal level or the governor on the state level). When a bill becomes law, the various provisions in the bill are called statutes. The term statute signifies the elevation of a bill from legislative proposal to law. State and federal statutes are compiled in statutory codes that group the statutes by subject. These codes are published in book form and are available at law libraries. [Learn more about statute.](#)

Regulation

A rule of order having the force of law, prescribed by a superior or competent authority, relating to the actions of those under the authority's control. "Authorities" on this page include state and regional agencies.

Regulations are issued by various federal government departments and agencies to carry out the intent of legislation enacted by Congress. Administrative agencies, often called "the bureaucracy," perform a number of different government functions, including rule making. The rules issued by these agencies are called regulations and are designed to guide the activity of those regulated by the agency and also the activity of the agency's employees. Regulations also function to ensure uniform application of the law. [Learn more about regulation.](#)

Ordinance

A law, statute, or regulation enacted by a municipality. "Municipality" includes County and incorporated areas of a county (i.e. city, town, etc).

County and municipal governments enact laws, often called ordinances, via specific powers granted to them by the state. County and municipal ordinances apply to everyone within the county or municipality limits. These ordinances may not violate state or federal laws.

Many ordinances deal with maintaining public safety, health, morals, and 'general welfare.' One of the most significant areas of municipal law is Zoning. Zoning ordinances constitute a master plan for land use within the municipality. A municipality is typically divided into residential, commercial, and industrial zoning districts. Zoning attempts to conserve the value of property and to encourage the most appropriate use of land throughout a particular locality. [Learn more about ordinance.](#)