



ANNUAL CERTIFICATION CYCLE TIMELINE

Certified handlers must submit a renewal application annually and receive an on-site inspection at least once per calendar year. Certified handlers are also required to maintain up to day records and notify their certifier of any changes to their operation that affect certification, such as requests for new products, changes in formulations, suppliers, or labels. Each of these activities fall on a rolling timeline described in the table below.

Annual Certification Cycle Timeline		
Event	Frequency	Timeline
Certification renewal paperwork submission	Annually	Determined by your certifier, commonly either around your anniversary date of the close of the calendar year
Standard On-Site Inspection	Annually	2 to 6 weeks notice typically, held anytime during normal business hours
Unannounced Inspection	As needed	Anytime during normal business hours, no notice required, inspector <i>may</i> issue notice up to 4 hours in advance
Response to your certifier's requests for additional information	Common	3 to 4 weeks, can vary depending on type of information requested
Maintain all records applicable to certification	Ongoing	Retain archives for minimum of 5 years
Notify certifier of any changes that affect certification	As incurred	Immediately upon decision to make a change
Approval of changes to product labels and formulas	As incurred	2 to 6 weeks from submitting requested change, varies by certifier and circumstance
Label Use-Up Period	As incurred	90 days is typical, with a maximum of up to 1 year, subject to certifier decision
Verify organic certificates for all suppliers	Annually	Completed prior to submitting annual renewal paperwork
Commercial availability search updates for non-organic ingredients	Annually	Completed prior to submitting annual renewal paperwork, some certifiers approval searches up to 18 months
Certifier Audit of Approved Ingredients, Packaging or Processing Aids	At least every 5 years	Can be more frequent depending on a material's risk for contamination

SOURCES CITED

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USDA National Organic Program, [7 CFR §205.103\(b\)\(4\)](#), [7 CFR §205.406](#).