

Mobile Food Unit General Information

A summary of the Food Sanitation Rules relating to mobile food units

The Mobile Food Unit Operational Guide is intended to help you set up and operate your mobile food unit in a safe and sanitary manner. By focusing on foodborne illness risk factors and public health interventions the possibility of foodborne illnesses will be greatly reduced in your operation. While this guide provides some detailed information about operating a mobile food unit, it does not contain all the requirements for your unit. *Additional questions should be directed to the Health Officer: Nelva Wright (nvwright@harrisburgpa.gov)*

What is a Mobile Food Unit?

Mobile food units are a type of annually licensed food establishment that are a readily movable vehicle (on wheels) that is self-propelled (driven), or can be pulled or pushed down a sidewalk or street. They vary in equipment and design, depending upon the type of food and service intended by the operator. Pre-approved menu items may be prepared or processed on the vehicle which is used to sell and dispense food to the consumer.

Home Base and Service Area Requirements

Mobile food units must return to their Home Base of Operation a minimum of every three days for thorough cleaning and sanitizing of the facility, disposal of waste water, and general maintenance of the unit. Mobile units may need to return to their home base of operation on a more frequent basis depending on business demands. **Refrigerated trucks must be used in any situation where there is inadequate space in the mobile unit to store cold hold foods at 41 degrees or below. Cold hold foods transported/stored in unrefrigerated box trucks will be discarded and the violation noted in the vendors' file.**

Water supplied to the mobile food unit shall be from a public water source. If water is supplied from a private source, the water must be tested annually with test results provided to the regulatory authority. If on-site power is required for the mobile unit to function overnight, then the plug shall be secured to an outlet to prevent loss of power. If not secured, all perishable foods shall be removed and stored in a licensed commissary. Any storage or handling of food at a home base would require a license.

A home base of operation may include a licensed Commissary or licensed Warehouse. The mobile unit permit holder and the commissary or warehouse permit holder must be the same person or company.

A home base of operation may include a servicing area. A servicing area may be an unlicensed facility if there is no food preparation or storage of any kind. This type of service area must be pre-approved by the regulatory authority during the plan review and pre-operational inspection.

A mobile food unit may have the ability to operate without a commissary. The decision will be made by the Environmental Health Specialist during the plan review and pre-operational inspection.

How is a Mobile Food Unit Classified?

There are four types of mobile food units. The mobile food unit classifications are based on the menu. A mobile unit can serve menu items within its classification number or below. For example, a Class III unit may also sell items allowed in a Class II and Class I. A mobile unit cannot serve menu items from a higher classification number. Example, a Class III unit cannot serve menu items from a Class IV unit.

Training and equipment requirements are located in table 1 on the next page.

Class I Non-Refrigerated Vending Units - These units can serve **only intact, non-potentially hazardous commercially prepackaged food and drinks.**



No preparation or assembly of food or drinks may take place on the unit. Examples include chips, crackers, cookies, soda, and sweets in manufacturers packaging. These units **DO NOT** require a permit to operate but may require an additional warehouse license.

Class II Refrigerated or Hot Vending Units - These units serve **potentially and non-potentially hazardous commercially Prepackaged foods.**



No preparation, assembly, cooking, or open packages of food or beverage on the unit is allowed. The food items may be prepared commercially or in the permit holder's licensed restaurant or commissary. Examples: packaged sandwiches, ice cream bars, individually wrapped and cooked hot dogs.

Class III



These units serve **potentially and non-potentially hazardous packaged foods and unpackaged foods with limited assembly.** Preparation, assembly, or cooking of raw animal foods is *not allowed* on this unit. Commercial or Commissary prepared foods may be **reheated** on the unit. Self-service by customers of unpackaged food is *not allowed*. Menu items must be approved and processes must be reviewed at a pre-operational inspection. Examples: Pushcart Operations, packaged salads, hot dogs,

Class IV



These units serve **potentially and non-potentially hazardous foods that are prepared, cooked, cooled, or reheated, and assembled on the unit** using pre-cooked and/or raw products. The menu is unlimited, but processes must be reviewed at a pre-operational inspection. Examples: Self-Contained Mobile Food Units, Food Trucks. All meats, fish, poultry, plant foods, and dairy products.

Table 1: Mobile Food Unit General Requirements and Limitations

Requirements	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Plan Review	NO	YES	YES	YES
Commissary or Warehouse	*	*	*	*
CFPM (1)	NO	NO	YES	YES
Employee Health Policy	NO	NO	YES	YES
Assembly or preparation allowed	NO	NO	***YES (Limited)	YES
Cooking allowed	NO	NO	(Reheating ONLY)	YES
Barbecue operation allowed	NO	NO	NO	YES
Cold holding equipment	NO	**YES	**YES	**YES
Hot holding equipment	NO	**YES	**YES	**YES
Water supply required hot & cold	NO	NO	YES	YES
Waste water tank	NO	NO	YES	YES
Hand washing sink required	NO	NO	YES	YES
Dish washing sinks required	NO	NO	*YES	*YES
Adequate Ventilation	NO	NO	YES	YES
Examples	Pre-packaged non-potentially hazardous foods. Snacks, sodas, cookies, chips, crackers	Pre-packaged potentially hazardous foods. Ice cream, frozen meats, sandwiches	Pre-cooked foods with limited assembly. Hot dogs, shaved ice, coffee	Menu Limitations: <u>No special processes (ex: Sous Vide) allowed</u>

* An additional licensed commissary or warehouse may be required based upon the Health Officers' plan and menu review and pre-operational inspection.

** Holding equipment is based on food type.

***Limited food assembly. On site- menu and processes shall be provided at plan review and pre-operational inspection for approval.

(1) Certified Food Protection Manager (Serv Safe or other certification)

There is no size limit to mobile food units, but they must meet the following basic requirements:

1. A non-mobile unit, or structure, cannot be licensed as a mobile unit. The intention is to be mobile and not a permanent fixture. For example, a temporary food establishment set up using tables and tents cannot be licensed as a mobile unit.
2. All required mercantile permits, event rules and regulations, insurance requirements and safety procedures must be followed at all times
3. All self-contained mobile units and pushcarts, Class III and IV, must have a hand washing sink equipped to provide water at a temperature of at least 38°C (100°F) through a mixing valve or combination faucet. Sinks must be stocked with hand washing soap and disposable towels or other approved means of hand drying.
4. **Additional coolers (igloos) that are not attached to the unit may ONLY be used to store bottled drinks and ice.**
5. Cleaning supplies and soiled utensils may be stored in additional tubs or containers that are non-absorbent, covered and stored in a manner as to prevent contamination or infestation.
6. A smooth and easily cleanable table may be assembled next to the unit **ONLY** for the purpose of serving condiments, napkins, and straws. This table must be visible from inside the mobile unit so it can be visually monitored.
7. Mobile units **must** be positioned to keep the general public away from the food preparation and cooking areas of the unit.
8. Mobile units **do not** include automobiles, trucks, or vans not designed for food preparation (this includes the trunk of your car). No food products may be stored in your vehicle such as extra supplies of breads, packaged hotdogs in a cooler, or prepared foods stored in insulated units. You may be required to return to your commissary several times a day.
9. Class IV Mobile Food Units may cook on a covered grill or smoker that is set up outside of the unit. *No other outside cooking equipment or food preparation is allowed.*

Temporary Food Establishment (Mobile Food) Inspection Checklist

PERSONNEL

- PERSON-IN-CHARGE (PIC):** PIC present (Certificate posted)
- DEMONSTRATION OF KNOWLEDGE:** PIC demonstrated knowledge/certified

HYGIENE

- EMPLOYEE HEALTH:** Ill employees excluded
- HANDWASHING:** Hot/Cold running water (or insulated containers with free flow spout)
- HANDWASHING FACILITIES:** Convenient/100 degrees minimum/paper towels/soap
- NO BARE HAND CONTACT:** No bare hand contact. Utensils or gloves used

FOOD SOURCE & TRANSPORTATION

- SOURCE:** Approved sources; Ice made from potable water
- TRANSPORTATION:** Protected from contamination; 135°F or higher or 41°F or below

FOOD PREPARATION

- FOOD CONTAMINATION:** Protected from contamination
- CROSS CONTAMINATION:** Protected from cross contamination
- HANDLING OF UNPACKAGED FOOD:** Protected from contamination
- HOLDING OF FOOD:** 135°F or higher or 41°F or below.
- COOKING:**
 - 165°F for 15 seconds –poultry etc.
 - 155°F for 15 seconds -- tenderized meat, hamburgers etc.
 - 145°F for 15 seconds –raw eggs
- THAWING:** Proper thawing
- REHEATING FOR HOT HOLDING OF COMMERCIALY PROCESSED FOOD:** Reheated to 135°F
- COOLING:** 2 hr 135°F to 70°F ; 4 hr 70°F to 41°F
- REHEATING FOR HOT HOLDING:** 165°F 15 sec
- DATE MARKING:** Marked as required
- CONSUMER ADVISORY:** Posted as required

EQUIPMENT

- UTENSILS:** Washing and sanitizing/ testing strips and equipment/3-Bay sink
- COOKING DEVICES:** Properly designed and used
- COLD STORAGE:** Not in contact with water; 41°F or below
- HOT STORAGE:** 135°F or above
- THERMOMETERS:** Proper thermometers provided and used
- COUNTERS/SHELVES:** Easily cleanable and nonabsorbent
- BUCKETS/SPRAY BOTTLES** (with sanitizer)
- TRASH CONTAINERS**
- BODILY FLUID CLEAN-UP KIT**

FOOD AND UTENSIL STORAGE

- DRY STORAGE:** Least 6" off the ground.
- FOOD DISPLAY:** Protected from contamination
- IN-USE UTENSILS** Properly stored and used
- SNEEZE GUARDS**

Other Food Safety Requirements

- **No Home Prepared food are permitted**
- **Temperatures must be taken and recorded on temperature log**
- **Foods held at 41 degrees or below not stored on mobile unit, must be transported and stored in a refrigerated truck.**
- **Under no circumstances will additional coolers (igloos) be permitted to store items other than bottled drinks and ice**
- **If it is determined that any food requiring cold holding was transported in non-refrigerated truck... the food will be discarded, and the violation noted in the vendors' file**

Any questions? contact Health Officer: Nelva Wright (nvwright@harrisburgpa.gov)