

MOBILE FOOD PREPARATION VEHICLE & TRAILER GUIDELINES



Mobile food preparation vehicles and trailers are divided into two categories, Class III & Class IV units.

Class IV units are motorized units that are fully enclosed that meet all the safety equipment and standards as a brick-and-mortar unit. This class includes a restaurant on wheels or a mobile food preparation vehicle.

Class III units are a mobile food preparation trailer that may cook in an external covered area such as a barbeque pit or wood fired pizza ovens, where all food preparation, assembly, and service is done in an enclosed area on board the unit. This class includes a non-motorized mobile food unit that is readily movable such as a trailer or shipping container.

All Class III and IV mobile food units must be commercially-manufactured and comply with construction and operational standards to be eligible to receive an annual mobile food permit.

Requirements for a mobile food preparation vehicle or trailer permit:

- Approved commissary location
- Notarized letter of authenticity for the vehicle
- Registered food service manager certificate
- Approved vehicle plan review
- Vehicle vending itinerary with written property owner authorization and restroom use agreement
- Propane fire permit from Dallas Fire Department (is necessary)
- Current proof of six months vehicle liability insurance
- Current registered vehicle license plate
- Current driver's license
- Vehicle passes permitting health inspection

Commissary Requirement

A Commissary is defined as a permitted fixed food establishment that serves as an operating base for a mobile food unit. The commissary is where the mobile unit will be stored, parked, serviced, cleaned, supplied, and maintained. When located in Dallas, the facility must be constructed in accordance with Chapter 17 of the Dallas City Code. Commissaries outside Dallas must be permitted and inspected by the local health authority. **Home based operations are not allowed.** All mobile food preparation vehicles or trailers must report daily to a commissary where:

- The unit is properly cleaned and serviced.
- All food contact surfaces are washed, rinsed and sanitized.

- The liquid waste is properly disposed.
- The unit receives potable water necessary to operate.
- Food served from the mobile food unit is stored, handled or prepared.
- Single service articles are properly stored.
- The vehicle or trailer is stored overnight (minimum of 5 hours).

Out-of-town commissaries must submit a copy of the current local health permit and a copy of the last health inspection report conducted by the local health authority.

Note: If you do not own your own commissary, you must secure a Dallas Commissary Approval Form and have it filled out completely by the commissary owner. The approval form must be signed by the commissary owner and notarized if the commissary owner is not present at our office at the time of signing.

Vehicle Plan Review

A mobile food preparation vehicle or trailer must go through plan review if the unit is:

- applying for initial permit with City of Dallas,
- changing ownership,
- converted from another use,
- remodeled, or
- without a valid permit for more than 18 months.

The plan review process is used to determine if the mobile unit meets all the sanitation and safety specifications required by the City of Dallas. If the mobile unit requires a plan review, it must pass the plan review before the unit will be inspected. The plan review fee for a mobile food preparation vehicle or trailer is non-refundable.

Items required for plan review

- 2 sets of plans drawn to scale (minimum ½" = 1')
- Views from top and both sides
- Include view of plumbing fixtures and dimensions of tanks
- Label equipment and include dimensions
- Provide a list of all equipment and include the manufacturers specification sheet
- Describe the construction materials used on the vehicle (i.e. floors, walls, ceiling, counters, etc.).

The floor plan drawing of the mobile unit should be a good representation of how the unit looks in real life. The plan does not have to be professional, but does have to be to scale, detailed and legible. Drawing "to scale" means that everything is drawn to the correct proportion (minimum ½" = 1'). Make sure the drawing is detailed to include all labeled equipment and their dimensions. Submitted plans that are not drawn correct or are incomplete will be returned until finished properly. Once the plans have been accepted as complete, please allow up to 3 weeks for the review process. An inspector will contact the owner with any questions or to notify of approval. After the plan has been approved a time can be scheduled for the inspection of the vehicle.

Vehicle Design and Equipment Requirements:

1. Floors of the mobile unit must be constructed of durable, easily cleanable material, including, but not limited to, anodized aluminum, stainless steel, or tile. All junctures must be properly sealed. All service lines and pipes must be installed off the floor to allow for easy cleaning.
2. Walls of the mobile unit must be durable, easily cleanable, non-absorbent and light in color. Minimum wall materials include, but are not limited to, aluminum or fiberglass reinforced plastic (FRP). Walls at vent hood and grill areas must be covered with stainless steel panels. Wall covering must be installed to cover the entire height of each wall. Stud and utility lines may not be unnecessarily exposed on the wall or prevent cleaning.
3. Ceilings of the mobile unit must be light in color, non-absorbent, and easily cleanable. The height over the aisleway portion of the unit must be at least 74 inches and unobstructed. Joints and rafters may not be exposed.
4. The cab of a mobile food preparation vehicle must be physically separated from the food preparation area, with seats designated for the cook and any passengers located outside of the food preparation area.
5. Aisle space must be unobstructed and at least 30 inches wide for all mobile food vehicles or trailers.
6. Construction joints must be tightly fitted and sealed with no gaps or voids, and all sealant, solder, and weld joints located in the food contact areas must be smooth and approved for food contact surfaces.
7. All equipment and utensils must meet or exceed the standards published by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF). No household or home-use equipment or appliances allowed.
8. All equipment must be placed, installed, stored, and secured on the mobile unit in a manner that allows for thorough cleaning and sanitizing around the equipment.
9. Floor-mounted equipment must be sealed directly to the floor or securely installed on legs to provide a six-inch clearance under the equipment. Counter-mounted equipment must be sealed directly to the countertop or securely installed to provide a four-inch clearance under the equipment.
10. Cooking equipment must be commercial grade and properly vented. An automatic fire suppression system approved by the Dallas Fire Department must be provided over cooking surfaces that require exhaust ventilation. Deep fryers, steam tables, and similar equipment must have covers with secured latches while the mobile unit is in motion.
11. The mobile unit must be equipped with commercial grade mechanical refrigeration equipment if time and temperature control for safety (TCS) food is stored, prepared, or served on the vehicle. The refrigeration equipment must have at least 15 cubic feet of usable storage space.
12. The mobile unit must contain at least 20 inches of linear counter space for each piece of food equipment.
13. The mobile unit must contain at least 15 cubic feet of storage space for dry food and utensil storage. No food or utensil storage is allowed in any plumbing compartment.

14. The mobile vehicle or trailer must be equipped with a power source that is capable of handling the power demands of the unit and equipment while the vehicle or trailer is stopped or in motion. The power source must be permanently installed in an area that is completely separated from food preparation and food storage areas and must be accessible for proper cleaning and maintenance.

15. Adequate lighting must be provided using light bulbs that are completely enclosed in plastic safety shields or the equivalent.

16. All outer openings to the food service area of the unit must be insect and rodent proof. Screens are required to be tight fitted with a maximum of 16 mesh per square inch.

17. Service windows must not be larger than 216 square inches. The distance between two service windows must not be less than 18 inches. Each service window must have an overhead protection cover extending at least 12 inches from the vehicle or trailer.

18. Entrance doors and service windows to the food preparation area must be self-closing and kept closed when not in use.

Vehicle Plumbing Requirements:

1. The mobile unit must be equipped with a permanently installed water supply tank with a minimum capacity of 30 gallons.

2. A hot water heater must be provided that is capable of heating water to at least 110 degrees Fahrenheit. The water heater tank is required to be a minimum of three gallons.

3. The mobile unit must be equipped with a stainless steel, three-compartment sink measuring at least 12 inches long, 12 inches wide, and 10 inches deep for each compartment. The sink is required to have an integrated stainless steel drainboard that is at least 12 inches long.

4. The mobile unit must be equipped with a stainless steel handwash sink measuring at least nine inches long, nine inches wide, and four inches deep. The sink must be fully accessible and separated from the warewashing sink by a splashguard. Handwash sinks are required to have a soap and paper towel dispenser in close proximity.

5. All sinks must provide a minimum water pressure of one gallon per minute.

6. All liquid waste must be properly drained into the mobile units liquid waste retention tank. The retention tank must be permanently installed and at least 50 percent larger than the potable water supply tank.

7. The mobile unit must be equipped with a built-in hose bibb that may be used to wash the interior of the vehicle or trailer.

Operational Requirements:

1. All operators of motorized mobile food vehicles must have a current driver license and proof of liability insurance (minimum six month policy).

2. Mobile food preparation vehicle or trailer must have a current City of Dallas Registered Food Service Manager on-site during food service operations. All other employees working in the food service area must have a current food handler registration.
3. Each mobile unit must have a copy of their daily vending itinerary. The Consumer Health Division must be advised of any itinerary changes immediately. Schedules/Stops must be accurate to within 30 minutes. The name, address and telephone number of the owner of the premises must be provided. A description of the food to be sold or served at each premise must accompany the itinerary.
4. The mobile unit must maintain a written agreement with each vending locations property owner/manager granting permission to vend at the location and to provide access to toilet facilities for the food service employees.
5. The mobile food preparation vehicle or trailer must park only on improved surfaces to sell and serve food. Vending on dirt or grass is prohibited. The mobile unit may not utilize or park in any off-street parking spaces required of the vending premises.
6. The mobile unit must comply with all applicable zoning, noise, and smoke regulations in the City of Dallas Development Code.
7. The mobile unit can not have any external operational support equipment on the property including but not limited to tables, chairs, tents, overhead coverings, refrigeration, freezers, generators, or dry storage units. All operations must be contained within the mobile unit.
8. Cooking must not be conducted while the mobile unit is in motion.
9. Ice used for drinks must be properly dispensed and drained into a liquid waste retention tank.
10. Food and single service articles must be properly protected and stored at least six inches above the floor.
11. Garbage containers must have tight fitting lids and be kept closed when not in use.
12. A fire extinguisher approved by the Dallas Fire Department must be present on the vehicle or trailer at all times.

Code Variance

In accordance with Section 17-10.2 of the Dallas City Code, a food establishment may apply to the director for a variance modifying or waiving the requirements of the Texas Food Establishment Rules or the requirements of Chapter 17 of the City Code, if in the opinion of the director, a health hazard or nuisance will not result from the variance. A food establishment granted a variance shall comply with Chapter 17 of the City Code and the Texas Food Establishment Rules and any conditions or standards for the variance established by the director.