

# Mobile Food Establishment Plan Review Guide



Public Health Madison and Dane County

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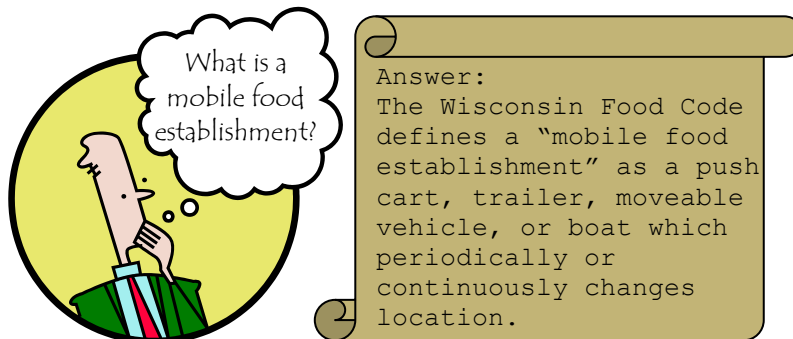
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## General Licensing Information

This guide has been created to assist you in the licensing and plan review process for the operation of mobile food establishments in Dane County.



Two separate licenses are required for mobile businesses to operate:

- ① Mobile food establishment license
- ② Service base license

Due to the variation of mobile food establishments, each operation is evaluated on an individual basis. Design requirements are based on the menu and food handling activities that will occur on both the mobile unit and at the service base.

New operators must submit the "*Operational Plan*" document for review and approval. This must be completed by all new applicants, regardless of whether or not the mobile unit has been licensed in the past. Carefully follow instructions on the "*Operational Plan*," as incomplete plans will not be approved.

Public Health  
Madison & Dane Co.  
recommends that you  
**DO NOT** build or  
buy until you have  
plan approval.

## License Application

Our Department cannot approve your “*Operational Plan*” until your application and payment for licensing has been received. Applications can be found on our website or at the City Clerk’s Office. Applications for all mobile food establishments in Dane County should be submitted to:

City Clerk’s Office, City-County Building, Rm. 103  
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Madison, WI 53703  
(608) 266-4601

See page 2 of the “ Food and Drink Application” for details on licensing fees. Fees are determined by your gross sales per year and by your food handling/ processing activities. A one time \$350.00 plan review/pre-inspection fee is included in the cost of each new mobile food establishment or service base license.

The license year runs from July 1st to June 30th. License fees are not pro-rated throughout the year; however, if you apply after April 1st, you will be given a 15 month license. Fees must be paid in full when the application is submitted.

If I own a restaurant and plan to start a food cart, do I still need an additional service base license?



No, if the mobile food establishment will be owned and operated by a licensed restaurant under the same licensee name, then the restaurant’s Food and Drink license will fulfill the service base license requirement. If the mobile food establishment is owned by someone other than the restaurant owner, a separate service base license is required.

## What is a Service Base?



A service base, or commissary, is an essential part of a mobile food establishment's operation. It is used daily for conducting activities such as:

- ♦Preparing food
- ♦Storing food and equipment
- ♦Filling fresh water
- ♦Dumping wastewater
- ♦Dishwashing
- ♦Cleaning the mobile unit

Minimum plumbing requirements usually

- ♦Handwashing sink
- ♦Approved dishwashing facilities
- ♦Food preparation sink
- ♦Utility or mop sink

include:

**Personal homes will not be approved!**

An equipment/storage layout of service base facilities shall be submitted with your "Operational Plan" for review.

A restaurant, retail food store, or commercial kitchen may be approved as the service base if it meets the necessary requirements of the Wisconsin Food Code.

If an operator plans to use a restaurant as a service base, the operator shall complete the "Service Base Sharing Agreement" form and submit this with the operational plan. Do not submit your "Operational Plan" for review until you have a signed agreement; your plan can not be approved until the service base location is verified. If your proposed service base is not currently licensed by Public Health Madison & Dane County, equipment layout plans of the service base will be required.



Operators shall maintain a "mobile log" at the service base verifying dates/times of use.

## Service Base Considerations

The following are items to keep in mind when selecting a service base location:

- ♦ Is the service base a practical distance to vending location?
- ♦ How will the food be transported at proper temperatures?
- ♦ Is the mop/utility sink located in a practical location for filling and dumping water?
- ♦ Do the food handling activities require a commercial ventilation hood or a grease trap?
- ♦ Is there approved dishwashing?
  - ✓ 3 or 4 compartment manual dishwashing sinks
  - ✓ Chemical or high temperature sanitizing dish machine
- ♦ Are all handwashing sinks non-hand operated?
- ♦ Is there a toilet facility?
- ♦ Are there approved handwashing sink(s) in all required areas (e.g. food prep, dish-washing, toilet)?
- ♦ Is there a required freestanding, air gapped food prep sink for washing produce or thawing meat?
- ♦ Preparation sink

## Types of Mobile Units

Mobile food establishments are categorized into three types:

- ❶ Open Air
- ❷ Enclosed Limited Service
- ❸ Enclosed Full Service

Depending on the type of mobile unit, different restrictions or limitations may exist. See the following pages for specific requirements. If your mobile food establishment does not fit into one of these categories, you may contact Public Health Madison & Dane County to discuss your idea.

## Open Air

This style is operated in an unenclosed, open-air environment. It is restricted to activities that involve very limited food handling.

Activities on the mobile units are limited to:

- ♦ hot/cold holding
- ♦ assembly per order
- ♦ prepackaged items

Examples include:

- ♦ Hotdog pushcarts
- ♦ Snow cone pushcarts
- ♦ Moveable coffee kiosks
- ♦ Boats serving prepackaged sandwiches
- ♦ Prepackaged ice cream bicycle carts



### Important Considerations:

- \*All food preparation (e.g. chopping, dicing, mixing, forming) is required to be conducted at the service base.
- \*Dishwashing shall be conducted at the service base.
- \*Open air mobiles are not allowed to grill, cook, or handle raw animal foods. Items such as brats and sausages must be precooked (either commercially or at the service base).
- \*All equipment and food must be contained within the mobile unit (e.g. a refrigerator can not be placed on the ground next to the mobile unit).

- \*Units serving potentially hazardous products (e.g. hot dogs, cooked corn, milk) shall be mechanically equipped to hold food at proper temperatures. Dry ice may be approved only for prepackaged, ice cream novelties.
- \*Insulated chest coolers are not approved for cold holding potentially hazardous foods (e.g. back stock of hot dogs can not be stored on ice).
- \*Outdoor units must be located on a paved surface and all unpackaged food must be kept in an enclosed system (e.g. steam table with lid).
- \*Indoor units must be located on an easily cleanable surface and shall have adequate shielding to protect food displays.
- \*A handwashing sink is required if you are handling any unpackaged food items.

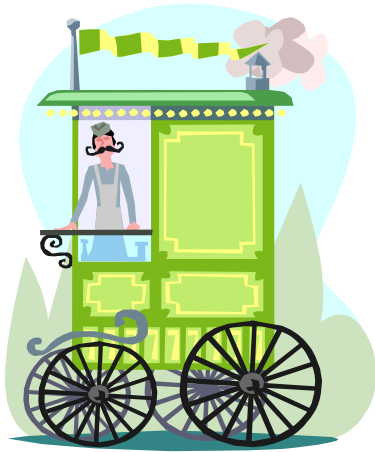
Fresh water supply system:

- Non-hand operated handwashing sink (e.g. long wing handles for wrist operation)
- Fresh water supply tank 5 gallon minimum
- Waste water storage tank sized 15% larger than fresh water tank
- Pressurized or gravity fed (If gravity fed you must show adequate flow)
- Tempered water (85°F - 110°F)
- See page 12 for additional water tank construction requirements



## Enclosed Limited Service

This style is the most common type of mobile food establishment. It includes enclosed units, such as the trailers frequently seen around the Capital Square and Library Mall. Resources on these units are limited. Therefore, many food preparation and processing activities are restricted from occurring on the units and must be conducted at the service base.



Food activities on the mobile units are limited to:

- ♦ Hot/cold holding
- ♦ Reheating
- ♦ Assembly per order
- ♦ Prepackaged items

### Important Considerations:

- \* All food preparation (e.g. chopping, dicing, mixing, forming) is required to be conducted at the service base.
- \* Dishwashing shall be conducted at the service base.
- \* No raw animal products are allowed (e.g. cracking/cooking eggs or grilling raw burgers).



**Example: Chicken Tacos****Service base activities:**

Cook raw chicken  
Shred chicken  
Wash/ chop vegetables

**Mobile unit activities:**

Hot hold meat in steam table  
Cold hold toppings  
Reheat taco shells on grill  
Assemble tacos per order

\*Floors, walls, and ceilings shall be smooth, durable, easily cleanable, and nonabsorbent.

\*All enclosed mobile units shall have adequate ventilation for their proposed food activities. Hood ventilation may be required if there is not sufficient ventilation through screening.

\*Outer openings must be kept closed or protected by the use of screens. The

pass through window shall be screened and sized appropriately to prevent the entry of flies or other pests.

Details shall be specified on the layout drawings or photographs submitted with your "operational plan" review.

Fresh water supply system:

- Non-hand operated handwashing sink (e.g. long wing handles for wrist operation)
- Fresh water supply tank 10 gallon minimum
- Waste water storage tank sized 15% larger than fresh water tank
- Pressurized or gravity fed (If gravity fed you must show adequate flow)
- Tempered water (85°F - 110°F)
- See page 12 for additional water tank construction requirements

## Enclosed Full Service

This style of mobile food establishment is typically sized much larger than the other types. Due to the size, this type of unit will be restricted from operating in certain areas, such as the high density areas in downtown



Public Health Madison & Dane County recommends that you consult with the zoning department of the local municipality you plan to operate in for additional restrictions. Often times, this type of mobile unit is limited to vending on private, commercial property or in city parks (park permit required).

Madison.

This type of mobile establishment will enable you to conduct much more food processing and/or

Why do I need a service base if I can conduct all of my food preparation on my mobile vending truck?



Examples include:

- ◆Washing & chopping vegetables
- ◆Forming dough & cooking pizzas
- ◆Cooking raw animal products

Answer: A service base is always required, at minimum, for filling fresh water and dumping waste water.

preparation on the mobile unit.

Important Considerations:

- \*Full service mobile establishments must have handwashing and dishwashing facilities on the mobile unit.
- \*If washing/rinsing of produce or thawing of meat occurs on the mobile unit, a separate food preparation sink will be required.

These details shall be specified on the layout drawings or photographs of the unit submitted with your "operational plan" review.



- \*If necessary to keep the unit free of excessive heat, steam, condensation, or smoke, mechanical ventilation of sufficient capacity shall be provided.

- \*Floors, walls, and ceilings shall be smooth, durable, easily cleanable, and nonabsorbent.

- \*Outer openings must be kept closed or protected by the use of screens. The pass through window shall be screened and sized appropriately to prevent the entry of flies or other pests.

- \*Driving quarters, if applicable, shall be separated by a partition. No food or supplies may be kept in this space.

Fresh water supply system:

Given the multiple sinks and increased food handling on this type of unit, the following are the specific water requirements:

- Non-hand operated handwashing sink (e.g. long wing handles for wrist operation)
- Fresh water supply tank 40 gallon minimum
- Waste water storage tank sized 15% larger than fresh water tank
- Pressurized water is required
- Tempered water (85°F - 110°F)
- See page 12 for additional water tank construction requirements



## Fresh Water System

Water tanks are required for mobile food establishments handling unpackaged food. The following are the general design requirements for fresh water and waste water tanks.

### General Construction Requirements

#### Fresh Water Tank:

- ♦Durable, food grade material
- ♦Translucent color or sight gauge glass - (so that water level is viewable)
- ♦Threaded opening on inlet line - (for flushing or sanitizing the tank)



#### Waste Water Tanks:

- ♦Smooth, durable material
- ♦Discharge connection with tight closing valve
- ♦Waste water tank 15% larger than fresh water tank

The water supply tank shall be maintained with 10 ppm chlorine at all times of operation to prevent bacterial growth within the system.

See “*Mobile Food Establishment Fresh Water Tank Maintenance*” factsheet for instructions.

## Equipment Requirements

\*Food service equipment shall be certified to meet applicable sanitation standards by an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited certification program.

\*ANSI/NSF certification addresses the sanitation requirements for commercial grade food service equipment.



\*Specification sheets from the manufacturer or other proof of certification are required for all proposed equipment. In the absence of ANSI/NSF certification, a variance request for comparable compliance must be submitted for approval.

\*Non-commercial grade equipment, such as residential refrigerators or home-style ovens, will not be approved.

*All equipment on the mobile unit must be able to run simultaneously.*

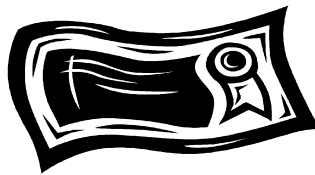
You cannot turn off one piece of essential equipment to operate another.

For example, the handwashing sink, refrigerator, and steam table must be able to all run at the same time.



## Food Safety Knowledge

All food employees shall have adequate knowledge of food safety as it relates to their job duties. Mobile food establishments that prepare, handle, or serve unpackaged meals are required to obtain a certified food manager within 90 days of license approval.



This license shall be posted in public view on the unit at all times of operation.

For more information see:  
"Food Manager Certification/

Recertification Factsheet"

"Food Manager Resource Guide"

## Toilet Facilities

Mobile food establishments shall ensure public or private toilet facilities are available for the food employees operating the unit. The facilities shall be located within a reasonable distance from the vending site during all hours the mobile food establishment is in operation.



# Checklist

## Review Prospective Mobile Food Establishment Operator's Packet

- Plan Review Guide
- Operational Plan
- Service Base Sharing Agreement
- Fresh Water Supply Tank Maintenance Fact Sheet
- Base Log
- Licensing Application and Fee Schedule
- Food Service Manager Certification Fact Sheet

## Review the following online resources:

- Slide Show: Guide for New Mobile Food Operators
- Wisconsin Food Code – Chapter 9 Mobile Food
- City of Madison Street Vending Requirements

## Complete the following steps in this order:

- Obtain a Service Base Sharing Agreement
- Complete Operational Plan
- Apply for licenses at City Clerk's office
- Submit Operational Plan to health department
- Contact health department

