

# Food Facts

## NEWSLETTER

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Environmental Health Division

Special Edition

*Foodfacts is designed to keep food employees, chefs, managers, and owners informed, connected, and engaged about current food safety news.*



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### Special Edition: Winterizing Your Mobile Food Unit

#### Are You Prepared for the Cold?

With temperatures dropping and snow falling, winter food cart vending can prove to be challenging. Cold conditions can create obstacles for equipment and make it difficult to maintain running water. If you are going to vend through the winter months, it is important to know that **all food safety requirements** still apply.



This includes making sure that you:

- have a **working hand sink** with warm water and;
- use a **generator with enough power** for all equipment to function simultaneously.

Keep in mind that a "temporary" hand washing set up, similar to what you'd use at a festival food stand, is not an acceptable alternative for licensed mobile food vendors. Carts that operate regularly are always required to have **plumbed and heated** water.

## Surviving the Winter Freeze

Winter vending and seasonal cart storage requires careful planning and preparation to avoid equipment damage. Freezing water lines can expand and break, leading to the inability to operate, lost revenue, and costly repairs.

How do you keep your equipment in **good repair** and the **water flowing** during the winter? We asked the experts, our local cart vendors, to share their secrets for operating in Wisconsin's frozen tundra. Here is a list of **tips** for when the temperatures dip below freezing:

1. Most important...**completely drain your fresh water tank, waste tank, and lines** after each operating period.
  - Some operators use an air compressor hooked up to the fresh water inlet to remove all the water. (Be sure to keep faucets in open positions when performing this task.)
  - Anti-freeze, approved for use in potable water, may also be used (e.g. RV or Marine anti-freeze).
2. Store your cart **indoors overnight**. A heated area is best when the temperatures dip below freezing.
3. Keep a small **heater** inside the unit and monitor with a webcam for safety.
4. Insulate all the **plumbing and pipes** on the cart.
5. Keep warm air in by adding insulation to your roof and floor, and upgrading to **double hung windows**.
6. Look into "arctic packages" from RV

dealers. There are different options for [insulating your storage tanks](#), ranging from enclosed underbellies to heating pads.

7. RV [skirting kits](#), also available from RV suppliers, can help to trap the warm air beneath units further increasing insulation.

Keep in mind that each mobile operation and trailer design is unique. Therefore, these tips may be used in a variety of combinations, depending on what works best for your mobile business.

Check out this [infographic](#) for more helpful winterization practices.

## Local Connections

Adam Haen, Business Development Director at FEED Kitchens, mentioned that there are local facilities available for rent:



"At FEED, we have outlets available for overnight use, encouraging our winter food cart vendors to plug in and have heat tape, or a warming pad attached to their pipes and tank, to keep hand wash sinks usable. Space heaters

are an option, though we ask that they have web cams hooked up for monitoring them. The other option that we encourage is starting an hour early and running their generator to have a properly heated cart for hand wash usage."

## The Power is in Your Hands

Remember, handwashing is an essential component to preventing foodborne illness and germs from spreading. All licensed mobile cart operators are required to have a working, plumbed hand washing

sink with warm water at all times.

## We Want to Hear From You

Do you have more resources, tips to share, or questions? Email us at [foodfacts@publichealthmdc.com](mailto:foodfacts@publichealthmdc.com)

Thanks in advance for your input!

### Stay Connected

