

A GUIDE

To the

LICENSING and OPERATION

Of

MOBILE FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS

Prepared by

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In cooperation with

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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What is a mobile food service operation?

A mobile food service operation is an operation that is operated from a movable vehicle, portable structure, or watercraft; routinely changes location; and it does not remain at any one location for more than forty consecutive days. If all of the conditions above are not met then the operation cannot be licensed as a mobile food service operation. This definition was developed to address food service operations of a truly mobile nature who "routinely," meaning "regularly" or as "a matter of custom" changes location. Moving a mobile a few feet or pulling an operation around the block and returning to the same location does not comply with the intent of the law.

All operations that conform to the conditions above are now considered mobile operations including confections, popcorn, bakery products, etc. (See note #1 on last page.)

How are mobile food service operation licenses obtained?

The operator of a mobile food service operation shall make application for a license to the board of health of the district in which the operator's business headquarters are located. The application must be submitted prior to commencing operation in a new licensing year. If a mobile food service operation's business address is located outside Ohio, the health district in which the operation is first operated is to issue the mobile food service operator's license.

If the unlicensed mobile food service operation's business headquarters are located in Ohio but outside the jurisdiction of the local health department the local health department in which the operation wants to operate has two options. The operator should be instructed that they can contact the local health department having jurisdiction of their business address and make an appointment for an inspection or they may be issued, a temporary food service operation license if the inspecting local health department issuing the temporary so desires. The temporary license will be valid for five days only. Under no circumstances can this operation, at this location, be issued a mobile food service operation license.

If such an operation, as described above, is issued a temporary food service license the local health department having jurisdiction of the operator's business address must be notified so that the operator can be assessed a late charge.

Are plans required to be reviewed prior to issuing a license?

Yes, plans must be submitted showing a list of equipment (make and model numbers) surface finishes, lighting and location of major equipment as well as a menu. This is needed so a determination can be made that this operation has the appropriate equipment to adequately provide the items on the proposed menu. This floor plan and menu are also needed for the back of the license when it is issued.

What items are required to be placed on the back of the mobile food service operation license?

The health district must post on the back of each license the layout of the operation including the location and type of major equipment, and menu as well as any exemptions or any restrictions or conditions limiting the types of food that may be prepared or served by the licensee based on the equipment or facilities.

What are the license fees for mobile food service operations?

The fees are determined by a cost analysis and are therefore different for each health district.

What information is required to be placed on the mobile?

The name of the operation, the city of origin, and the area code and telephone number must be conspicuously displayed on the exterior of the mobile unit.

The name and city of origin of the food service operation shall be displayed with individual lettering measuring at least three inches high and one inch wide.

When are inspections required and what items are subject to inspection?

One complete standard inspection must be completed, by the licensing health department, at least once during the licensing period. This is to be done prior to issuing the license each licensing year.

Inspections may be conducted as necessary and at reasonable times determined by the health district in which it is operating.

All equipment used in the operation of the mobile food service is to be inspected and must be in compliance with the law and rules at all times when in operation. This includes support vehicles, such as supply trucks, refrigerators, etc.

When an inspection is conducted by a health district other than the licensing health district, a copy of the inspection report must be sent to the health district issuing the license.

Can mobile licenses be revoked or suspended?

Yes, if a violation presents an immediate danger to the public health, the license may be suspended without giving written notice or the opportunity to make corrections. The licensor that issued the license or the licensor for the health district in which the operation is being operated may suspend the license. When a license is suspended, the licensor that suspended the license shall hold the license until the suspension is lifted and the licensor receives written notice of the next location at which the licensee proposes to operate the food service operation.

Revoking a mobile food service operation license can only be accomplished by the health district issuing the license.

An appeal on a suspension or revocation must be made to the licensor that suspended or revoked the license.

What types of foods may be served?

Any food may be served as long as all of the equipment on the floor plan and menu are consistent with the information on the back of the license.

All food must be prepared at the mobile food service operation and no preparation may be conducted at home. No home canned foods are permitted. All foods shall be obtained from sources that comply with all the laws relating to food and food products. Only government inspected meats shall be used

and only clean whole eggs, with shells intact and without cracks or checks, pasteurized liquid, frozen, dry eggs, or pasteurized dry egg products shall be used, except that hard boiled, peeled eggs, commercially prepared and packaged, may be used.

Bulk food containers of food if not in the original container and if not easily identified must be properly labeled by common name.

How are foods required to be protected (temperature requirements)?

All potentially hazardous foods are to be maintained at an internal temperature of 41 °F or below or at an internal temperature of 135°F or above during storage, display and transportation.

All potentially hazardous foods requiring cooking shall be cooked to heat all parts of the food to a temperature of at least 145 °F (63 °C) or above for at least fifteen seconds, except that:

1. Exotic meats raw poultry and poultry products, stuffed fish or meats and stuffing containing meat, poultry or fish must be cooked to heat all parts to at least 165 °F (7.2° C) or higher for at least fifteen seconds without interruption of the cooking process;
2. Comminuted fish and meats, injected meats, and unpasteurized eggs shall be cooked to heat all parts to at least 155 °F (68 °C) for at least one minute or 145 °F(63 °C) for at least three minutes;
3. Roasts of beef , pork roasts or corned beef shall be cooked in an oven that is preheated to the required temperature and held for the required time as specified in the table located in Section 3717-1-03.3 (A) (2) of the Ohio Administrative Code.
4. Raw, rare, or undercooked potentially hazardous foods may be served if so ordered by the consumer. (Consumer advisory required)
5. Potentially hazardous foods cooked in a microwave oven shall be rotated or stirred midway through the cooking process to compensate for uneven distribution of heat; covered to retain surface moisture; heated to 165 °F and allowed to stand covered for two minutes.

What are the requirements for reheating at a mobile food service operation?

Foods that are to be reheated must be reheated to an internal temperature of at least 165 °F (73.8 °C) or higher and held at least fifteen seconds. This must be accomplished within two hours; steam tables, warmers; etc. are not permitted to be used for this purpose.

Potentially hazardous foods that are to be reheated, in a microwave, shall be covered and rotated or stirred throughout or midway during cooking or according to the label instructions during heating and must be reheated to 165 °F and allowed to stand for two minutes after reheating.

Any ready-to-eat food taken from a commercially processed, hermetically sealed container, or from an intact package shall be heated to a temperature of at least 140°F (60°C) if it is to be placed into hot holding.

What equipment is necessary to maintain product temperature?

This will vary with the type of operation. Some operations will need both hot and cold holding facilities. If the operation is serving potentially hazardous foods, it must at least have refrigeration facilities, or effectively insulated facilities to assure proper maintenance of temperatures. Each refrigerated facility must be provided with a numerically scaled thermometer (or recording thermometer), accurate to plus or minus 3° F (plus or minus 1.7°C) located to measure the air temperature in the warmest part of the facility and located to be easily readable. A metal stem-type, numerically scaled product thermometers, accurate to plus or minus 2° F (or plus or minus 1.1 ° C) shall be provided and used to assure proper cooking, holding, or refrigeration temperatures are being maintained and/or attained. These facilities must be sufficient to allow for storage of foods to prevent cross contamination.

If potentially foods are to be held hot then adequate hot holding facilities will be required in addition to the items in the preceding paragraphs. The number of the hot holding facilities will be determined by the size and scope of the operation. Each hot holding facility storing potentially hazardous foods shall be provided with a numerically scaled indicating thermometer or recording thermometer, accurate to plus or minus 3° F (1.7° C) located to measure the air at the coolest part of the facility and located to be easily readable.

What is the proper way to thaw foods?

There are only four acceptable ways to thaw potentially hazardous foods. They are as follows:

1. In the refrigerator at a temperature not to exceed 41°F (7.2°C),
2. Under cold potable running water with sufficient velocity to agitate and float off loose particles into the overflow;
3. In a microwave if the food will be cooked immediately by microwave or by conventional means;
4. Or as part of the conventional cooking process.

What foods can be re-served by a mobile food service operation?

Only packaged foods that are not potentially hazardous may be reserved if the packages have not been opened and the food is in sound condition.

How are foods to be protected in a mobile food service operation?

All foods must be protected at all times, including while being stored, prepared, displayed, or transported, from potential contamination, including dust, insects, rodents, unclean equipment and utensils, unnecessary handling, coughs and sneezes, hair, overhead leakage or drippage from condensation.

Foods, raw and prepared, if removed from the original container must be stored in a clean, covered, approved container.

Raw animal foods must be stored in a manner that will not lead to cross contamination of ready-to-eat foods.

Raw animal foods must also not be stored in a manner that will allow foods that require a higher cooking temperature to contaminate foods that require lower cooking temperatures.

All equipment, surfaces, and utensils must be cleaned and sanitized.

Only ice scoops may be stored, with handles out of ice, in ice intended for human consumption.

Ice used to cool beverage lines attached to exposed cold plates may not be used for human consumption.

Packaged food shall not be stored in contact with water or undrained ice.

Raw fruits and vegetables shall be thoroughly washed with potable water before being cooked or served.

How must food be handled in mobile operations?

Food shall be prepared with the least possible manual contact using suitable utensils.

An ice scoop or other suitable utensil must be used when dispensing ice.

How are dispensing utensils to be stored?

Dispensing utensils must be stored clean and dry or in the food with handles out of food; in potable running water with sufficient velocity to agitate and float off loose particles into an overflow.

Malt collars and dispensing utensils used in preparing frozen desserts shall be stored in a potable running water dipper well or clean and dry.

Ice scoops may not be stored in ice machines unless the ice machine is designed for such storage.

What is required of all employees when working in a mobile?

All employees are to be healthy, have clean clothing, have their hair under control, practice safe food handling procedures and wash their hands when needed.

What equipment and utensils can be used in a mobile?

All equipment must be approved prior to licensing, but if in the event that a piece of equipment should break during the course of the year it could be replaced by an approved piece of equipment. All equipment/utensils must be in good condition at all times.

What type of sinks are required on mobiles?

All mobiles handling exposed foods are required to have proper hand wash facilities. This would include hot and cold or warm water under pressure soap and single service hand towels.

A three compartment sink is required on all mobiles if utensils will be washed continuously. An approved sanitizer is required to be used and test strips are to be available at all times to monitor the concentration of the sanitizing solution while in use.

A two-compartment sink would be permitted providing that the utensils are to be batch cleaned as specified in 3717-1-04.2(B) (4) of the OAC and an acceptable detergent-sanitizer (i.e. iodine-based sanitizer) and test kit or test strips are available at all times.

How are sanitizers to be used?

If you are using chlorine or a quaternary-ammonia base as a sanitizer in a three-compartment sink the first compartment would be used for detergent and water, the middle compartment would be used for a clear water rinse and the third and last compartment would be used for the sanitizer (Chlorine at 50-100 PPM Quat-ammonia at 200 PPM)

Iodine detergent/sanitizers are used as follows the amount of the detergent sanitizer as specified by the manufacturer is to be placed in the first compartment and then add the amount of water specified. (This will form suds to be used in washing the utensils). In the second compartment the required amount (usually one-half of the amount used in the first compartment) is placed in the sink after the required amount of water is added to prevent the formation of suds.

If other types of detergent/sanitizers are used, follow the manufacturers' directions and make sure that they are designed so that a final rinse is not required.

Store wiping cloths in a solution of approved sanitizer at the concentration recommended by the manufacturer.

How often is the equipment in a mobile operation required to be cleaned?

Equipment, food contact surfaces and utensils used to prepare potentially hazardous foods on a continuous basis, shall be washed rinsed and sanitized at intervals throughout the day based on the food temperature, type of food, and amount of food particle accumulation.

The food contact surfaces of grills, griddles, and similar cooking devices and the cavities and door seals of microwaves shall be cleaned at least once a day, except that this requirement shall not apply to hot oil cooking equipment and hot oil filtering systems. The food contact surfaces of all cooking equipment shall be kept free of encrusted grease deposits and other accumulated soil as specified in 3717-104.5 of the OAC.

[The cleaning and maintenance of heat treatment dispensing freezers will follow the requirements as specified in Section 3717-1-08.1 of the Ohio Administrative Code.]

Non-food contact surfaces of equipment shall be cleaned as often as is necessary to keep the equipment free of an accumulation of dust, dirt, food particles, and other debris.

How are cleaned and sanitized equipment to be stored?

All cleaned and sanitized utensils shall be handled in a way to prevent contamination; knives, spoons and forks handled by handles only; cups, bowls, plates and similar items shall be handled without contact with inside surfaces or surfaces that contact the user's mouth.

Equipment must be stored 6 inches off the floor, must be air dried or stored in a self draining position.

How are single service utensils stored and dispensed on a mobile?

Unless pre-wrapped, all knives, forks and spoons shall be dispensed with the handle of the utensil to the consumer.

All cups, bowls, etc. must be stored in a manner that will prevent contamination during storage and/or dispensing.

The re-use of single-service articles is prohibited.

What are the requirements with regard to water that apply to a mobile?

All water used in a mobile must be from an approved source. It shall be adequate and shall be of a safe and sanitary quality. If a fresh water holding tank is used, it must be filled with water from an approved source, i.e., city water supply or from a well that has been tested and has a safe water sample test result within the past year.

Hot and cold or warm running water under pressure must be provided to all fixtures while in operation. Bottled water may be used but it must be obtained from a source that complies with applicable laws and handled and stored so that it will not become contaminated. Bottled and packaged water must be dispensed from the original container.

All mobiles must be equipped with a back-flow device to prevent possible contamination of public water supply if connected to water supply with a hose. (See note*3) If a hose is used, it should be a food-grade hose and not a standard garden hose. (If a garden hose is used it must have one end (male) removed to prevent the possibility of using the sewage hose as the hose for fresh water)

If a fresh water holding tank is used it must be separate from the holding tank for sewage.

How is the sewage disposed of in mobiles?

A holding tank or a portable sewage dolly must be available if a direct sewage connection is not provided. The dolly must be properly emptied in an acceptable sanitary manner at the facilities provided. If a hose is connected to a sewer or dump site it must be connected so there is no spillage of waste. This hose may only be used for sewage and under no circumstances can it be used for a fresh water supply.

What are the requirements of plumbing in mobiles?

Mobiles are not covered by plumbing code. All sinks must have all drains hooked up to the sewage holding tank or portable dolly. Ice bin drains should not be directly connected to the sewage holding tank to prevent possible contamination of ice in the event of sewage back up. A mop sink is not required in a mobile.

What facilities are required on mobiles to dispose of garbage and trash?

Trash containers that are leak proof, durable, cleanable, insect and rodent proof and that have tight fitting lids are required in all mobiles. Trash cans are to be covered at all times and dumped in

approved dumpsters or other facility when full to prevent insect and rodent attraction. Overnight storage of garbage on mobile operations is prohibited.

What are the requirements of floors, walls and ceilings in a mobile? '

All floors, walls, and ceilings are to be constructed of a material that is easily cleanable and kept clean at all times.

If mats are used on the floors, they must be non-absorbent and grease resistant and kept clean. Carpeting may not be used.

Floors, walls and ceilings are to be maintained in good repair at all times.

What are the lighting requirements in a mobile?

Permanently installed fixed artificial light sources shall be installed to provide at least fifty foot-candles of light on all food preparation surfaces and at equipment or utensil washing work levels. The lights must be properly shielded or shatter-resistant bulbs used to protect against broken glass falling onto food.

Infrared or other heat lamps shall be protected against breakage by a shield surrounding and extending beyond the bulb, leaving only the face of the bulb exposed.

How are chemicals and personal belongings to be stored on a mobile?

All chemicals needed to operate the mobile must be stored in their original container and stored separately from all food products. Only those chemicals needed for the operation of the mobile are permitted:

Personal medications, clothing etc. are to be stored so as not to contaminate food or food contact surfaces.

All pressurized tanks shall be chained or secured to a wall or fixed equipment.

Can a mobile be used as sleeping or living quarters?

Under no circumstances may a mobile be used as either sleeping or living quarters.

This booklet is intended to be a brief outline of some of the requirements needed for a mobile food service operation. It is in no way to be construed as being all the requirements needed to operate a mobile food service operation. The Cincinnati Health Department, Chapter 3717 of the Ohio Revised Code, and Chapter 3717-1 of the Ohio Administrative Code should be consulted to assure that all applicable criteria have been addressed.

NOTES

- The only exceptions would be a mobile operation such as a truck selling raw meat items or bulk food items. This would be a mobile food establishment due to the fact that it does not meet the definition of a food service operation. The reason that it does not meet the definition of a food service operation is that it offers food in bulk portions that requires further processing or cooking prior to consumption. This is different from the mobile ice cream truck selling ice cream. The ice cream is ready to eat in individual portions and requires no additional preparation prior to eating. (The ice cream trucks would be licensable.)
- A three compartment sink may not be required on a mobile unit if it must return to a commissary daily for cleaning or it has no utensils used to dispense food. Sufficient utensils (clean) must be available during all hours of operation, in the event a utensil is soiled or dropped on the ground/floor rendering it unfit to use to dispense food. (Noted on the back of the license)
- The appropriate back flow device for a mobile unit that has water supplied, under constant pressure, by using a food-grade hose hooked to a water source is an ASSE 1012 or ASSE 1024.

***Contact the Cincinnati Health Department
prior to renting, leasing or purchasing a
mobile food service operation. Plans for the
unit must be reviewed and approved by the
Cincinnati Health Department. Without prior
approval from the Cincinnati Health
Department, your investment may not be
authorized for licensing and operation.
Contact phone number: 513-564-1751***