



# Environmental Health Department

## Fort Bend County, Texas

281-342-7469  
281-342-5572 (Fax)

### Procedures for Obtaining A Food Vendor Permit MOBILE UNITS

A **Mobile Food Unit Plan Review** may be conducted and approved prior to starting construction, remodeling, or renovations of Mobile Food Units. **This is optional for Mobile Food Units.** However, if the operator chooses this option, all required information and forms must be submitted as a complete package. Incomplete submittals will not be accepted. Appointments should be made in advance or the plans and paperwork may be delivered to the receptionist.

#### **The following items shall be submitted:**

1) **Facility Floor Plans**

Submit one set of blueprints or contractors drawings, **drawn to scale**, for new construction or renovations of an existing unit, for review **PRIOR** to any construction. Include the layout and finish construction materials for the entire mobile food unit including: food preparation areas, food storage areas, hand sinks, utensil sinks, food preparation sink, and food equipment. Include lighting, venting, mechanical, and plumbing plans. External elevations of the front, rear, and both sides of the unit must be submitted as part of the planning materials.

2) **Description of Operation Form:** Completed and signed.

3) **Application for Food Establishment Permit:** Completed and signed.

4) **Risk Assessment Form:** Completed and signed

5) **Plan Review Information Sheet:** completed with contact information

6) **Menu** or list of all foods and beverages to be served.

7) **Equipment Specification Sheets:** Refrigerators, freezers, steam table, ice machine, cooking equipment, etc.

8) **Color Samples:** Light colors required.

**Once your floor plans have been approved, construction can begin.**

**Application:** All new and renewing vehicles shall submit a completed and signed application.

**Menu:** A menu or list of all foods and beverages to be served shall be submitted in conjunction with construction drawings.

**Letter of Intent / Description of Operation:** A description of the operation (in writing) of the mobile vendor unit shall be submitted. The description shall include, but not be limited to, the following: food preparation and method of operation, hours of operation, areas of operation, proposed food service.

**Commissary:** Mobile Vendor Units shall operate from an approved commissary or other fixed permitted food service establishment, and shall report at least weekly to the location for supplies, food, cleaning and servicing operations. **FOODS SHALL BE FROM AN APPROVED COMMERCIAL SOURCE. UNDER NO INSTANCES SHALL FOODS BE PREPARED OR COOKED AT HOME.** The commissary or other fixed food service establishment shall be used as a base of operation and must possess a current, valid Health Permit.

The owner of a mobile vendor unit shall provide the following documentation regarding their commissary to the Environmental Health Department prior to issuance of a Mobile Vendor Permit:

- Letter of Commissary written on the commissary's letterhead, or regular paper with the establishment's ink stamp containing the address, telephone number and a contact person.
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- A photocopy of the commissary's current, valid Health Permit.

**Pre-Approval Inspection:**

- Inspections are conducted on Wednesday, from 8:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. at the Fort Bend County Rosenberg Annex. You must be here and signed in no later than 11:30 a.m. ***No inspections are conducted off site.***
- Pre-approval inspections are conducted only after the completion of all construction, remodeling or repairs.
- Mobile vendor units shall be clean, with all equipment in place.
- No food is permitted on the mobile vendor unit.
- All supplies shall be provided (chemical test strips, soap, sanitizer, paper towels, and thermometers).
- The ability of equipment to hold cold and hot foods at safe temperatures will be verified.
- Mobile vendor units having potable water systems shall submit a water sample to test for bacteria. The cost of the test is \$16.50, and the expense shall be the responsibility of the applicant. ***Check or money order payable to the City of Houston.*** Cash is not accepted.
- Provide a current drivers license, current state inspection of vehicle and proof of liability insurance.

**Final Inspection:**

- A final inspection will be conducted after all corrections have been completed and water sample results are received and are satisfactory.
- Mobile Vendor Permits fees are \$200.00, expire on December 31<sup>st</sup> and must be renewed annually. Permits are not prorated.
- Permits are non-transferable and shall be posted at all times in a conspicuous location on the mobile unit.

**Once permitted, Mobile Vendor Units shall serve the approved menu, and use the approved method of operation only.**

## Requirements

- Customer seating shall **not** be provided
- Refrigeration: Refrigeration shall be operational and maintain an internal product temperature of 41°F or below.
- Hot Food Holding Units shall be provided and maintain an internal product temperature at 135°F or above.
- Thermometers shall be shielded and provided inside of all potentially hazardous food holding units. Provide stem probe thermometers, scaled 0-220°F, for monitoring internal food temperatures.
- Hand Sinks: Hand sinks shall be provided, accessible for use, and plumbed according to current law. The hand sinks shall be provided with hot and cold water under pressure tempered by a mixing valve or combination faucet. Each hand sink shall be provided with soap and paper towels.
- Three Compartment Sink shall be provided and used to wash, rinse and sanitize utensils and equipment. Each sink shall be large enough to permit the complete immersion of utensils and equipment used on the mobile unit. Each compartment shall be supplied with hot and cold running water under pressure tempered by a mixing valve or combination faucet, and drain stoppers in good working condition.
- Drain Boards shall be provided. Open wire racks with protective coating above the 3- compartment sink will be accepted as alternate to drain boards.
- Water Systems: A mobile vendor unit requiring a water system shall have a hot and cold potable water system under pressure. Water shall be from an approved source. The system shall have a holding capacity sufficient enough to furnish enough hot and cold water under pressure for hand washing, food preparation, and utensil washing and sanitization. The water inlet shall be located in such a place to prevent contamination from any source. The outlet shall allow complete gravitational drainage of the tank. Lines between the inlet and outlet shall be constructed according to law.
- Waste Retention: Liquid waste resulting from the operation of the mobile food unit shall be stored in permanently installed retention tanks that are at least 15 % larger than the water supply tanks. Liquid waste at no time shall be discharged while the unit is in motion. The retention tanks shall be thoroughly flushed and drained at the commissary.
- Solid Waste: A solid waste receptacle (trash can) shall be provided inside the unit, and located to avoid contamination of food product.
- Ice: Ice used for cooling foods or maintaining food temperatures may not be used for human consumption. ***Potentially hazardous foods may not be stored in direct contact with ice.***
- Poisonous & Toxic Materials, Personal Items: All cleaning chemicals and personal items shall be stored separately from all foods, food containers, single service items, utensils and food contact surfaces.
- Outer Openings: All outer openings shall be protected to prevent the entrance of pests with 16 mesh/inch screens, or sealed, or by other effective means.
- Ventilation shall be provided and operational. All vents to outer areas shall be sealed to prevent the entrance of pests.
- Lighting: Adequate lighting with shielding or shatterproof bulbs shall be provided to all surfaces
- Floors and Floor Coverings: All floors and floor coverings shall be smooth, non-absorbent, easily cleanable, and maintained in good repair.

- Walls and Ceilings: All walls and ceilings shall be smooth, non-absorbent, easily cleanable, and maintained in good repair.
- Identification: Provide the name of the business and telephone number, printed in bold letters not less than 2 inches in height and not less than 1.5 inches in width, permanently affixed and prominently displayed on the driver side, passenger side, and rear of the vehicle.
- Ice Cream units shall have displayed warning signs that state “**CAUTION CHILDREN**” that are visible from the front and the rear of the unit. The letters shall be at least six (6) inches in height, and at least three (3) inches in width, with bold black lettering on a yellow background, placed at the top, center portion of the truck, in front of, but not obstructing the view of any flashing lights. The ice cream unit, while in operation, shall have flashing yellow lights that are clearly visible from the front of the unit and flashing red lights clearly visible from the rear of the unit. These lights shall be placed on both sides of the “**CAUTION CHILDREN**” sign.
- **Roadside type units shall be removed from site once every week. All units shall demonstrate mobility.**

**Note: Raw seafood vendors (example: Shrimp Vendors) are subject to all of the above requirements and must also hold a valid Retail Fish Dealer Truck Permit from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department which can be obtained by calling 1-800-792-1112.**

In addition, units shall operate in accordance with the Texas Food Establishment Rules, section §229.169 and the Fort Bend County Order for the Regulation of Food Establishments. Failure to do so may result in re-inspections, citations, suspension or other legal actions allowed by law.