



## **MOBILE FOOD ESTABLISHMENT GUIDELINES**

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## MOBILE FOOD ESTABLISHMENT GUIDELINES

Per Idaho Statute Title 39 Chapter 16 Food Establishment Act, a Mobile Food Establishment is defined as “a food establishment selling or serving food for human consumption from any vehicle or other temporary or itinerant station and includes any movable food service establishment, truck, van, trailer, pushcart, bicycle, watercraft or other movable food service with or without wheels, including hand-carried, portable containers in or on which food or beverage is transported, stored or prepared for retail sale or given away at temporary locations.” **Food establishments as defined in Section 39-1602, Idaho Code, must comply with the Rules IDAPA 16.02.19.**

These Rules do not apply to the following establishments:

- Low-risk food establishments, as exempted in Section 39-1602, Idaho Code, which offer only non-Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods. Non-profit charitable, fraternal, or benevolent organizations that do not prepare or serve food on a regular basis as exempted in Section 39-1602, Idaho Code.
  - Food is not considered to be served on a regular basis if it is not served for more than five (5) consecutive days on no more than three (3) occasions per year for foods that are **non-TCS**. For all other food, it must not be served more than one (1) meal per week.

## MOBILE FOOD VENDORS

**Please read this entire packet of information before completing your application.**

This information is intended to help you operate a safe and sanitary food establishment. Proper food safety knowledge, equipment, food sources, processes, and active managerial controls are important to reduce unnecessary risks and to prevent foodborne illness. Additional information pertaining to Idaho Food Safety Rules may be found on the Idaho Dept. of Health and Welfare (IDHW) website: <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/health-wellness/community-health/food-safety>

You are encouraged to **contact Panhandle Health District (PHD) early in the planning process** to help ensure there is adequate time to complete the necessary steps for licensure- before your proposed operation date(s).

PHD must receive an application and fees before we will inspect and approve a new food establishment (and issue a license to operate). An Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) will review your proposal for compliance with the Idaho Food Safety Rules by assessing the types of food to be prepared & served, proposed food processes, proposed operational and sanitation practices, equipment, proposed sanitary services (water and wastewater), proposed methods for maintaining safe food temperatures (hot and/or cold), etc.

## WHERE CAN I GET A FOOD ESTABLISHMENT APPLICATION?

Applications may be obtained in-person from any PHD office during normal business hours Mon-Fri. or at any time from our website: <https://panhandlehealthdistrict.org/>

## HOW DO I SUBMIT AN APPLICATION?

Completed Applications may be submitted to any PHD office during normal business hours, mailed to any PHD office, or emailed to: [EHAApplications@phd1.idaho.gov](mailto:EHAApplications@phd1.idaho.gov). Fees must be submitted with the application using one of the following methods: Cash (in- person), Check (in-person or through the mail), Credit/Debit Card (in-person or over the phone).

## REQUIREMENTS FOR MOBILE FOOD VENDORS

All inspections are conducted at Panhandle Health District and require an appointment. If you would like to request an on-site inspection at another location, please consult with your inspector and they will determine if that is feasible.

## GENERAL SERVICE GUIDELINES FOR *LIMITED-SERVICE* MOBILES

- 1) A semi-enclosed mobile cart with overhead protection, capable of being maneuvered by one person.
- 2) No cooking or food preparation will be allowed on the limited-service mobile (i.e., grilling, baking, washing or cutting fruits and vegetables and other food items). **Only reheating of cooked food by boiling or steaming is allowed.**
- 3) **Hot and Cold Holding:** Unit must provide storage areas capable of maintaining Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) foods at 41°F or below or 135°F or above. Thermometers shall be conspicuously located in each hot and cold unit. Note: only limited potentially hazardous foods allowed. Hand wash sink: Each cart must have a hand sink supplied with hot and cold potable water under pressure. Must have a water supply tank of sufficient capacity to furnish enough hot and cold water for hand washing.
- 4) Water for hand washing must be heated via an electrical, on demand system, to generate water at a minimum of 105°F and not to exceed 120°F.
- 5) All wastewater must drain to a liquid waste retention tank of at least 15% greater capacity than the potable water supply tank.
- 6) All liquid waste must be disposed of at an approved location.
- 7) Only foods approved by the Environmental Health Specialist may be served, sold, or distributed.
- 8) Everything that is necessary for the operation of the mobile must be on the mobile. No additional ice bins, ice chests, tables, etc. are allowed. Mobile must be a stand-alone, self-contained unit.
- 9) A metal-stem thermometer is required to check internal food temperatures. It must be able to measure from 0° to 220°F. Unit must also supply soap, paper towels and sanitizer.
- 10) Only single service articles are to be used.
- 11) **Wiping cloths:** Have on hand a separate bucket of sanitizer for rinsing/storing wiping cloths used to clean tabletops, counters and so forth. For example, 1-2 tablespoons of liquid bleach added to one gallon of cool water is acceptable. The sanitizer should be changed every 1-2 hours throughout the day.
- 12) Smoking, eating or drinking in mobiles while working is not allowed. All non-working, unauthorized persons are to be kept out of the mobile
- 13) Any person infected with a communicable disease (cold, flu), has open sores or infected cuts on hands, is vomiting or has diarrhea, shall NOT work in the mobile.
- 14) Chemicals such as liquid bleach, detergents and cleaning supplies must be stored in a separate area away from food preparation and display areas.
- 17) Only employees or delivery personnel are allowed in the mobile.
- 15) A refuse container with a tight-fitting lid must be available for garbage.
- 16) **Restrooms.** Approved, properly functioning restrooms with hot and cold running water must be available for employee handwashing immediately upon exiting the toilet.
- 17) No homemade foods may be sold. All food sold must be properly labeled and obtained from an approved permitted facility.
- 18) **Permit.** The mobile food unit permit must be kept on the cart during all times of operation.
- 19) An approved commissary is required, which is properly permitted and inspected by the Health District, at which those foods to be served/sold are obtained and prepared, and also for all warewashing and for servicing of the unit. The operator of the limited-service mobile must report the mobile daily to the commissary for all servicing and cleaning.

## GENERAL SERVICE GUIDELINES FOR *FULL-SERVICE* MOBILES

- 1) The vehicle must be an enclosed commercial van or truck designed for the transportation, storage, and preparation of all Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) and non-TCS foods.
- 2) **Sinks:** Must provide proper equipment (such as Stainless Steel Three-Compartment Sink, Food Prep. Sink, and Hand Wash Sink, supplied with both hot and cold potable water under pressure).
- 3) Wastewater retention tank required and must be at least 15% greater capacity than the potable water supply.
- 4) Approved mechanical refrigerators, freezers, stoves, ovens, grill, hot holding units are required to maintain TCS foods at or above 135° F or at or below 41°
- 5) Units to store TCS foods must be provided with accurate thermometers that are conspicuously located.
- 6) Mobile unit must be provided with adequate ventilation, exhaust fans, and proper lighting and light shields.
- 7) **No homemade foods may be sold.** All food sold must be properly labeled and obtained from an approved source.
- 8) Everything that is necessary for the operation of the mobile must be on the mobile. No additional ice bins, ice chests, tables, etc. are allowed. Exception: an outdoor grill may be used and setup directly adjacent to the mobile.
- 9) A metal-stem thermometer is required to check internal food temperatures. It must be able to measure from 0° to 220°F.
- 10) Other items that must be present are soap, paper towels, sanitizer, sanitizer test strips.
- 11) **Restrooms:** Approved, properly functioning restrooms with hot and cold running water must be available for employee handwashing immediately upon exiting the toilet.
- 12) **Wiping cloths:** Have on hand a separate bucket of sanitizer for rinsing/storing wiping cloths used to clean tabletops, counters and so forth. For example, 1-2 tablespoons of liquid bleach added to one gallon of cool water is acceptable. The sanitizer should be changed every 1-2 hours throughout the day.
- 13) Smoking, eating or drinking in mobiles while working is not allowed. All non-working, unauthorized persons are to be kept out of the mobile.
- 14) Any person infected with a communicable disease (cold, flu), has open sores or infected cuts on hands, is vomiting or has diarrhea, shall NOT work in the mobile.
- 15) Chemicals such as liquid bleach, detergents and cleaning supplies must be stored in a separate area away from food preparation and display areas.
- 16) The mobile food unit permit must be kept on the vehicle during all times of operation.
- 17) Outer openings including pop-up vents and sunroof must be insect and rodent proof. Screens must be tight fitting and in good repair. (duct tape is not acceptable).
- 18) **Garbage.** Garbage containers must have tight fitting lids and be kept closed when not in use.
- 19) **Single service items.** Only single service utensils may be used. Mobile unit must be maintained in clean condition.

## MOBILE CATERING VEHICLES-GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1) The vehicle must operate from a fixed, permitted commissary. **NO HOME-BASED FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS ARE ALLOWED.**
- 2) All food must be transported in approved insulated units, electrical heating and mechanical refrigeration to maintain food temperature.
- 3) Food containers and all serving articles must be stored and dispensed in a manner to prevent contamination.
- 4) **Food may not be prepared or sold/served from a mobile catering vehicle. The vehicle is used strictly to transport the food and equipment to the catering site.**
- 5) The vehicle must be clean at all times.
- 6) The vehicle must report regularly to the commissar for supplies, cleaning and servicing.

# FOOD HANDLING REQUIREMENTS

## **TIME/TEMPERATURE CONTROL FOR SAFETY FOOD (TCS Food)**

Any food which requires controls (time or temperature) to prevent harmful bacterial growth. All foods must be from an Approved Source and be stored properly to prevent cross contamination. A TCS food is any food **or ingredient that** will support the rapid growth of harmful bacteria and some examples are as follows:

- Any food of animal origin - all meats (red meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, crustaceans, etc.), eggs, milk and dairy products;
- Any food of plant origin that has been heat-treated and has a history of foodborne disease - potatoes, squash, pumpkin, rice, refried beans, mushrooms, onions, tofu; any untreated food of plant origin with a history of foodborne disease - seed sprouts, cut melons, unpasteurized juices, tightly wrapped produce such as mushrooms and coleslaw
- Synthetic foods (unless laboratory evidence proves otherwise) - artificial cream filling.

## **NON-TIME/TEMPERATURE CONTROL FOR SAFETY FOOD (NON-TCS Food)**

Foods that are typically stored without temperature or time controls and do not support the rapid growth of bacteria that cause foodborne illness include the following:

- Air-dried hard-boiled eggs with shells intact
- Food with low water activity (0.85 or less) - jerky, powdered milk, hard cheeses, potato chips, popcorn etc.
- Foods with a pH of 4.6 or less - some commercially prepared dressings, pickled meats and vegetables
- Unopened containers of food which have been processed to maintain commercial sterility, such as unopened pasteurized milk products
- Foods, both natural and synthetic, for which laboratory evidence demonstrates that growth of harmful bacteria will not occur.
- Some additional examples include - cotton candy, most breads and cookies, pasteurized juice, brewed coffee and tea, ice, candy bars etc.

## FOOD PROTECTION

- Always use disposable gloves or utensils when assembling ready-to-eat foods such as buns, lettuce and tomatoes.
- Protect food on display from contamination.
- Store food in a manner that prevents cross-contamination (separate ready-to eat, animal species etc.).
- Ice intended for human consumption must not be used for any other purpose (cooling, product displays etc).
- Serve condiments, such as ketchup, mustard, coffee creamer, sugar, etc. in individual packets or from squeeze containers.
- Keep self-service foods in containers protected by sneeze guards.
- Supply adequate serving utensils and monitor to protect against contamination.

- Use only disposable plates, cups, plastic forks and spoons for serving food to the public (special groups and churches serving a limited population may request approval to use reusable utensils).
- Cover all food and food-contact surfaces and store up off the ground on pallets.
- Supply a back-up of clean spoons, tongs, cutting boards every 2 hours.

## SANITIZING

- Towels used for wiping counters and tabletops must be clean and used for no other purpose.
- Rinse towels in sanitizing solution frequently & store in sanitizer between use. If you choose to use bleach as the sanitizer, the recommended concentration is one teaspoon of liquid bleach added to one gallon of cool water. Do not add soap to the water – it uses up the chlorine, making the solution ineffective.

**NOTE:** Flies tend to avoid surfaces that have been wiped with bleach solution.

## PROPER TEMPERATURE CONTROL

### COOKING

All TCS foods requiring cooking shall be cooked, with **no interruption in the cooking process**, to the following **minimum** internal temperatures:

- **165°F** - Poultry, ground poultry, stuffings containing meat, fish, poultry and stuffed meats.
- **155°F** - Ground, injected or restructured meat and fish products (hamburger, pork sausage), as well as ratites (ostrich, emu), alligator and rabbit.
- **145°F** - Fish, shellfish, lamb, intact beef, intact pork and whole shell eggs.
- **135°F** - Plant food for hot holding.
- **130°F** - Roast beef.

### REHEATING

All TCS foods that have been cooked in pre-approved kitchens must be cooled properly and refrigerated properly until use. All re-heated foods require **rapid reheating from 41°F to 165°F or more within 30 minutes, before being placed in hot food storage equipment.** Slowly reheating on a steam table or in a crockpot is not allowed. Rapid heating is necessary for food safety.

### THAWING

Thaw foods in approved facilities using one of the following methods:

- In refrigerated units at temperatures not to exceed **41°F**.
- Only foods less than 4 inches thick may be thawed by a continuous cooking process.
- In a microwave unit only when immediately cooked to the proper temperature using a stove, grill or approved cooking equipment.
- Or by other methods approved by the Health District.



## HOT AND COLD HOLDING

TCS foods must be **stored at temperatures below 41°F (cold holding) or above 135°F (hot holding) at all times**, except when undergoing necessary preparation. Room temperature storage of TCS foods is not allowed. Foods found in the danger zone are subject to destruction or removal from sale and service.

**Most foodborne illness outbreaks are caused by:**

- ill workers
- lack of handwashing
- improper cooking
- improper holding temperatures
- food from an unsafe source
- contaminated equipment

## THERMOMETERS

Have available and use a metal-stem thermometer to check internal food temperatures. Thermometers must be able to measure temperatures from 0° to 220°F. Have an accurate, visible thermometer for all refrigerators, cold holding units and freezers.

## USE OF ICE

Store prepackaged foods (i.e., sandwiches) in sealed containers — not in direct contact with ice — to prevent contamination from melting ice water.

Ice used for cold-holding or consumption must be from an approved source. Ice used for cold holding of bottles, cans and prepackaged foods **MUST NOT** be used in beverages.

## FOOD SOURCES

All foods must be approved by the Health Department. **Home canned and home prepared foods, ice made at home, raw milk or storage of foods at private homes are not allowed.**

- When **raw or undercooked meats, eggs, dairy products, seafood or unpasteurized juices** are offered for sale as ready-to-eat, they **must be disclosed** as such in one of the following ways:
- On the menu
- On the label
- On a clearly visible sign, such as: “Cider is raw” or “Juice is squeezed from raw fruit/vegetables” **and include a health reminder “consuming raw or undercooked foods may increase your risk of foodborne illness.”**

## **IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER**

### **REHEATING FOODS**

Examples:

Use canned chili instead of preparing fresh chili; prepare taco meat just before serving rather than cooking ahead, cooling and reheating; use canned refried beans instead of making beans from scratch.

### **HOT HOLDING OF FOODS**

Examples:

Make tacos and burritos to order rather than assembling and keeping them hot; cook raw shish-kabob to order instead of cooking ahead and hot holding.

### **COLD HOLDING OF FOODS**

When using ice be sure ice level is **equal** to the level of food or bury the food in the ice. You must provide enough ice at all times to maintain food temperature of **41°F or less**.

### **SIMPLIFY FOOD HANDLING STEPS**

For example, use commercial products such as store-bought potato, macaroni or pasta salads, are easy to use and easy to handle. Their use also minimizes the risk of foodborne illness. Use proper utensils to prepare and serve foods. In order to minimize the possibility of foodborne illness, simplify food preparation methods. Provide a backup supply of utensils to replace soiled ones every 2 hours.

### **SAFE HANDLING OF GROUND BEEF**

Ground beef must be kept frozen or below 41°F at all times. All ground beef must be cooked to **155°F or above**. Once cooked, ground beef products must be hot held at 135°F or above at all times. To prevent illness resulting from cross-contamination, be sure to always wash your hands after touching any raw meats such as raw hamburger patties. Before assembling buns and condiments, wash your hands and put on a new pair of single-use gloves. Make sure hands are washed between glove changes.

### **REMEMBER**

- These requirements and recommendations are essential for protecting the community from illness.
- All food mobiles may be inspected frequently.
- The Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) may impose additional requirements to protect against health hazards related to the operation of the food service establishment and may prohibit the sale of some or all TCS food.
- If there are any additional questions, please contact the Panhandle Health District Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!**