

GUIDELINE FOR MOBILE FOOD VENDING CARTS

INTRODUCTION

Section 3(1) of the Food Premises Regulation (B.C. Reg. 361/99), states that a person must not construct or make alterations to food premises unless plans and specifications for the construction or alteration have been approved by a health official.

While mobile food vending carts fall within these requirements, many units have unique features not normally associated with a food service establishment.

This guideline is intended to provide a framework that recognizes the unique needs of mobile food vending carts, ensures the safe, sanitary handling of food and that food served to the public is fit for human consumption.

DEFINITIONS

Mobile Food Vending Cart – means a cart, stand or kiosk that is operated either from a fixed location or on an established daily route from which food is served or provided to the public with or without charge.

Base of Operation - means the location where the mobile food vending cart is stored, cleaned, maintained and supplied before and after daily use.

GUIDELINE

I. APPROVAL

A. Submission of Plans

Plans and specifications for all mobile food vending carts should be submitted for approval to the local EHO in each Health Authority where the operator intends to operate the mobile food vending cart.

B. Permits/Fees

1. An application for a permit to operate a mobile food vending cart should be submitted to each Health Authority in the jurisdiction in which the cart intends to operate.

Note: An approval should denote that it is valid only in the Health Authority jurisdiction in which it was issued.

2. Upon approval of the cart, the operator requires a permit to operate, and may be subject to the appropriate fee (see fee policy for exemptions)

In the case of an operator applying to operate in multiple jurisdictions in the same Health Authority or on First Nations' lands, an additional permit is not required, nor the payment of additional fees.

Note: Exemption – mobile food vending carts which dispense only beverages and/or pre-packaged, non-potentially hazardous food, are not required to have a permit, and hence are not subject to an operating fee (see fee policy for exemptions).

C. Applications

Applications for a mobile food vending cart should be in writing and include the following information:

- a) name of operator, business address, phone number,
- b) design and construction details for the mobile food vending cart,
- c) the types of food to be sold, and the preparation involved in each,
- d) the area(s) in which the operator intends to operate the mobile food vending cart,
- e) the source of potable water,
- f) the source of power,
- g) details of the base of operation (see Section IV) and
- h) site for disposal of wastes.

In addition to the above, all operators should be advised that the health approval does not imply compliance with other by-laws/regulations, and it is the applicants' responsibility to obtain all necessary approvals.

II. STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Size and Types of Food

Mobile food vending carts should be of sufficient size to provide adequate protection, and prevent cross-contamination of foods.

Note: Mobile food vending carts and other small vending units should be limited to the preparation of one potentially hazardous food (e.g. hot dogs). Applications to prepare/serve more than one potentially hazardous food are considered to be full service operations and should comply with all requirements of the *Food Premises Regulation*.

B. Materials

Mobile food vending carts should be constructed of durable material, and smooth impervious surfaces that can be easily cleaned and sanitized.

C. Design

Mobile food vending carts should be designed as a single, self-contained unit, able to operate without the use of detached tables and counters, or require additional refrigeration facilities at place of operation.

Note: Exemption – a separate cooking unit such as a gas barbeque, may be permitted, however, it should be operated within/on, or immediately adjacent to the mobile food vending cart.

D. Refrigeration Equipment

Mechanical refrigeration should be provided for the storage of potentially hazardous foods, which is:

- a) sufficient in capacity, and
- b) capable of maintaining potentially hazardous food at 4°C (40°F) or less, and in the case of frozen foods at -18°C (0°F) or less.

Note: 1. Ice and icepacks are generally not considered as acceptable means of refrigeration, and should only be used as a supplement of mechanical refrigeration equipment.

2. Exemption – potentially hazardous foods intended to be sold in their frozen state (e.g., hard ice cream and novelties) may be exempted from mechanical refrigeration, if the temperature of -18°C (0°F) or less is maintained with dry ice.

E. Hot Holding Equipment

Hot holding storage equipment should be provided for the storage of potentially hazardous foods that are not refrigerated, which is:

- a) sufficient in capacity, and
- b) capable of maintaining potentially hazardous food at 60°C (140°F) or higher.

F. Thermometers

Thermometers should be provided to measure food preparation and food storage temperatures.

G. Sinks

Mobile food vending carts should be equipped with a two (2) compartment stainless steel sink with potable hot and cold running water. Each compartment should be large enough to immerse the largest piece of equipment/utensil to facilitate washing and sanitizing.

Note: Exemption – mobile food vending carts which sell only pre-packaged, non-potentially hazardous food and/or beverages may be exempted from the provision of a two (2) compartment sink.

A separate handwash sink should be provided and equipped with potable hot and cold running water, soap in a dispenser and single use hand towels.

Note: Exemption – when the nature of a premises' operation requires only minimal use of utensils/equipment in the preparation and handling of food (i.e., dispensing tongs), the requirement of a separate handwash sink may be waived, and one of the two (2) compartment sinks may be designated for this purpose.

H. Water Under Pressure

An operator should meet the following requirements regarding water under pressure:

- a) an approved water source should be specified,

- b) hot and cold water should be supplied on a continuous flow basis. Hence water under pressure, including gravity flow is required. Hand pumps are not acceptable for this purpose,
- c) hot water should be supplied at a minimum temperature of 43 °C (110 °F), and
- d) piping and fixtures should be designed for potable water (e.g., food grade).

I. Holding Tanks

The water and wastewater holding tanks should comply with the provisions below:

- a) the potable water tanks should only be used for storing potable water,
- b) the potable water tanks should be sufficiently sized (e.g., 36 litres/8 imperial gallons minimum) to ensure an adequate supply of water for handwashing, cleaning of equipment, and similar operations,
- c) the waste water holding tanks should be sized to accommodate at least 125% (45 Litres/10 imperial gallons minimum) of the volume of the potable water supply,
- d) an approved site for disposal of the waste water should be specified, and
- e) the potable water tank should be designed to facilitate cleaning and sanitizing as well as sanitary filling and emptying. Generally, design criteria should include the following:
 - i. the tank is sloped to an outlet that allows for complete drainage,
 - ii. the tank is enclosed from the filling inlet to the discharge outlet,
 - iii. if the tank has an access port, the port cover should be provided with a gasket and device for securing the cover in place. As well, the cover should be flanged to overlap the opening and sloped to drain,
 - iv. if the tank has a vent, it should terminate in a downward direction and be covered with a screen or filter,
 - v. the tank inlet should be positioned so that it is protected from outside contaminants,
 - vi. when compressed air is used to pressurize the potable water tank, a filter that does not pass oil or oil vapours should be installed in the air supply line between the compressor and the potable water system, and
 - vii. if a hose is used on the tank outlet, the hose should be cleanable and should not be used for any other purpose.

J. Protection of Food from Contamination

Food should be protected from contamination at all times. As such, food should not be allowed to be exposed to the elements. This may involve the use of umbrellas, canopies, and equipment coverings/lids, depending on the design of the unit.

K. Ventilation

Enclosed mobile food vending carts should be adequately ventilated to prevent the accumulation of smoke, condensation and odours.

L. Waste Disposal

A covered garbage receptacle of sufficient size should be provided. The garbage should be removed daily or as often as required and the receptacle should be cleaned and sanitized after each garbage removal. Spilt foods should be cleaned up promptly to help prevent the attraction of pests.

M. Single Service Only

Mobile food vending carts should only use single service utensils and hand towels.

III. Operational Requirements

To ensure food served from the mobile food vending carts is safe for human consumption, the operator should ensure:

- a) potentially hazardous foods be maintained at 4°C (40°F) or less, and in the case of frozen foods at -18°C (0°F) or less,
- b) frozen foods should be thawed out and used in the same day,
- c) all work surfaces should be kept clean and sanitized throughout the day. An adequate supply of sanitizing solution (e.g., bleach) should be stored on the cart at all times,
- d) mobile food vending carts are returned to the base of operation at the end of each day for cleaning and sanitizing,
- e) an adequate supply of clean wiping cloths are available for use. Soiled cloths should be stored in a separate plastic bag. Alternately, wiping should be done with single service towels (i.e., paper towels),
- f) if milk or milk products are dispensed or used in the preparation of a food or beverage, the milk should be stored under refrigeration in either the original container or an approved dispenser. Utensils used for milk products should be cleaned and sanitized on a frequent basis throughout the day,
- g) where food requires pre-cooking, processing or other forms of preparation, before storing on the mobile food vending cart, the work should be conducted in an approved food premises,
- h) all foods should be obtained from an approved source, and
- i) pre-packaged food intended for immediate consumption should be labeled in accordance with Canadian Food Inspection Agency requirements. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - i. common food product name,
 - ii. volume/weight of the food product,
 - iii. date of preparation,
 - iv. "best before"/expiry date,
 - v. list of ingredients,
 - vi. producer name, address and telephone number, and
 - vii. any other relevant information.

IV. Base of Operation

The operator should have a base of operation for the mobile food vending cart and include the following:

- a) approved as a base of operation by the local EHO,
- b) secured to protect the cart against the elements,
- c) be equipped with cleaning facilities for the mobile food vending cart which consist of a two (2) compartment sink with hot and cold running water,

Note: Exemption – mobile food vending carts that handle only prepackaged, non-potentially hazardous food and/or beverages may be exempted from this requirement. However, other adequate provisions for washing the unit should be provided.

- d) be equipped with refrigeration facilities adequate to the needs of the operation, and
- e) food preparation, processing or packaging at the base of operation only in areas that have been approved for that purpose by the local EHO.

V. Food Safety Training

Operators of mobile food vending carts and food handlers operating the cart during their absence should possess the FOODSAFE Level I certificate, or its equivalent.

Note: Exemption – FOODSAFE or equivalent certification is not required for operators of mobile food vending carts that are not issued a permit. For example, carts that sell only pre-packaged, non-potentially hazardous food and/or beverages only.

VI. Food Safety and Sanitation Plans

Operators of mobile food vending carts should submit to the local EHO a food safety and sanitation plan as required in Sections 23(2) and 24 of the Food Premises Regulation.

VII. Personal Hygiene

All operators and food handlers should;

- a) observe good personal hygiene,
- b) wear clean outer garments,
- c) keep hair controlled,
- d) refrain from smoking while handling food, and
- e) wash hands frequently.