

# Mobile Food Service Requirements



# Table of Contents

(You can click the picture if you're looking at this document on a computer or phone.)

Getting Started .....	4
-----------------------	---

## Concession Trailers and Trucks (Food Trucks)



.....	7
-------	---

## Pushcarts



.....	8
-------	---

## Knockdown Concessions



.....	9
-------	---



**Frozen Food Trucks and Carts**



..... 10

**Delivery Type Truck**



..... 11

**Mobile Cookers or BBQ Pits**



..... 12

## Getting Started

Do you want to start a mobile food business based in Franklin County? Then our Food Safety team at Franklin County Public Health are here to help! Follow these steps to begin your mobile food business.

### 1. Business address must be listed below:

We work with people in these cities, villages, and townships:

#### Cities

Bexley  
Canal Winchester  
Dublin  
Gahanna  
Grandview Heights  
Grove City  
Groveport  
Hilliard  
New Albany  
Pickerington  
Reynoldsburg  
Upper Arlington  
Westerville  
Whitehall

#### Villages

Brice  
Harrisburg  
Lockbourne  
Marble Cliff  
Minerva Park  
Obetz  
Urbancrest  
Valleyview

#### Townships

Blendon  
Brown  
Clinton  
Franklin  
Hamilton  
Jackson  
Jefferson  
Madison  
Mifflin  
Norwich  
Perry  
Plain  
Pleasant  
Prairie  
Sharon  
Truro  
Washington

**If you live in City of Columbus or City of Worthington, please contact Columbus Public Health.**

## 2. Make Sure that the Mobile is Ready.

- Review mobile license requirements (see the attached “Mobile Food Requirements”). Applicants that do not meet all requirements will NOT be licensed.

## 3. Fill out application on last page

- Email completed application to Franklin County Public Health, Food Safety Program at [food@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:food@franklincountyohio.gov)

## 4. About Licenses

- There are two types of licenses:
  - **FSO** (food service operation) sell food that the customer eats right away. These act like a restaurant.
  - **RFE** (retail food establishment) sell food that the customer takes home and later prepares. These act like a grocery store.
- **Primary business is defined through sales volume.** If your facility operates as both a FSO and RFE, whichever portion of your business has the greater sales volume (51% or more) determines your food license designation (either FSO or RFE).
- **Mobile licenses are split into two risk levels:**
  - **Low risk** poses a potential risk to the public in terms of sanitation, food labeling, sources of food, storage practices, hand contact, hand washing, and employee health concerns but minimal possibility of pathogenic growth exists and includes the following activities:
    - (a) Holding for sale or service pre-packaged refrigerated or frozen time/temperature controlled for safety foods in equipment that complies with paragraph (KK)(3) of rule 3717-1-04.1 of the Administrative Code; and
    - (b) Offering for sale or serving pre-packaged non-time/temperature controlled for safety foods;
  - **High risk** poses a higher potential risk to the public than low risk because of concerns associated with: proper receiving, holding, and cooking temperatures; proper cooling procedures; processing a raw food product requiring bacterial load reduction procedures in order to sell or serve it as ready-to-eat; handling or preparing food using a procedure with several preparation steps that includes reheating of a product or ingredient of a product where multiple temperature controls are needed to preclude bacterial growth; offering as ready-to-eat a raw time/temperature controlled for safety meat, poultry product, fish, or shellfish or a food with raw time/temperature controlled for safety items as ingredients; or using time in lieu of temperature as a public health control for time/temperature controlled for safety food. Examples of high-risk activities include, but are not limited to:
    - (a) Assembling or cooking time/temperature controlled for safety food that is immediately served, held hot or cold, or cooled;
    - (b) Operating a heat treatment dispensing freezer;
    - (c) Reheating bulk quantities or individual portions of leftover time/temperature controlled for safety food;
    - (d) Heating of a product, from an intact, hermetically sealed package and holding it hot; or
    - (e) Operating as a mobile catering food service operation mobile. Discuss with your inspector the kinds of foods you will sell to help make an accurate decision.

## **5. Pay for the License.**

- o Inspector will supply a mobile license application. Fill out each line.
- o The application must be submitted to our office along with the fee.
- o You can drop it off at our office or send in the mail.

The address is:

Franklin County Public Health Food Safety  
280 East Broad St.  
Columbus, OH 43215

## **6. Schedule First Inspection.**

- You can schedule the first inspection once the application and fee have been processed.
- Contact your inspector to schedule the inspection and make sure that the application and fee have been processed.
- Inspection will be at your business address.
  - o Inspections cannot take place at any other location.

## **7. First Inspection.**

- Set up as if you are about to serve food.
  - o No food is necessary for this inspection.
  - o Hot water must work.
  - o Handwashing sink needs soap and paper towels.
  - o Coolers must be turned on (if this applies).
  - o Food thermometer must be on the mobile.
  - o Mobile must be clean.
- A drawing of your mobile set up will go onto the back of the license.

## **8. Selling Food**

- Your license allows you to sell food anywhere in Ohio. Some cities may have additional rules. You must follow all rules.
- You may be inspected by when you sell in other areas. Your inspector will get a copy of the report.

## **9. License Renewal.**

- Expiration is on the license and will expire at the end of February
- The new licensing period begins March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- You can renew your license online for the following year.
- Contact your inspector once you have renewed your license for the first inspection.

## Concession Trailers and Trucks (Food Trucks)

A food trailer or food truck acts like a restaurant on wheels.

### What is required?

- Restaurant-style food equipment.
- Restaurant-style coolers and freezers
  - No ice coolers
- A handwashing sink with hot water, cold water, soap, and paper towels.
- A 3-compartment sink for washing, rinsing, and sanitizing food utensils.
- Enough hot water to hands and utensils. At least 5 gallons is recommended.
- A wastewater holding tank that is at least 15% greater than the water tank.
- Adequate proper storage in unit for food and equipment.



### Rules to follow:

- You cannot make food at home to serve on the trailer. Only make food on the trailer or at a commissary.
- You cannot dump wastewater into the storm drains or on the grass. Find a location that you can dump the wastewater.
- You must always keep the original food license with picture on the back on the trailer.

### Identification:

You must put identification on the outside of the food trailer in letters that are 3 inches tall and 1 inch wide. Put the following:

- Name of mobile
- City, State, and Zip Code
- Phone number with area code

# Pushcarts

**A pushcart is a cart for serving food that person stands at. They usually use ice for keeping food cold.**

## What is required?

- The cooking equipment (grill, flat top, hot hold steam table, etc.) is part of the body of the cart. It cannot be removed.
- Cold storage is part of the cart and uses ice.
- A handwashing sink with hot water, cold water, soap, and paper towels. The sink is attached to the pushcart.
- A 3-compartment sink for washing, rinsing, and sanitizing food utensils. The sink is attached to the pushcart.
- A commissary to prepare food and the cart at the beginning of the day and to clean-up at the end of the day.



## Commissary Agreement

You must prepare food for a pushcart at a commissary. Fill out the commissary agreement form and give to your inspector.

## Rules to follow:

- You cannot make food at home to serve on the trailer. Only make food on the trailer or at a commissary.
- You cannot dump wastewater into the storm drains or on the grass. Find a location that you can dump the wastewater.
- You must always keep the original food license with picture on the back on the trailer.

## Identification:

You must put identification on the outside of the food trailer in letters that are 3 inches tall and 1 inch wide. Put the following:

- Name of mobile
- City, State, and Zip Code
- Phone number with area code



# Knockdown Concessions

**A tent with tables and equipment that are taken down at the end of the day.**

## What is required?

1. The stand must be on non-absorbent ground (e.g., concrete, asphalt) or a tarp must be placed underneath.
2. Grass or dirt floors are not acceptable.
3. Restaurant-style food equipment.
4. Food to be served on the knock down must be prepared at the knock down.
5. A handwashing sink with hot water, cold water, soap, and paper towels.
6. A 3-compartment sink for washing, rinsing, and sanitizing food utensils.
7. Enough hot water for the knock down to wash hand and equipment.
8. A roof of some kind is required for rainy days. Food must be protected from dirt, water, pests, and animals.
9. Commercial coolers and freezers must be placed under that knock down each time.



## Rules to follow:

- You cannot make food at home to serve on the trailer. Only make food on the trailer or at a commissary.
- You cannot dump wastewater into the storm drains or on the grass. Find a location that you can dump the wastewater.
- You must always keep the original food license with picture on the back on the trailer.

## Identification:

You must put identification on the outside of the food trailer in letters that are 3 inches tall and 1 inch wide. Put the following:

- Name of mobile
- City, State, and Zip Code
- Phone number with area code

## Frozen Food Trucks and Carts

**Frozen food trucks and carts sell prepackaged frozen foods. Workers do not serve open foods.**

### Basic Requirements

1. The frozen food must be received frozen and prepackaged and come from a commercial distributor.
2. You cannot store frozen food in your home.
3. Freezers must be restaurant-style.

### Rules to follow:

- You will need to find out if some areas have limits on where and when the unit can operate.
- You must always keep the original food license with picture on the back on the trailer.

### Identification:

You must put identification on the outside of the food trailer in letters that are 3 inches tall and 1 inch wide. Put the following:

- Name of mobile
- City, State, and Zip Code
- Phone number with area code



## Delivery Type Truck

**These units carry prepackaged and non-prepackaged hot and cold foods.**

### **What is required?**

1. You must be able to keep the food at the correct temperature.
2. Packaged food on these trucks must come from a wholesale type facility that is inspected and licensed by Ohio Department of Agriculture.



### **Rules to follow:**

1. There may be local regulations that limit where and when this unit operates.
2. The original food license with diagram must be available at all times during operation.

### **Identification:**

An ID must be at least 3" tall and 1" wide, placed anywhere on the concession, and contain the following information:

- Company Name
- City, State, Zip Code
- Area Code and Phone Number

## Mobile Cookers or BBQ Pits

**These are ovens on wheels. The cooking unit is mounted to the frame of the unit.**

### What is required?

1. The mobile cooker concession must have the same infrastructure as a concession trailer or knockdown.
  - a. Handwashing sink, 3 compartment sink, tanks for fresh water and for wastewater, storage space, commercial grade equipment, etc.
2. Another trailer may be needed to accommodate the required items.



### Rules to follow:

1. Food to be served from the cooker will be prepared at the commissary or on the cooker. No food will be prepared at home.
2. Wastewater must be disposed of in an approved manner and never dumped into a storm sewer.
3. The original food license with diagram must be available at all times during operation.
4. Food not prepared on the unit must be prepared at a commissary.
5. The original food license with diagram must be available at all times during operation.

### Identification:

An ID must be at least 3" tall and 1" wide, placed anywhere on the concession, and contain the following information:

- Company Name
- City, State, Zip Code
- Area Code and Phone Number





Franklin County Public Health  
280 East Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215-4562  
(614) 525-3160  
[www.myfcph.org](http://www.myfcph.org)

## Mobile Food Requirements

### Food Safety Program

**A self-contained mobile unit must have the following equipment. All food equipment should be commercial grade.**

- ☐ A three-compartment sink with sanitizer and test strips available.
- ☐ A hand sink with soap and paper towels available.
- ☐ A hot water tank large enough to supply water to all sinks.
- ☐ A sewage-holding tank that is at least 15% larger than the water tank (if water tank is used).
- ☐ A dual-check backflow prevention valve that meets A.S.S.E. standard 1012 or 1024 if a hose will be used to supply water to the mobile unit.
- ☐ A food-grade hose if the mobile connects to a water supply.
- ☐ Shielded lights that provide at least 50 foot-candles of light intensity in food preparation areas.
- ☐ All surfaces must be smooth and washable.
- ☐ All refrigeration must maintain 41 degrees F. or less and have a working thermometer.
- ☐ The name and city of origin must be placed on the outside of the mobile in letters at least 3" high by 1" wide. The phone number must also be posted but there are no size requirements for the phone number.
- ☐ If a water holding tank is used, it must be made from food-grade material and the inlet must be protected from contamination. The tank must be sloped to an outlet.
- ☐ Push carts must return to a licensed commissary each day.
- ☐ All mobile operators must wear a hair restraint (hat, hairnet, or visor) when working with food.
- ☐ Bare hand contact of ready-to-eat food must be avoided by using gloves, utensils, foil, or other methods.
- ☐ Hot holding temperatures must be maintained at 135 degrees F. or more.
- ☐ An application must be filled out and an inspection must be conducted prior to operating.
- ☐ The mobile operation may not operate in the same location for more than forty days.
- ☐ All new high risk mobiles must have one person in charge certification for at least one person in charge per license holder at each individual event.



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## Commissary Agreement Form

Food Safety Program

Pursuant to Chapter 3717-1-09 of the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC), Mobile Food Service and Mobile Food Establishments, which include pushcarts, are designed and approved to operate with certain restrictions, limitations and conditions.

In accordance with Franklin County Public Health, the owner or operator of the pushcart/mobile unit agrees to operate from a licensed food service/food establishment as defined in OAC 3717-1-01, which also includes commissaries.

The owner or operator shall agree to prepare, store, and or cook food at the licensed commissary. In addition, the owner or operator agrees to clean and properly wash/rinse/sanitize all utensils and equipment, dispose of solid waste, and refill the water supply in the licensed commissary.

The owner or operator of the designated commissary agrees to designate and properly identify the area to be used by the owner or operator of the pushcart/mobile unit.

The owner or operator of the commissary shall agree to notify the Food Safety Program of Franklin County Public Health if the owner or operator of the pushcart/mobile unit fails to regularly (any time the pushcart operates) return to the commissary to perform the required tasks outlined in this agreement.

**This agreement will expire the last day of February, 2026 (unless noted otherwise).**

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Business Name of Pushcart/Mobile

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License Number

---

Owner/Operator of Pushcart

---

Operator/Owner's Address

---

Pushcart Operator/Owner's Address

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Phone Number

---

Business Name of Commissary    License Number (if applicable)

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Address of Commissary

---

Owner/Operator of Commissary

---

Phone Number

---

Pushcart/Mobile Operator/Owner

---

Date

---

Commissary Owner/Operator

---

Date