

# Setting Up and Operating a Mobile Food Service Unit

This guide contains a summary of the basic requirements for constructing and operating a mobile food service unit. It is offered by Southern Seven Health Department as an aid in the designing and planning of a newly constructed mobile food service unit as well as the operation of existing mobile food service unit. The requirements are taken from County Ordinances, Illinois Department of Public Health Food Service Sanitation Code, and the State of Illinois Plumbing Code. After reviewing this guide, a meeting should be arranged with a member of Southern Seven Health Department's Environmental Health Staff to discuss the particular plans you have for your unit. Because mobile food units vary greatly in makeup and type of operation it is difficult to write a complete guide that sets out in detail the requirements that mobile food units are required to meet. Each mobile food unit operation will have to be considered separately by the Health Department before a determination can be made as to the exact requirements that an individual mobile food unit must meet. The requirements outlined in this guide are general in nature and are not intended to specify all the requirements contained in the above mentioned regulations. This guide does not cover any requirements that may be imposed by other regulators. Before any plans are considered complete, other interested parties should be contacted. These may include city officials, county officials, fire marshal, Department of Labor, your insurance carrier, etc. This guide should also be used in conjunction with the Food Service Establishment, Planning Your Operation guide.

The definition of a "Mobile Food Service Unit" is a vehicle-mounted food service or pushcart that is designed to be readily movable.

## Plan Review

Before the annual permit to operate a mobile food service unit can be issued, certain pre-opening activities must occur. Plans for the proposed mobile food service unit and base of operation must be submitted if a mobile food service unit and base of operation are constructed or remodeled. The plans must be reviewed and approved by Southern Seven Health Department prior to commencing any construction remodeling. Careful planning can help avoid costly mistakes and delays in your project.

A plan review packet may be obtained from the sanitarian in your county. A set of blank forms are provided in the packet. These are provided for your floor plan drawing and equipment listing.

In general the floor plan must include the following:

Total area used for the mobile service unit

Entrance and Exits

Food Storage Areas

Food Prep Areas (If other than the Unit.)

Location, number and types of plumbing fixtures, including all potable water supply facilities and waste water holding facilities

Location and type of equipment installed

Types of construction materials that will be used on the floor, walls, and ceiling.

Seating capacity.

Mobile food units must provide only single service tableware and utensils for the consumer.

**A pre-opening inspection must be conducted by the Southern Seven Health Department prior to the opening of any mobile food unit or pushcart operation.**

### **Section I. Mobile Food Units or Pushcarts Serving Only Prepackaged Food**

**This section is for Mobile Food Units or Pushcarts that serve only food that was prepared, packaged individual servings, transported, and stored under conditions meeting the requirements of the Food Service Sanitation Code or beverages that are not potentially hazardous and are dispensed from covered urns or other protected equipment. (Frankfurters may be prepared and served from these units.)**

## **Base of Operations**

Mobile food units or pushcarts must operate from a commissary or other fixed food service establishment. The mobile food unit must report to this location **at least daily** for all supplies and for cleaning and servicing operations.

The base of operations for a mobile food unit or pushcart serving only prepackage food, beverages, or frankfurters must provide an adequate area for cleaning and servicing. At all times food must be protected from contamination.

## **Section II. Mobile Food Units or Pushcarts Serving Food Other Than In Section I.**

**Any Mobile Food Unit or Pushcart of this type shall operate from a commissary or a fixed food service establishment and shall report to this location at least daily for all supplies and for cleaning and servicing operations. The servicing area shall include, but not limited to:**

The servicing area shall have overhead protection for any supplying, cleaning, or servicing operation

The floor of the serving area shall be constructed of a smooth non-absorbent material, such as concrete, asphalt, etc.

The construction of the ceilings and walls of the servicing area are exempt from the provisions of Section 750.1210(a) through (f) of this Part

Food storage areas and food prep areas are subject to the provisions of Sections 750.1210(a) through (f) of this Part

A separate location for flushing and drainage of waste shall be provided and utilized

## **Water Systems**

This category of mobile food unit must provide a water system that provides potable water under pressure. It shall provide enough hot and cold water for food preparation, utensil cleaning and sanitizing, and hand washing in accordance with the Food Service Sanitation Rules and Regulations.

The water inlet shall be located so that it will not be contaminated by waste discharge, road dust, oil or grease and kept capped at all times except while being filled. The inlet fitting will be of a different size and/or type of connection than the waste water connection.

All potable supply water hoses used shall be of an approved food grade quality.

## **Waste Retention**

If liquid waste results from operation of a mobile food unit, the waste shall be stored in a permanently installed retention tank that is at least 50 percent larger than the water supply tank. All connections on the vehicle for servicing the mobile unit waste disposal facilities shall be of a different size or type than those used for supplying potable water to the mobile food unit. The waste connection shall be located lower than the water inlet connection to preclude contamination of the potable water system.

**Both the potable water supply system and the waste retention system must meet and be installed in accordance with the Illinois Food Service Sanitation Code and the Illinois Plumbing Code. All plumbing must be preformed by an Illinois Licensed Plumber and inspected by the State Plumbing Inspector.**

**All units shall be operated under the requirements of the Illinois Food Service Sanitation Code. This includes the requirement that a Certified Food Service Manager be at the unit at all times food is being prepared.**

Includes office addresses and phone numbers on back of pamphlet.