



Oregon Department of Human Services

## **MOBILE FOOD UNIT OPERATION GUIDE**

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Guidelines for Food Service

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

# Mobile Food Unit Operation Guide

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**QUESTIONS?** Contact your county health department for more information on mobile units. See page 4 or the back cover of this guide for county phone numbers.

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Foodborne Illness Prevention Program  
800 NE Oregon Street, Suite 608  
Portland, OR 97232  
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<http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/foodsafety/index.shtml>

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# Mobile Food Unit Operation Guide

## **A summary of the Food Sanitation Rules relating to mobile food units**

**T**he Mobile Food Unit Operational Guide is intended to help you set up and operate your mobile food unit in a sanitary and safe manner. By focusing on critical food safety practices, you will reduce the possibility of foodborne illness. While this document contains some detailed information about the rules for the construction and operation of mobile food units, it does not contain all the requirements for your unit. Unless otherwise noted, sections of the Food Sanitation Rules, Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 333-150-0000 are provided for you to obtain specific rule requirements. The Oregon Food Sanitation Rules are at <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/foodsafety/index.shtml>

Contact your County Health Department early in your planning process. Determine the county where you will be operating your mobile unit and contact that county's Environmental Health Program (see page 4, the back of this guide, or website).

## Base of Operation

### Base of Operation

Mobile food units must operate from a licensed restaurant, commissary, or warehouse. A warehouse may be accepted as a base of operation if only prepackaged goods are sold (OAR 333-162-0040; OAR 333-162-0930; OAR 333-162-0940; OAR 333-162-0280; 333-162-0680).

The regulatory authority will determine whether self-contained mobile food units have the ability to operate without a base of operation. To do so, the units must contain all the equipment and utensils that a commissary would provide.

## What is a Mobile Food Unit?

A mobile food unit is any vehicle that is self-propelled, or can be pulled or pushed down a sidewalk, street, highway or waterway. Food may be prepared or processed on this vehicle, and the vehicle is used to sell and dispense food to the ultimate consumer. There is no size limit to mobile food units, but they must meet the following basic requirements:

- Mobile units must be mobile at all times during operation. The unit must be on wheels (excluding boats) at all times (Section 1-201.10(B)(48.1)).
- The unit and all operations and equipment must be integral to the unit. There are three exceptions that may be allowed provided that specific conditions are met. These exceptions will be discussed later in this document on page 5.

## How is a Mobile Food Unit Classified?

There are four types of mobile food units. The mobile food unit classifications are based on the menu. A mobile food unit can serve menu items within its classification number or below (see Table 1). For example, a Class III unit may also sell items allowed under Class II and I (OAR 333-162-0020(2)).

**Class I** These units can serve only intact, packaged foods and non-potentially hazardous drinks. No preparation or assembly of foods or beverages may take place on the unit. Non-potentially hazardous beverages may be provided from covered urns or dispenser heads only. No dispensed ice is allowed.

**Class II** These units may serve foods allowed under Class I and provide hot and cold holding display areas from which unpackaged foods are displayed. Self-service by customers of unpackaged food is not allowed. Preparation, assembly or cooking of foods is not allowed on this unit.

**Class III** These units may serve any food item allowed under Class II, and may cook, prepare and assemble food items on the unit. However, cooking of raw animal food on the unit is not allowed.

**Class IV** These mobile food units may serve a full menu.

**Table 1: Mobile Food Unit General Requirements and Limitations**

Requirements	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Water Supply Required	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Handwashing System Required	No	Yes - Minimum Five Gallons <sup>1</sup>	Yes - Minimum Five Gallons <sup>1</sup>	Yes - Minimum Five Gallons <sup>2</sup>
Dishwashing Sinks Required	No	No <sup>3</sup>	No <sup>3</sup>	Yes - Minimum 30 Gallons
Assembly or Preparation Allowed	No	No	Yes	Yes
Cooking Allowed	No	No	Yes <sup>4</sup>	Yes
Barbecue Operation Allowed	No	No	Yes - Reheating of fully cooked foods <sup>5</sup>	Yes
Restroom Required	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Examples	Prepackaged Sandwiches/Dispensed Soda	Service of Unpackaged Food Items	Espresso Hot Dogs	No Menu Limitation

1 The handwashing system may consist of a container that provides flowing water.

2 The handwashing system must be plumbed to provide hot and cold running water.

3 Must provide a minimum of 30 gallons of water for dishwashing, if provided.

4 May cook only foods that are not potentially hazardous when raw (rice, pasta, etc.).

5 With Class III units, the barbecue must be integral to the unit and only used to impart flavor.

## County Health Departments

Baker	541-473-5186	Lake	541-947-6045
Benton	541-766-6841	Lane	541-682-4480
Clackamas	503-655-8384	Lincoln	541-265-4112
Clatsop	503-325-8500	Linn	541-967-3821
Columbia	503-366-3828	Malheur	541-473-5186
Coos	541-756-2020	Marion	503-588-5346
Crook	541-447-8155	Morrow	541-278-6394
Curry	541-247-3300	Multnomah	503-988-3400
Deschutes	541-388-6575	Polk	503-623-9237
Douglas	541-464-3820	Sherman	541-506-2600
Gilliam	541-506-2600	Tillamook	503-842-3900
Grant	541-575-0429	Umatilla	541-278-5432
Harney	541-573-2271	Union	541-962-8818
Hood River	541-386-1115	Wallowa	541-426-4848
Jackson	541-774-8206	Wasco	541-506-2600
Jefferson	541-475-4456	Washington	503-846-8722
Josephine	541-474-5325	Wheeler	541-475-4456
Klamath	541-883-1122	Yamhill	503-434-7476

## Licensing Your Mobile Food Unit

A license is required. Before a Mobile Food Unit is licensed, it must go through a plan review with the local Environmental Health Department. Prior to licensing, there may be other agencies from which you will be required to obtain approvals. These include, but are not limited to planning (zoning), building codes (structural, electrical, plumbing) Fire Marshall, and other city or county authorities (OAR 333-162-0880).

## Food Handler Certificates

All food service workers must obtain a food handler certificate. For more information on how to obtain a food handler certificate, contact your County Health Department or go to: <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/foodsafety/index.shtml> (OAR 333-175-0000).

## Activities Allowed Outside of the Unit

All operations and equipment must be an integral part of the mobile food unit, unless your proposed activity meets one of the three exceptions, and specific conditions are met. The three exceptions are the use of a barbecue unit, customer seating, and auxiliary storage.

### Barbecue Unit

A Class III unit may use a barbecue to impart flavor on fully cooked animal food items prior to putting the food item into hot holding or immediately prior to service. The barbecue unit may not be used for hot holding or any other use outside of this description. On a Class III unit, the barbecue must be integral to the unit (Section 3-306.15).

A Class IV mobile food unit may use a barbecue when:

- It is in close proximity to the mobile food unit
- The barbecue is used only for cooking. Processing, portioning, preparation, or assembly of food must be conducted from inside the mobile food unit
- A handwashing system must be provided adjacent to the barbecue

### Seating for Customers

Operators may provide seating for customers if restrooms are readily accessible within one-quarter mile or a five-minute walk from the mobile food unit. The restroom must have a handwashing facility that provides hot and cold running water, soap, and paper towels or air dryer (OAR 333-162-0020(4)).

### Auxiliary storage

Auxiliary storage may be provided if it is limited to impervious, nonabsorbent, covered containers stored in such a manner as to prevent contamination or infestation. Auxiliary storage shall be limited to an amount that can be used in the course of a day's operation. No self-service, assembly or preparation activities may occur from the auxiliary storage container (OAR 333-162-0020(5)).

# Food Sanitation Requirements

## Person In Charge (PIC)

Someone at your mobile unit must be in charge during all hours of operation. This person is responsible for knowing the food sanitation rules and the procedures within your unit. This person needs to be able to provide employees with information they need to perform their job. The Person In Charge (PIC) must inform employees to notify the PIC when the employee is experiencing fever, sore throat, or gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, and nausea. The PIC must have the authority to send an employee home (Sections 2-101.11; 2-201.12).

The person in charge is required to demonstrate knowledge of rules applicable to the food service operation. Demonstration of knowledge can be met by obtaining a food manager training certificate, having no critical violations, or by correctly answering the inspector's food safety questions. Critical violations are violations that are known to cause foodborne illness. See <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/foodsafety/index.shtml> for approved food manager certificates.

## Sick Employees Must Not Work

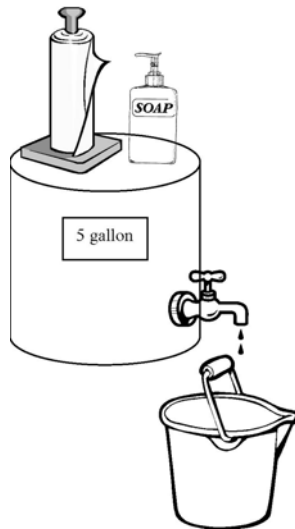
### Employee Illness

Any person, who is infected with a communicable disease, has vomiting, abdominal cramps or diarrhea must **not** work in food service until the person is completely free from symptoms (Section 2-201.11).

Infected sores or cuts on employee hands must have a watertight cover such as a finger cot that protects the lesion and a single-use-non-latex glove is worn. Infected sores or cuts on other parts of the body, such as the arms, need to be covered by a dry clean tight-fitting bandage. Latex gloves are prohibited (Section 3-304.15).

## Handwashing Facilities

Handwashing facilities must have warm running water, dispensed soap, paper towels, and a wastebasket. (Sections 6-301.11; 6-301.12; 6-301.20; 6-302.11).



When and How to Wash Hands

A Class IV mobile unit must be plumbed to provide hot and cold running water. A Class II or Class III mobile unit may use a 5-gallon container of warm water with a dispensing valve that provides a constant flow of water when opened. Provide a bucket to catch the wastewater for proper sewage disposal (Section 5-203.11).

Handwashing is very important when working with food and drinks. Handwashing removes microorganisms that are known to cause illness. Food workers need to wash hands between changing tasks, after handling raw meats, and anytime hands may have been contaminated. The best way to wash hands is to scrub for about 20 seconds with warm running water and soap. Rinse and dry hands with paper towels (Sections 2-301.12; 2-301.14; 2-301.15).

A double handwash is required whenever you enter the unit, after using the restroom, after smoking, and anytime hands become contaminated with body fluids. A double handwash requires you to lather hands with soap and warm water for approximately 20 seconds, rinse, and repeat a second time. Dry hands with paper towel. A double handwash is to prevent the spread of diseases that workers might have even though they are not yet showing the symptoms (Section 2-301.13).

## Food Source

All food products must be wholesome and free of spoilage, microorganisms, toxic chemicals, and other harmful substances that can make people sick. All food products must be prepared, stored, handled, or displayed so that it is safe for people to eat (Sections 3-201.11 thru 3-201.17).

Home canned or home processed foods are not allowed. All food must either be prepared in the unit or obtained from an approved source. Home-prepared foods must not be stored on the unit or served to the public. The only alternative to preparing the food in the unit is to prepare the food in an approved licensed facility such as a commissary. If you plan to prepare food off the unit, a separate commissary license is required.

## Water Source

All water used in the mobile food unit must be from an approved public water system. A mobile food unit may also use commercially bottled water (Sections 5-1; 5-2; 5-3).

## Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF)

Potentially hazardous foods are:

- Food of an animal origin (raw or cooked)
- Cooked plant products
- Raw seed sprouts, cut melons, garlic and oil mixtures

Examples: hamburgers, tacos, hot dogs, spaghetti, chili, cooked rice, cooked potatoes, and cooked beans (Section 1-201.10B(61)).

## Food Temperatures

### Hot and Cold Holding

Potentially hazardous foods must be kept cold at 41°F or colder or kept hot at 140°F or hotter. Temperatures between 41°F and 140°F allow for rapid growth of bacteria that can make people sick. Use equipment capable of holding food hot (140°F or hotter). Open flames often fail and blow out. Be sure equipment will work and can hold food hot at all times (Sections 3-501.11 thru 3-501.19).

Use refrigerators or ice to store food cold (41°F). The ice must be from an approved source. All containers used must allow for water to drain away as ice melts (like an insulated cooler with drain plug). Keep enough ice available to keep the food surrounded by ice for the duration of the operation.

### Date Marking

Date-mark ready-to-eat potentially hazardous foods that will be kept longer than 24 hours at 41°F with a date to discard at 7 days from the day of preparation.

### Thawing Foods

Foods may be thawed under refrigeration, under cool running water, or in a microwave if it will be cooked immediately.

### Cooling

The best way to keep food safe is to make it fresh each day, just before you serve it. If you have food that is leftover or made in advance, you must cool it from 140°F to 70°F within two hours. Then the food must cool from 70°F to 41°F within four hours. If the food does not reach 70°F within two hours, you must reheat the food to 165°F, and start the cooling process again or you may serve it immediately or hot hold the food until service. If the food takes longer than four hours to drop from 70°F to 41°F,

it must be discarded. Refer to the food handler manual for more information or look online at <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/foodsafety/manual.shtml>

### Cooking

Cook raw animal products to the following internal temperatures (Sections 3-401.11 thru 3-401.13):

- Poultry, stuffed meats, stuffed fish, stuffed pasta to 165°F
- Ground beef and other ground meats to 155°F
- Pork, eggs, fish and other potentially hazardous foods 145°F

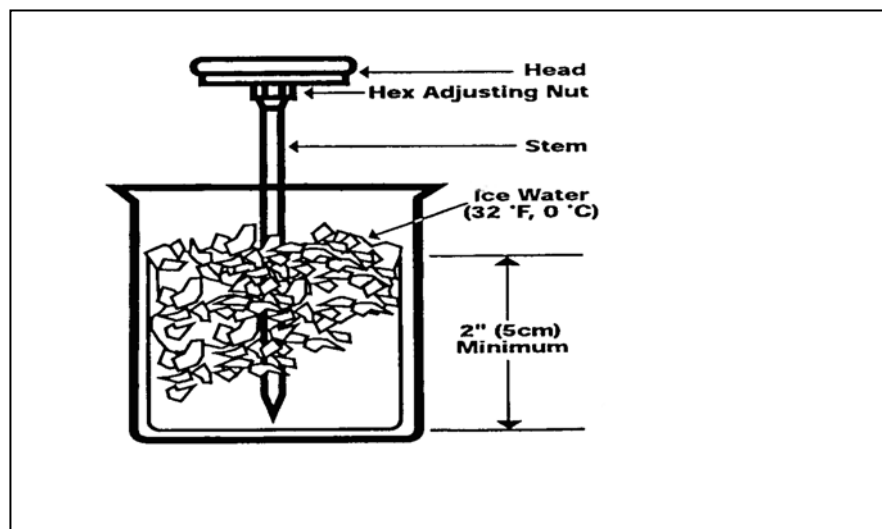
### Reheating

All potentially hazardous foods that have been cooked, and cooled must be reheated to at least 165°F within two hours before being placed in hot holding (Section 3-403.11).

## Thermometers

Metal-stem probe food thermometers with a temperature range of 0°F to 220°F are required to test food temperatures when holding foods hot, cold or when cooking raw animal products. Clean and sanitize your thermometer after each use (Sections 4-203.11; 4-502.11).

It is important to ensure that the thermometer is working properly. An easy way to check your thermometer is to pack a container with crushed ice and add enough water to make it slushy. Put the thermometer into the slush and wait for 30 seconds until the dial stops moving. The dial should read 32°F. If it has a different reading, adjust the hex nut keeping the probe in the slush until it reads 32°F. For digital thermometers, follow manufacturer instructions on how to adjust the thermometer.



Refrigerator thermometers are required to confirm that the refrigerator or cooler is staying cold at 41°F (Section 4-204.112).

## Dishwashing

A commercial dishwasher or a three-compartment sink are used to wash, rinse, and sanitize all equipment and utensils. Using a three-compartment sink, wash equipment and utensils with soapy hot water, rinse with hot water, immerse in sanitizer and air dry. Sanitizer can be made up of 50-100 ppm of chlorine bleach or 200 ppm of quaternary ammonium. Use test strips that are made for the sanitizer that you are using. The test strips will ensure that the sanitizer has been mixed according to manufacturer's directions (Chapter 4).

For units that do not have a dishwashing, you must bring multiple clean utensils to replace any that have been in use for four hours or utensils that have been dropped or contaminated.

## Cleaning and Sanitizing

Clean and sanitize food-contact surfaces between preparing raw and ready-to-eat foods. Food contact surfaces must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized as with dishwashing. Wiping cloths must be stored in a sanitizing solution between uses. Wipe cloths used for wiping areas that contacted raw animal products must be stored in a container of sanitizer separate from all other sanitizers (Section 3-304.14).

## General Food Protection

- Store food and utensils up off the floor. Store food only in food grade containers. Protect food and utensils from dust and other contaminants (Sections 3-305.11; 4-1)
- Store chemicals such as liquid bleach and detergents below and separate from the food and utensils. Properly label all chemical containers (Section 7-2)
- Keep all garbage in a watertight container with lid (Section 5-5)
- Dispose of wastewater properly into a plumbed sewer (Section 5-4)
- Protect food from insects and rodents (Sections 6-202.15; 6-501.111; 6-501.112)

## County Health Departments

Contact your county health department's environmental health program early in your planning process. Determine what county you will be operating your mobile unit. The county's environmental health program contact information can also be found at <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/foodsafety/county.shtml>

Baker	541-473-5186	Lake	541-947-6045
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