

Food Service Establishment Rules
Mobile Food Units
Chapter 1200-23-1-.02 (12)

(a) General. Mobile food units shall comply with the requirements of these Rules, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (12).

1. Restricted operation.

Mobile food units serving only food prepared, packaged in individual servings, transported and stored under conditions meeting the requirements of these Rules, as well as beverages that are not potentially hazardous and are dispensed from covered urns or other protected equipment, need not comply with requirements of these Rules pertaining to the necessity of water and sewage systems nor to those requirements pertaining to the cleaning and sanitation of equipment and utensils if the required equipment for cleaning and sanitation exists at the commissary. However, potentially hazardous food such as frankfurters, may be prepared from these units without the necessity of a water system, provided approved hand wipes are convenient, accessible, and utilized.

2. Single service articles.

Mobile food units shall provide only single-service articles for use by the consumer.

3. Water system.

A mobile food unit not exempt from the requirement for a water system shall have a potable water system under pressure. The system shall be of sufficient capacity to furnish enough hot and cold water for food preparation, utensil cleaning and sanitizing, and handwashing, in accordance with the requirements of these regulations. The water inlet shall be located so that it will not be contaminated by waste discharge, road dust, oil or grease, and it shall be kept capped unless being filled. The water inlet shall be provided with a transition connection of a size or type that will prevent its use for any other service. All water distribution pipes or tubing shall be constructed and installed in accordance with the requirements of this regulation.

4. 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 of at least 15 percent larger capacity than the water supply tank. Liquid waste shall not be discharged from the retention tank when the mobile food unit is in motion. All connections on the mobile food unit for servicing mobile food 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.

(b) Commissary

1. General

(i) Mobile food units shall operate from a commissary or other fixed food service establishment and shall use this facility for all supplies. All mobile food units shall be cleaned and serviced as often as necessary from this facility.

(ii) The commissary or other fixed food service establishment used as a base of operation for mobile food units shall be constructed and operated in compliance with the requirements of these regulations.

Servicing areas and operations

(i) Servicing area.

(I) A mobile food unit servicing area shall be provided and shall include at least overhead protection for any supplying, cleaning, or servicing operation. Within this servicing area, there shall be a location provided for the flushing and drainage of liquid wastes separate from the location provided for water servicing and for the loading and unloading of food and related supplies. This servicing area is not required if the mobile food units exempt from the water system and waste retention requirements of this paragraph.

(II) The surface of the servicing area shall be constructed of a smooth nonabsorbent material, such as concrete or machine-laid asphalt, and shall be maintained in good repair, kept clean, and be graded to drain.

(III) The construction of the walls and ceilings of the servicing area is exempted from the provisions of Rule 1200-23-1-.02(11)(b).

(ii) Servicing operations.

(I) Potable water servicing equipment shall be installed according to law and shall be stored and handled in a way that protects the water and equipment from contamination.

(II) The mobile food unit liquid waste retention tank, where used, shall be thoroughly flushed and drained during the servicing operation. All liquid waste shall be discharged to a sewage disposal system in accordance with Rule 1200-23-1-.02(10)(f).

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GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. GENERAL

Mobile food units shall comply with the requirements of the Tennessee Department of Health's Food Service Establishment Rules and Regulations.

2. DEFINITIONS

MOBILE 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. Mobile units must be mobile at all times during operation. The unit must be on wheels (excluding boats) at all times. Any mobile food unit that removes such wheels or becomes stationary must meet 1200-23-1 in its entirety.

COMMISSARY- Any location in which food, containers, or supplies are kept, handled, prepared, packaged or stored.

3. PRE-OPERATION REQUIREMENTS

The menu, floor plan, equipment layout, and equipment specifications for both the mobile food unit and the commissary must be submitted to the local county Public Health Department at least 15 days prior to construction.

After plans have been approved, the mobile unit may not begin operations until a pre-operational inspection has been made and compliance is determined. Mobile units shall be permitted in the owner/operator's county of residence.

4. FLOOR, WALLS, CEILING, AND LIGHTING

Floors, walls, and ceilings shall be light-colored, smooth, nonabsorbent, and easily cleanable with no exposed utility lines, piping conduits, or wiring. Flooring must be constructed of smooth, durable, easily cleanable material. Shielding shall be provided for all lighting fixtures.

5. COUNTER/SHELVING SURFACES

All surfaces shall be easily cleanable, smooth and free of breaks, open seams, cracks, chips, pits, and similar imperfections.

6. HAND SINK

A hand sink equipped with a mixing valve faucet must be installed. It must be accessible to the operator(s) at all times. The sink can be either a drop-in or a wall-attached style. Provide splashguards between the sink and food prep or storage area as required during plan review.

Mobile units which serve only non-potentially hazardous foods (and/or hotdogs, sausages, and coffee drinks with milk) may use disposable hand-wipes in lieu of handwashing.

7. WAREWASHING SINK

A three-compartment commercial sink with drain boards at each end is required for the proper washing of food contact utensils. This sink must be seamless with rounded corners and be sized deep and wide enough to accommodate the largest utensil or small ware to be washed. Two drain boards shall be provided, one on each end of the sink.

All mobile units shall be equipped with warewashing sinks that meet the minimum requirements, with the exception of push-carts or other operations such as snow-cone carts that use equipment or utensils limited to ice scoops or tongs and the three compartment sink is available at the commissary.

8. WATER SUPPLY

Potable water must be supplied to each sink by means of a pressurized water system. It is recommended that a minimum sized 30-gallon potable water tank be installed. The tank's size requirement will be determined during the plan review process based on the menu, sink dimension, and operating hours. This tank is to be made of a food grade material. The tank must be installed at an angle that will permit complete drainage of the tank at the end of each day of operation. Due to the need to drain the tank, an outlet/valve must be installed at the lowest section of the tank. The fresh water tank should be flushed and sanitized monthly. Log records should be retained in the unit for verification. The tank and water fill pipe must be a closed system and free from contamination. A water inlet/valve must be installed for filling the potable water tank. The water inlet/valve and outlet must be capped when not in use to protect the water supply from contamination.

9. WATER HEATER

A water heater must be installed that is sized large enough to supply 90-120° F water to the hand sink and three-compartment sink during all periods of operation.

10. WASTEWATER TANK

A wastewater tank must be installed and have a 15% larger capacity than the capacity of the potable water tank. An atmospheric vent must be provided at the top of the wastewater tank. A wastewater outlet/valve must be installed on the exterior of the mobile unit. The outlet must be equipped with a shut-off valve and different in size or type than those used for supplying potable water to the mobile food unit. The tank must be installed in a manner that facilitates proper drainage of the wastewater. **Size of potable water tank in gallons x 1.15 = Minimum size requirement for waste water tank.**

11. POTABLE WATER SUPPLY HOSE

The mobile unit shall be provided a food grade water hose that is adequately sized to fill the potable water tank. The hose must be connected to a supply outlet that is equipped with a back flow prevention device. This hose should be either white or clear in color to differentiate from the wastewater drainage hose. When not connected to the water supply and mobile unit, the hose must be completely drained in a manner that protects the cleanliness of the hose and capped at both ends. The hose must be stored in a sanitary manner within the approved, permitted commissary or mobile unit.

12. WASTEWATER DISPOSAL

The wastewater tank must be emptied into an approved sanitary sewer at the end of each day of operation. The disposal location must be approved at the time of plan review. If the operator of the mobile food unit does not own the approved dumpsite, then a receipt of disposal from the owner/operator of the site should be retained in the mobile food unit for at least 30 days.

13. WASTEWATER DRAINAGE HOSE

A hose shall be provided for emptying the wastewater tank. This hose must be distinctly different in color or size than that of the potable water supply hose. The hose must be stored in an area that will not contaminate food, or food contact surfaces. Do not store with the potable water supply hose.

14. OUTER OPENINGS

Food shall be protected from contamination during preparation, display, and service. This may be accomplished with covers, screening, and/or air curtains. Each mobile unit shall be evaluated individually based on the menu and complexity of food preparation to determine the appropriate method for food protection. **Revised 11-12**

15. SOLID WASTE

Solid waste/trash shall be contained in durable, easily cleanable, insect-proof containers that do not leak or absorb liquids.

16. LEFTOVER FOODS

At the end of each day of operation, all potentially hazardous food that is held hot must be rapidly cooled to below 41° F within 4 hours. The cooling device must be located within a permitted food establishment. If this is not possible, then the food must be discarded.

17. FOOD SUPPLIES

All food items must be purchased from an approved source or permitted food service establishment.

18. OPERATION LIMITATIONS

The food preparation activities of the mobile food unit are limited to the interior of the unit. Counter extensions and tables can be used to display and dispense condiments and single-service items, such as napkins or plastic-ware, provided that the condiments and single-service items are protected and dispensed in a sanitary manner. Covered smokers and grills that are used for batch cooking and operated under the provisions of outdoor cooking in the Tennessee Department of Health's Food Service Establishment Rules and Regulations are also allowed. **Revised 11-12**

19. COMMISSARY

All foods and single service articles must be stored at an approved commissary. The floor plans of the commissary must be submitted for plan review to the local county health department prior to construction of the mobile unit. If the owner of the mobile unit intends to use a permitted facility that is owned by another operator, the owner/operator of the commissary must submit a notarized "**Mobile Unit/Commissary Agreement**" letter to the local county health department.

A separate food service permit is required at the commissary if food preparation takes place in the commissary.

20. IDENTIFICATION OF MOBILE UNIT

All mobile food units shall be clearly identified with the name of the business and permit number posted and unobstructed on the exterior of the unit in letters at least three inches in height.

**100% Self-Contained
Mobile Unit
Plan Review Checklist**

Name of Operation:	
Name of Owner(s):	
Address:	
Phone number:	
Alternate Phone Number:	
Location of Commissary:	
Food preparation in the commissary?	
Proposed Menu:	
Floor Plan and Specifications of the Mobile Unit:	
• Mobile food operation confined to a mobile unit on wheels	
• Approved floor construction and materials	
• Approved wall & ceiling construction and materials?	
• Screening (if required)	
• Lights shielded	
• Approved counter and shelving surfaces	
• Handsink	
• Three compartment sink with two drain-boards	
• Water Supply	
• Water Heater	
• Generator	
• Wastewater Tank	
• Potable water supply hose	
• Wastewater disposal	
• Wastewater drainage hose	
• Outer openings protected (if required)	
• Solid Waste disposal	
• Limited Operation	
• Unit Identification	

**Commissary
Plan Review Checklist**

Name of Operation:	
Name of Owner(s):	
Address:	
Phone number:	
Alternate Phone Number:	
Location of Commissary:	
Food preparation in the commissary?	
Proposed Menu:	
Floor Plan and Specifications of the Commissary:	
• Mobile food operation confined to a mobile unit on wheels	
• Approved floor construction and materials	
• Approved wall & ceiling construction and materials?	
• Screening (if required)	
• Lights shielded	
• Approved counter and shelving surfaces	
• Handsink	
• Three compartment sink with two drain-boards	
• Water Supply	
• Water Heater	
• Wastewater disposal	
• Outer openings protected (if required)	
• Solid Waste disposal	
• Servicing Area	



General Environmental Health
Tennessee Department of Health
Cordell Hull Building, 3rd Floor
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Nashville, TN 37243-3901
(615) 741-7206

Commissary Agreement Form

I, _____ owner of _____,
Name Commissary Business Name

located at _____,
Address

agree to allow _____ to use my facility as
Mobile Unit Operator

his/her commissary and I understand that the cart will be brought back
to my facility daily for servicing.

Signature of Commissary Owner

Date



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Tennessee Department of Health
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Wastewater Disposal Agreement Form

I, _____ owner of _____,
Name **Mobile Food Unit Name**
located at _____, state that the following
Address
named location _____ will be used to
Name of wastewater disposal location
dispose of the wastewater generated by the above named mobile food unit.

Signature of disposal location owner

Date