

Mobile Food Unit Guidelines



Northwest Georgia Public Health, District 1-1

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Chattooga County (706) 857-3377

Gordon County (706) 624-1440

Walker County (706) 639-2574

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Introduction

The following information is intended to provide guidance to individuals considering application for a Food Service Permit to operate a mobile food unit. These guidelines are not a substitute for the current Rules and Regulations for Food Service, chapter 511-6-1, as provided by the State of Georgia, but should be used as a tool to prepare you for the permit application and inspection process.

It is critical for anyone considering the business of preparing and serving food to understand the level of responsibility that you will have and the imminent health threat that can be created by improper food handling practices. If you are not aware, in the State of Georgia a food service establishment is defined as an establishment for the preparation and serving of meals, lunches, short orders, sandwiches, frozen desserts, or other edible products either for carryout or service within the establishment. This includes not only traditional restaurants, but also coffee shops, cafeterias, taverns, mobile food units and a variety of other venues all of which must first apply for and be granted a Food Service Permit by the local County Board of Health in order to operate.

The following information will attempt to guide you through the permitting process and prompt you to give considerable thought to what will be needed not only to receive a Food Service Permit, but how to prepare your particular mobile unit to allow you to serve food items with the highest level of food safety possible.

****Remember to never purchase or begin construction of a mobile food unit prior to following these steps**

Step 1

Obtain a copy of the Rules and Regulations for Food Service, chapter 511-6-1

- Available on-line at <http://dph.georgia.gov/food-rules-and-regulations>
- Or you can request a copy from your local County Health Departments Environmental Health office

Step 2

Review section 511-6-1-.08 Special Food Service Operations (Page 132-140)

- Remember to make notes as to what questions you would like to ask the Environmental Health Specialist when you establish the initial application request appointment with the Environmental Health office
- The more informed and prepared you are the faster the application and permitting process will occur

Review Section 511-6-1-.01 Definitions (page 3-20)

Become very familiar with definitions such as Base of Operation, Certified Food Safety Manager, Critical Control Point, Drinking Water, Dry Storage, Easily Cleanable, Food Borne Disease, Mobile Food Service Unit, Person in Charge, Potentially Hazardous Food, Time/Temperature control for Food Safety, Ready-to-Eat Food, Sanitization, Single Service Article, Special Food Service Operation, and Temporary Food Service Operation

Step 3

Check with local city and county officials to determine if any additional permits, license or other approval beyond the Food Service permit issued by the local Board of Health will be required in order to operate a mobile unit in the particular jurisdiction

- Planning and Zoning Office
- Business License
- Code Enforcement

Step 4

Begin developing your proposed menu

- Be very specific with menu items by not only listing the common name, but provide a detail description of ingredients and how each item is purchased, held, prepared, and served (served immediately after preparation or held hot/cold before serving)
 - If hot or cold holding will be required after food is prepared provide a detail description of how and where this will take place and identify equipment to be used to ensure proper holding temperatures and describe what steps will be taken in order to ensure maintaining proper food holding temperatures
 - The menu along with food preparation methods will play a key role in determining equipment and storage needs during your initial plan review process
 - It is important to remember that any deviation from the originally approved menu will require prior approval from the Environmental Health office in order to avoid permit suspension or revocation
- **This information will be required to be transferred onto your plan review application or be attached

Step 5

Identify your base of operation

- Mobile food service units and extended food service units must operate from a base of operation or fixed (currently permitted) food service facility under your ownership or direct managerial control.
- The mobile food service unit must report at least daily to the base of operation for cleaning and supplies and when not in use must be properly stored at the base of operation (an alternation location for storage when not in use may be considered by the Environmental Health office if requested in advance)

**A mobile or extended Food Service Permit will not be issued without an approved base of operation. The base of operation cannot be a within a private home where activities other than that of the mobile food unit function would take place (such as a shared kitchen used for residential use, storage or food preparation area will not be allowed).

Step 6

Prepare a scale drawing of your proposed mobile unit and base of operation

- Identify all equipment and building construction materials to be used
- Remember that units preparing and serving potentially hazardous foods must be constructed so that foods are prepared and served from within a fully enclosed area of the unit
- Consider ease of cleaning and durability of materials
- Develop an insect control plan such as a fly control fans and or screening
- Think through the food storage, preparation, and service process as you plan your mobile unit and base of operation needs
- List and identify make and model of all proposed equipment (handwash sinks, prep sinks, warewash sinks, cooking equipment, hot/cold food holding/storage units, etc.)

Step 7

Identify water supply source and handling practices

- A mobile food unit must have a potable water system from an approved source that is a public water system or a nonpublic water system meeting all local and state requirements
- The potable water must be stored and dispensed in a manner that prevents contamination
- Identify capacity needs for hot and cold water on unit

Step 8

Identify means of liquid waste disposal and solid waste disposal

- All waste water and solid waste generated from the mobile unit and base of operation must be disposed in an approved sanitary manner

Step 9

Identify location(s) for operation of the mobile unit

- The mobile food unit must restrict operation to a maximum of two (2) locations or an approved route
- You must provide documentation of legal access to the proposed location(s)

Step 10

At this point you should have developed a general understanding of information needed to now request and complete the mobile food unit application. An application and additional guidance can be obtained by contacting you local Environmental Health Office. Applications must be submitted at least 10 business days prior to the anticipated date of opening.