

Retail Food Establishments: Mobile Food Establishment



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Five Key Risk Factors repeatedly identified in foodborne illness outbreaks:

1. Improper Holding Temps
2. Inadequate Cooking
3. Contaminated Equipment
4. Food from Unsafe Sources
5. Poor Personal Hygiene

All 5 of these risk factors can be reduced by following this guidance.

Chapter 9-1

A mobile food establishment consists of a commissary and mobile food unit(s). Both the commissary and all mobile units must be permitted separately.

Chapter 9-1 addresses all requirements for mobile food.



All units, pushcarts, and commissaries must complete DHEC Form 1769: Application & Permit Document AND submit applicable Retail Food Establishment Fees.

Mobile Food Units & Pushcarts

» **Identification:** The business name and business address must be legibly printed on mobile food units and pushcarts in a contrasting color from the color of the unit; see 9-1 (L)(12) for more information.

» **Handwashing Sinks:** Mobile food units and pushcarts must have a handwashing sink.

» **Items/Articles:** Only single-service utensils, bowls, plates, and other containers are to be provided to the customer.

» **Service:** Customer self-service of unpackaged Time/Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) food is prohibited.

» **Water Source:** All mobile food units and pushcarts must use an approved drinking water source.

» **Water Capacity:** Each cart system must have a capacity of 5 gallons or greater.

» **Wastewater Storage:** Wastewater must be stored in a tank that is 15% larger than the unit's/cart's drinking water storage capacity. Removable tanks may not be larger than 10 gallons. When a permanent tank is used, there is no capacity limit.

» **Wastewater Disposal:** Wastewater must be flushed and drained only at the commissary.

» **Storage:** Mobile food units must be stored at the commissary or at a location approved by DHEC when not in operation.

» **Inspections:** Mobile food units and pushcarts must be available for inspection at any reasonable time and location when requested by DHEC.

Mobile Food Units

» **Definition:** Fully enclosed mobile kitchens that may prepare, cook, or serve TCS food as an extension of the commissary.

» **Food:** Preparation of bulk food, including washing, slicing, peeling, and cutting must occur at the commissary.

» **Doors:** Must remain closed at all times.

» **Service Window:** Service opening(s) may be no more than 576 square inches, must be covered with a solid material, and must be screened, self-closing or covered by an air curtain.

» **Ventilation:** Mechanical exhaust equipment must be provided over all cooking equipment to effectively remove cooking grease, heat, vapors, etc.

Mobile Food Pushcarts

» **Definition:** Limited food service units that operate as a direct extension of a commissary.

» **Food:** All food preparation, including washing, slicing, peeling, cutting, and cooking must occur at the commissary.

» **Construction:** Preparation and display areas must be completely enclosed, unless located indoors or approved by DHEC to serve boiled/steamed, fully cooked hot dogs with fully cooked chili or ice cream.

Commissary

» **Definition:** A permitted retail food establishment authorized by DHEC to provide support of operations, storage, and a servicing area for mobile food units or mobile food pushcarts.