

General Requirements of Mobile Food Units

All mobile units must have a commissary kitchen. The commissary kitchen is an approved food establishment where food is stored, prepared, portioned or packaged to be served somewhere else. The mobile unit must return to the commissary kitchen each day. Use of a commissary kitchen outside of Snohomish County is not allowed.

The commissary kitchen must provide the following:

- Potable water
- Cooking equipment (as necessary)
- Mop sink
- Restrooms
- Three-compartment sink for dishwashing
- Garbage disposal (as necessary)
- Food preparation sinks (as necessary)
- Backup refrigeration (as necessary)

Mobile units must be clearly marked with the name of the food establishment in a location visible to customers.

All food, equipment, utensils, paper products, water tanks and cleaning supplies must be stored on the mobile food unit or in the commissary kitchen. No additional tables, storage or cooking equipment (smoker, barbeque) are allowed off the frame of the mobile food unit.

A garbage container must be provided for waste generated by the mobile food unit operation.

Mobile food units must maintain their mobility and return to the commissary kitchen daily for storage and cleaning. Alternative servicing locations may be allowed but must be approved in advance by Snohomish County Health Department.

Mechanical refrigeration is required for all food that must be kept cold. Food that must be kept cold for safety must be kept at 41°F or below. Thermometers must be visible in all refrigeration units. It is required to pre-chill refrigeration units prior to loading food.

An ice chest is allowed for storage of beverages that do not require refrigeration.

Equipment used to keep food hot must maintain at 135°F or above. Mechanical units are required, either powered by propane, electricity or generators. It is required to pre-heat hot holding units prior to loading food.

All potentially hazardous food that is kept hot must be served the same day. Cooling and reuse of leftover hot food is not allowed. Hot food must be discarded at the end of each day.

Barriers or dividers must be provided to separate customers from grills, steam tables and other hot or dangerous equipment.

Condiments must be served in single-service packages or squeeze bottles. If condiments are not available in single service packages or cannot be served in bottles, they may be served in bulk. Condiments served in bulk must be protected by a sneeze guard and must not require refrigeration.

All food must be protected from contamination. Work areas, food and single-service items must be protected from customer contamination by sneeze guards, dome lids or other approved means.

A handwash sink must be provided. The handwash sink basin size must be at least 10 inches x 10 inches x 5 inches deep.

Handwash sinks must be easily accessible and cannot be located underneath counters or in locations that make access difficult. If the sink is installed on a slide-out drawer it must be locked in an open position when food is prepared or served.

A hot water heater must be installed and able to provide hot water (100°F or above) to all sinks.

The water system must have a mechanical pump capable of pressurizing both the hot and cold water systems to 15 psi.

Fresh water tanks and all piping/tubing must be made of food grade materials.

Food grade hoses must be used to fill fresh water tanks.

The connection to the wastewater tank must be easy to connect/disconnect and must not leak.

All sink basins must have rounded corners to allow for easy cleaning.

The number of menu items may be restricted due to mobile food unit size limitations.

With the exception of freezers and ice chests, all equipment shall be listed by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) or equivalent for its intended use.



In addition to Snohomish County Health Department plan review and permitting requirements, there may be other permits you are required to have before opening your business. Please see the Agency Resource List.

- Local building officials may require you to apply for a “land use” permit for your sales site(s). Contact the city or jurisdiction where you want to place your mobile unit.
- Fire Department approval and permit is required if you will be using liquid propane, charcoal, wood or oil frying equipment.
- State and local business licenses are required.

Specific Requirements for Occupied Mobile Truck/Trailer

Food Establishments where operator will be inside the unit

The fresh water tank must provide sufficient water to wash, rinse and sanitize reused utensils and provide a minimum of 5 gallons of water for washing of hands.

The wastewater tank must have a capacity at least 15% larger than the fresh water tank. (For a 35-gallon tank, the wastewater tank capacity must be 42 gallons.)

The hot water heater must be large enough to completely fill two compartments of the 3-compartment sink with hot water (100°F) without the temperature dropping below 100°F.

If make-to-order items are on the menu, such as sandwiches, salads, or tacos, a food prep refrigerator is required.

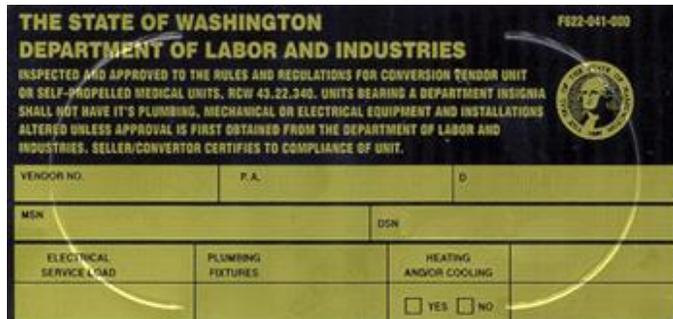
If fruits or vegetables, such as lettuce, tomato, onion, avocado, etc. are washed in the mobile unit, a commercial NSF approved sink is required. The sink must be stainless steel and be equipped with at least one drainboard. If food prep sinks are installed on the mobile unit, additional potable water supply and wastewater tank may be required.

A three-compartment sink with attached drainboards on both ends is required. The sink compartments should be large enough to submerge and wash all equipment used on the mobile truck. Attached drainboards should be the size of a sink compartment.

Cooking of raw meat is restricted to thin food such as hamburger patties. Cooking of raw meat thicker than 1 inch is prohibited.

Ventilation hoods are required for any cooking equipment that produces grease. If deep fryers are used, a tight fitting, heat resistant cover shall be locked in place for safe transport of hot grease.

Obtain Labor and Industries inspection and seal of approval prior to final inspection with the Health Department (black label affixed to the outside of the vehicle.) All occupied vehicles (commercial coaches, trucks, trailers) must obtain approval from Washington State Department of Labor and Industries. Labor and Industries regulations govern the safety of design and the installation of plumbing, heating and electrical equipment. Contact the Labor and Industries Plans Examiner at (360) 902-5222 for more information.



Labor and Industries does not determine the number or type of equipment you must install for food establishment approval. Please call (425) 339-5250 for a consultation with Snohomish County Health Department to determine your specific equipment needs.

Specific Requirements for Unoccupied Mobile Truck/Trailer

Food Establishments where operator will be outside the unit

The fresh water tank must be 5 gallons or larger. Buckets are not allowed.

The wastewater tank must be 6 gallons or 15% larger than the fresh water tank. Buckets are not allowed.

Raw meat or seafood is not permitted on an unoccupied mobile truck or trailer unless sold in unopened packages.

Specific Requirements for a Mobile Cart

Food Establishments that can be easily pushed by a single person to move between locations

The fresh water tank must be 5 gallons or larger. Buckets are not allowed.

The wastewater tank must be 6 gallons or 15% larger than the fresh water tank. Buckets are not allowed.

Juice extractors and blenders are not allowed.

Raw meat or seafood is not permitted on a mobile cart unless sold in unopened packages.

Reusable utensils (i.e., tongs, spoons, etc.) must be washed and sanitized at the commissary. Extra clean and sanitized utensils must be kept on the cart. A sanitary container for clean utensils and a separate container for soiled utensils must be provided.

Specific Requirements for Selling Only Pre-Packaged Food

Mobile unit that sells unopened commercially pre-packaged food items requiring temperature control

A handwash sink is not required on the mobile unit.

Sampling is not allowed.

