

MOBILE FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS

What you need to know before you start your food truck in Wisconsin

What is a mobile food establishment?

Mobile food establishments are defined by the Wisconsin Food Code as a moveable vehicle, push cart, trailer, or boat which periodically or continuously changes location.

What licenses are required?

A mobile food establishment requires two licenses:

- **Service Base License:** a permanent facility to accommodate the mobile food establishment for servicing, cleaning, inspection and maintenance
- **Mobile Food Establishment License:** mobile unit from which food is sold or served

*License types and fees will depend on the food activities conducted, refer to our handout “How to Determine a Restaurant Permit Category”

All mobile food establishments must...

- Return to its service base not less than once every 24 hours for servicing and maintenance. **Note: Ask your Licensing Specialist and/or Inspector if you might be exempt from this requirement.**
- Have equipment that is commercial grade.
- Have adequate non-hand operated hand wash facilities supplied with soap and single use toweling.
- Have adequate ventilation and fire extinguishing equipment.
- Have a properly air gapped, commercial grade food preparation sink, if food preparation is occurring on the unit .
- Have smooth, non-absorbent, and easy to clean surfaces.
- Have commercial approved utensil washing facilities if not conducted at the service base.

Push Carts

- Pushcarts are the simplest of all mobile units. They hold hot and/or cold foods that are for immediate service and conduct no food prep on the cart.
- Pushcarts are required to have adequate non-hand operated hand wash facilities supplied with soap and single use toweling. They also must utilize commercial grade equipment.
- Regardless of whether it has handles for pushing the cart or not, a pushcart that has a trailer hitch that allows the unit to be pulled by an automobile will be considered a full-scale mobile food establishment.



Need assistance?

Call us at **(608) 224-4720** or **(608) 224-4732**.
Leave a message and we will return your call.
E-mail us at datcpdfslicensing@wi.gov or
datcpfood@wi.gov.
Visit us at <https://datcp.wi.gov>.

Water Requirements

The mobile establishment must be equipped with a gravity or pressurized water storage tank that provides hot and cold water under pressure and is constructed of 14-gauge metal or other durable food grade material. Water tanks must also meet these requirements:

- **5 gallon** tank capacity for pushcarts to allow for employee handwashing
- **10 gallon** tank capacity for mobile food establishments that serve beverages or food, or reheat prepared foods to allow for employee handwashing
- **40 gallon** tank capacity for mobile food establishments that prepare food or beverages on the unit for employee handwashing and utensil washing

All mobile food establishments must have a waste storage tank that is at least 15% larger than the water supply tank and constructed of at least 14-gauge thick metal or another durable smooth surface material.

The water tanks must have a gauge that allows the operator to see the amount of water in the tank.

Service Base Requirements

- Must be an enclosed building of sufficient size to accommodate the mobile unit
- Approved water supply and hoses used for handling drinking water must be made of food grade material
- Equipped to properly dispose of liquid waste through the use of an approved septic system or through connection to a municipal sewer
- Must have commercial equipment for food preparation and storage
- Adequate non-hand operated handwashing facilities and commercial ware washing facilities must be provided when food preparation and utensil washing is conducted
- A properly air-gapped food preparation sink is required when food preparation is being conducted
- All surfaces must be smooth, non-absorbent, and easy to clean



Other Requirements

The operator of a mobile food establishment will need to arrange for use by personnel operating the establishment public or private toilet facilities during all hours of operation.

If bottled or liquefied gas is used in the mobile food establishment, the operator must have it securely installed according to Department of Safety and Professional Services rules . No mobile food establishment may be used for living for sleeping purposes or used for any non-food related business.

***This document is not an all-inclusive list of requirements. To obtain further information, see the Wisconsin Food Code or contact us.**



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