


# Mobile Food Facility

## Informational Packet

### INTRODUCTION



Mobile Food Facilities are a valuable resource for the community. They make a variety of tasty food conveniently available to the public. The Public Health Department wants to partner with Mobile Food Facilities to assure that the public is always served fresh and safe food from mobile carts and vehicles.

This informational packet has two parts. **Part One** describes requirements for Mobile Food Facilities. **Part Two** provides useful information for understanding some of the requirements and concepts referenced in Part One. When this is the case, reference to Part Two is indicated by the symbol .

### PART ONE. REQUIREMENTS

#### Plan Check and Initial Inspection


California Retail Food Code has specific requirements for the construction of Mobile Food Facilities, based on the type of food to be served and how it will be prepared and served at the facility. Therefore, our Environmental Health staff will assist you to assure the type and design of the mobile facility you choose will be appropriate and adequately designed for your intended use.

In addition to meeting California Retail Food Code standards, most Mobile Food Facilities must meet the California Department of Housing and Community Development standards. That agency may be contacted at by telephone at (919)-255-2501.



## Identification of Mobile Food Facility Category

Mobile Food Facilities fall into one of three different categories. The selection of category is based on the *type of food served* and *how the food is prepared*. Types of food that have a higher risk of causing foodborne illness and preparation practices that involve more handling of food have more extensive food safety requirements. This informational packet will frequently refer to Potentially Hazardous Food. These are foods that support bacterial growth and can cause foodborne illness.

Some foods, such as meats and dairy products are readily recognized by most people as “potentially hazardous.” Other foods, such as cut melons and cooked grains or vegetables are not so readily recognized as “potentially hazardous.” 

Because our food safety requirements for Mobile Food Facilities are based on the category of facility, it is important for you to know your facility’s category. Environmental Health staff will assist you in making this determination. The quick reference guide on the following page will also assist in this determination.

**Quick Reference Guide for Determining Facility Category**

Food Type or Process Description Taking Place at Mobile Facility	Category		
	1	2	3
Pre-packaged food	●	●	●
Whole seafood	●	●	●
Raw produce	●	●	●
Non-potentially hazardous beverage from approved bulk dispensing units	●	●	●
Limited preparation <sup>2</sup> on Mobile Food Facility		●	●
Steaming or boiling hot dogs		●	●
Preparing PHF or ingredients of PHF			●
<b>Examples of different Mobile Food Facilities in categories</b>			
Carts with candy bar and canned or bottled beverages	●		
Carts with pre-packaged frozen ice cream products	●		
Carts with pre-packed salads and sandwiches	●		
Carts with shaved ice		●	
Hot dog cart		●	
Popcorn cart		●	
Tamale cart (with Tamales in their original, inedible wrapper)		●	
Coffee and Espresso cart		●	
Taco trucks			●

 Additional explanation provided in **Part Two** of this Informational Packet

<sup>2</sup> Limited food preparation **may include** heating, frying, baking, roasting, popping, shaving of ice, blending, steaming or boiling of hot dogs, or assembly of non-prepackaged food. Limited food preparation **does NOT include** handling practices such as slicing or chopping (except on heated cooking surface), grinding, thawing, reheating potentially hazardous food for hot holding, hot holding of non-prepackaged potentially hazardous food, or cooking for later use

## Requirements Based on Facility Category

The following table summarizes the facility, equipment, operational, food worker hygiene, and safety requirements for each of the three categories of Mobile Food Facilities. Detailed, complete requirements are found in the California Retail Food Code that can be accessed on the Environmental Health webpage (see last page of this packet for the web address).

**Food Safety Requirements Based on Facility Category**

Food Safety Requirement	Category		
	1	2	3
<b>Facility Requirements</b>			
Permit to Operate from Butte County Environmental Health	●	●	●
Facility name clearly identified and labeled <sup>1</sup>	●	●	●
Facility constructed so as to be easily cleanable with smooth non-absorbent surfaces in good repair	●	●	●
Facility located within 200 feet of available toilet and hand washing facilities	●	●	●
Adequate preparation/counter space	●	●	●
Approved mechanical exhaust ventilation over all cooking equipment <sup>2</sup>	●	●	●
One compartment hand washing sink <sup>3</sup>	●	●	●
Overhead protection for areas of food preparation, storage, and display (including food compartments)	●	●	●
Hot water heater able to provide at least 1 gallon per minute and at least ½ gallon of water 100-104 <sup>0</sup> F for hand washing sink	●	●	●
Hot water heater minimum of 3 gallons or equivalent instantaneous heater able to provide adequate amount of water at 120 <sup>0</sup> F for utensil washing <sup>4</sup>	●	●	●
Utensil sink meeting following requirements: <sup>4</sup>	●	●	●
✓ Constructed of stainless steel with three compartments <sup>5</sup>	●	●	●
✓ Dual integral drain boards	●	●	●
✓ Sink is either integral to the unit or, for unenclosed Category 2 facilities where a utensil sink is required, the sink may be located in an adjacent auxiliary unit owned and operated by mobile facility owner	●	●	●
Fresh water tank requirements:	●	●	●
✓ Minimum of 5 gal. reserved for hand washing	●	●	●

<sup>1</sup> Include business name, city, state, zip, name of permit holder if different than business name on both sides of vehicle exterior; business name in at least 3 in high letters and other information in at least 1 in. high letters

<sup>2</sup> Must meet the current Uniform Mechanical Code and have been tested and approved by an official hood testing agency and comply with the testing agency's conditions of approval

<sup>3</sup> Sink must be at least 9 in. x 9 in. x 5 in. deep, separated from utensil sink (if provided) by 2 ft. or 6 in. splash guard

<sup>4</sup> Note: Some Category 2 Mobile Food Facilities may need a utensil sink, based on the type of food prepared and method of preparation. Contact our office to make this determination

<sup>5</sup> Each compartment needs to be at least 12 in. x 12 in. x 10 in. deep, or 10 in. x 14 in. x 10 in. deep and large enough for largest utensil

Food Safety Requirement	Category		
	1	2	3
✓ 20 gal. minimum capacity (of which 5 gal. is reserved for hand washing) if utensil washing is required at the mobile facility		●	
✓ 30 gal. minimum capacity (of which 5 gal. is reserved for hand washing)			●
✓ Protected inlet ¾ in. or less, located above tank overflow and constructed to prevent its use for any other purpose		●	●
✓ Drain outlet allowing the tank to be completely emptied		●	●
✓ Access port provided where possible		●	●
✓ Properly vented		●	●
✓ Mounted to the Mobile Food Facility		●	●
Wastewater tank requirements:			
✓ Wastewater tank at least 50% larger than fresh water tank		●	●
✓ Additional 33% storage capacity for ice bin <sup>1</sup>		●	●
✓ Additional 15% storage capacity for beverage dispenser		●	●
Full facility enclosure required			●
Minimum requirements for fully enclosed facilities: <sup>2</sup>			
✓ Facility approved by CA Dept. of Housing and Community Development HCD contact telephone number: (919)-255-2501			●
✓ Easily cleanable walls, floors, and ceilings			●
✓ Minimum aisle height 74 inches and width 30 inches			●
✓ Floors non-slip and with coving			●
✓ Service windows 216 sq. in. or less and spaced at least 18 in. apart			●
<b>Equipment Requirements</b>			
Adequate refrigeration for type and process of food preparation, storage, and display	●	●	●
Equipment in compliance with ANSI approved standard (i.e. NSF)	●	●	●
Equipment and utensils easily cleanable	●	●	●
Equipment located and spaced to be easily cleanable	●	●	●
Single-service utensils individually wrapped or dispensed in sanitary manner	●	●	●
Utensils handled and stored so as to be protected from contamination		●	●
Adequate commercial-grade storage refrigerator (if potentially hazardous food is cooked and cooled)			●
<b>Operational Requirements</b>			
Report to an approved Commissary each operating day	●	●	●
Food at end of day stored in Commissary, EXCEPT potentially hazardous food, held or displayed hot, not re-served to public after operating day	●	●	●
Food from an approved source, such as a commercial wholesale or retail facility	●	●	●
No food prepared or stored in private home	●	●	●

<sup>1</sup> Category One facilities with ice bin but no fresh water tank need to have a waste water tank equal to one-third the volume of the ice bin

<sup>2</sup> Requirements for fully enclosed facilities also apply to Category One and Two facilities that are fully enclosed.

Food Safety Requirement	Category		
	1	2	3
No smoking in the facility	●	●	●
Food protected from contamination during storage, transportation, and operation	●	●	●
Potentially hazardous food maintained at/ below 41 <sup>0</sup> F or at/above 135 <sup>0</sup> F <i>i</i>	●	●	●
Food protected from cross-contamination <i>i</i>	●	●	●
Food properly labeled	●	●	●
Chemical storage away from food and food preparation or storage areas. Poisonous chemicals plainly labeled in original container in separate enclosure.	●	●	●
Food condiments prepackaged or in approved dispenser when offered self-service	●	●	●
No food stored or served outside facility during operation other than packaged non-potentially hazardous food at Farmer's Market or Community Event	●	●	●
Food contact surfaces protected from contamination during storage, transportation, and operation	●	●	●
Trash collected and liquid waste drained into approved waste receptors	●	●	●
Operator of unenclosed facility has written operating procedures for food handling and cleaning and sanitizing equipment and food contact surfaces		●	
Potentially hazardous food cooked to proper temperature <i>i</i>		●	●
Unpackaged food handled in fully enclosed facility or within approved food compartments <sup>2</sup> having tight fitting closure		●	●
Cleanser and single service towels in dispenser at hand washing sink		●	●
<b>Food Worker Requirements</b>			
Food Manager and Food Handler Certification (see explanation in following section)	●	●	●
Food workers clothes clean	●	●	●
Proper hand washing techniques used by food workers <i>i</i>		●	●
<b>Safety Requirements</b>			
First aid kit	●	●	●
All equipment and utensils tightly covered and secured if facility operates at more than one location in day	●	●	●
Light bulbs and tubes completely enclosed in plastic safety shield	●	●	●
Second means of exit (if facility occupied), easily openable by hand, labeled "Safety Exit," and at least 2 ft. x 3 ft.		●	●
Minimum 10BC <sup>3</sup> fire extinguisher provided for heating and cooking equipment		●	●
Gas fired appliances insulated to prevent injury and heat build up		●	●

*i* Additional explanation provided in **Part Two** of this Informational Packet

<sup>2</sup> An additional food compartment is not required when adding ingredients to a beverage or dispensing into a serving container when the beverage is prepared for immediate service in response to an individual consumer order.

<sup>3</sup> Fire extinguishing capacity is rated in accordance with ANSI/UL 711: Rating and Fire Testing of Fire Extinguishers. The ratings are described using numbers preceding the class letter. The number preceding the B indicates the size of fire in square feet that an ordinary user should be able to extinguish. The letter C indicates that the extinguishing agent will not conduct electricity.

## Commissary Requirements

Mobile Food Facilities need to have a home base for overnight security, cleaning, restocking, storage of food, etc. Commissaries need to be approved by our office to assure they will adequately meet the needs of the mobile facility.

Commissaries for Category 1 Mobile Food Facilities that purchase all their pre-packaged food from a licensed retail or wholesale food facility need to be approved by our office to assure overnight security and periodic cleaning. It is the responsibility of the mobile facility owner and operator to assure that the Commissary location meets local zoning requirements.



Commissaries for Category 1 Mobile Food Facilities that process or prepare food at the Commissary, and all Category 2 Mobile Food Facilities, need a Commissary located at a commercial or semi-commercial kitchen or at a retail food facility permitted by our office. If potentially hazardous food is prepared in a Commissary, the Commissary must have a Commissary Permit from our office.

Commissaries for Category 3 Mobile Food Facilities need to be retail food facilities under permit by our office. Mobile facilities in this category must also obtain a Commissary Permit from our office so that we can make sure that the facility is adequate for the needs of the Category 3 Mobile Food Facility<sup>1</sup>.

## Food Manager Certification and Food Handler Card Requirements

Mobile Food Facilities need to be run by personnel who have a sound knowledge of food safety principles and practices. Food Manager Certification and Food Handler Cards are two ways to help assure that personnel have this knowledge.

Food Handler Cards (or Food Manager Certification as an alternative) is needed by all personnel of Category 1, 2, and 3 Mobile Food Facilities who prepare, package, or serve food. <sup>2</sup> In addition, whenever potentially hazardous food is prepared at a Commissary or at the mobile facility, at least one person involved in the operation needs to have Food Manager Certification.

<sup>1</sup> Exception: A Commissary Permit is NOT required when the owner/operator of the retail food facility is also the owner/operator of the Mobile Food Facility.

<sup>2</sup> Note: This requirement does not apply to personnel of Category 1 facilities that only serve commercially pre-packaged food obtained from licensed wholesale or retail providers.

## PART TWO. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### What is Potentially Hazardous Food?

Potentially Hazardous Food is a term used by food safety organizations to classify foods that require time-temperature control to keep them safe for human consumption.

#### Definition

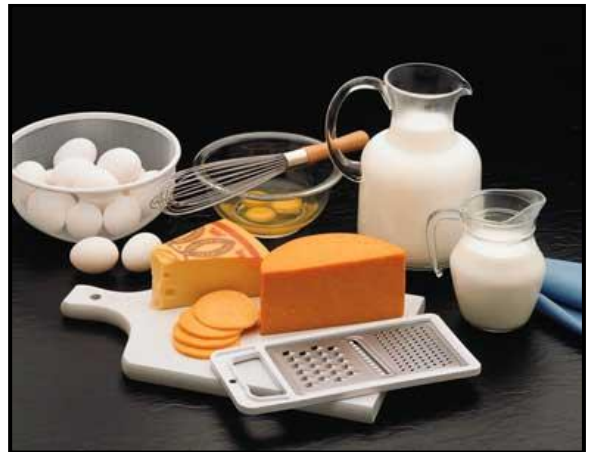
A potentially hazardous food means food that requires time or temperature control to limit the growth of microorganisms that can make people sick.

Some foods are widely known as potentially hazardous. Others are not so obvious but have been shown to be potentially hazardous by recent foodborne disease outbreaks.

#### Examples of Potentially Hazardous Foods

The US Food and Drug Administration Food Code identifies the following examples of potentially hazardous foods:

- Meat (beef, pork, lamb)
- Poultry (chicken, turkey, duck)
- Fish, shellfish, and crustaceans
- Eggs (except those treated to eliminate Salmonella)
- Milk and dairy products
- Heat-treated plant food (cooked rice, beans, or vegetables)
- Baked potatoes
- Mushrooms, raw sprouts,
- Cut melons and tomatoes
- Tofu and soy-protein foods
- Untreated garlic and oil mixtures



#### **Factors that contribute to foodborne illness:**

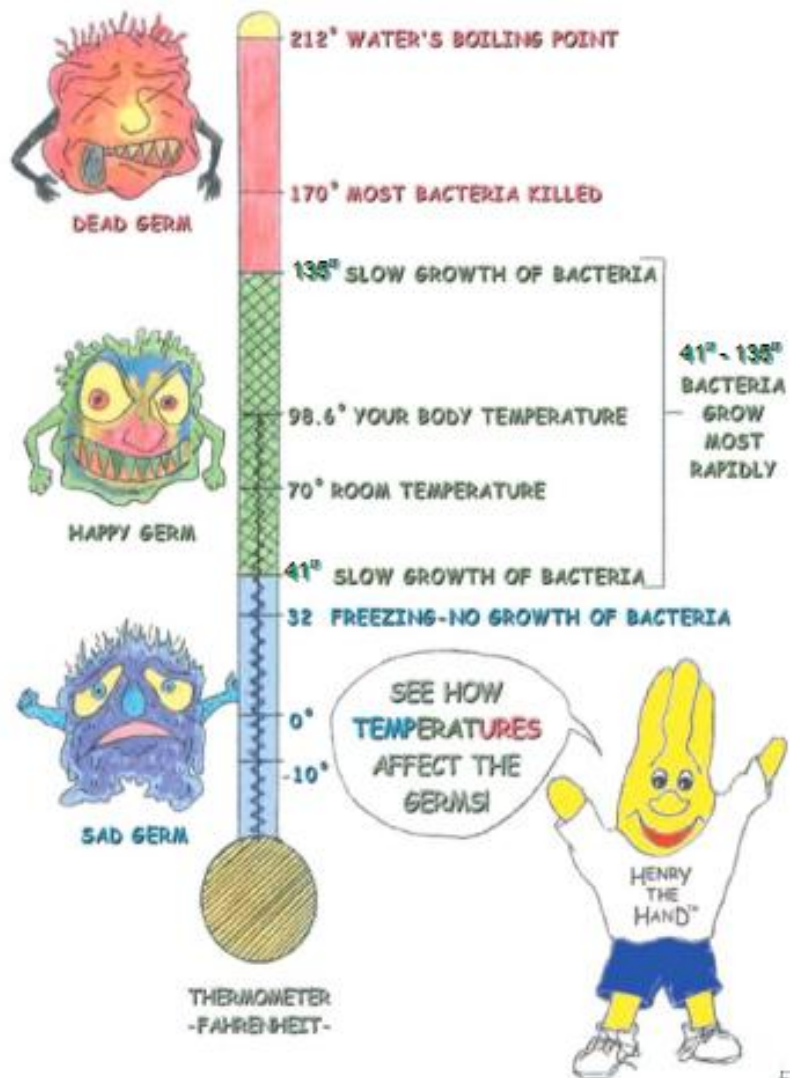
- Improper cooling of potentially hazardous foods
- 12 or more hours between preparation and sale of potentially hazardous food
- Improper holding temperature (hot or cold) of potentially hazardous food
- People who are ill or infected handling foods
- Contaminated raw food or ingredients
- Cross-contamination from raw to cooked or ready-to-eat foods
- Improper cleaning of equipment and utensils
- Inadequate cooking



## Temperature Control

Temperature control of potentially hazardous food is absolutely essential for preventing foodborne illness. Here are the key elements of temperature control for potentially hazardous food that need to be followed:

- In order to kill any harmful bacteria present on raw meats, fish eggs, and poultry, thoroughly cook these foods to bring the internal temperature to that which is shown in this chart
- Always hold **at or below 41°F** -or- **at or above 135°F**
- If held at or above 135°F during the day, discard the food at the end of the day



### Adequate Control Equipment

The equipment you use for cold holding and hot holding potentially hazardous foods needs to be adequate for the type and amount of food and for the ambient temperature where the facility is located.

Potentially hazardous food held hot needs to maintain an internal temperature at or above 135°F and potentially hazardous food held cold must be held at or below 41°F.

### Importance of Proper Thermometers



Temperature control to protect food safety requires accurate thermometers and vigilance by all those who are staffing the mobile food facility. Thermometers need to be located in each refrigerator and hot holding unit, and a metal stem thermometer (0-220°F or digital) needs to be available for checking hot and cold food temperatures.

	Internal Temp must be maintained	Time for at least
Whole Roasts, Corned Beef, Pork Roasts	145°	3 minutes
Shell eggs, fish, meat (including pork)	145°	15 seconds
Ground beef & pork products	155°	15 seconds
Poultry, ground poultry	165°	15 seconds
Stuffed foods or stuffings	165°	15 seconds

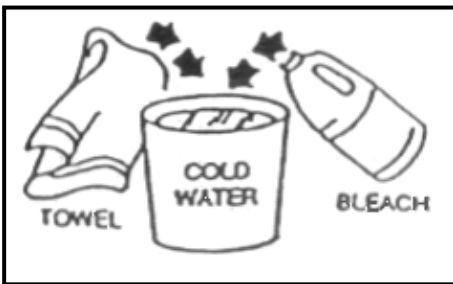
## Protecting Food from Contamination

### Cross-Contamination

Cooked foods and produce need to be stored and handled separately from raw beef, pork, fish, and poultry so they do not become exposed to harmful organisms that could cause foodborne illness.

Here are some helpful suggestions:

- Wash hands frequently as described in the following section of this Resource Guide.
- Wash utensils between uses or choose another safety option as described in the section on utensil washing in this Resource Guide.
- Use clean wiping cloths stored between uses in disinfectant solution to wipe food contact surfaces. **Avoid reusing wiping cloths that have been used to clean up blood or juices from raw meat!**



Cloths reused to clean and sanitize food contact surfaces need to be kept in a bucket of sanitizing solution. A common sanitizing solution is about 1 tablespoon of household bleach per gallon of water.

➤ Store raw meats, fish, eggs and poultry separate from produce and ready-to-eat foods. Store raw meats, fish, eggs and poultry below produce and ready-to-eat foods in refrigerators.



### Protection on Display

Foods need to be displayed in a manner that minimizes potential contamination from people who are walking by or purchasing food. In some cases, the food can be packaged or displayed in a manner that will minimize potential contamination and make use of food compartments unnecessary. Discuss alternatives available with our staff.

### Employee Health

Food handlers that are ill should be encouraged to stay at home and not serve food at the event, so that they do not pass their illness on to their customers.



The following are the most common organisms that cause foodborne illness:

- **Norovirus:** leading cause of foodborne illness in the United States. Found in food handled by food workers prepared with bare hands. Source is human feces.
- **Campylobacter jejuni:** found in dairy or poultry products.
- **E. coli O157:H7:** commonly found in undercooked beef, water, and unpasteurized juices and ciders.
- **Salmonella:** found in poultry or raw eggs.
- **Shigella:** found in ready-to-eat foods handled by ill food workers.
- **Listeria:** found in raw meat, processed meats, deli meats, seafood or dairy products.
- **Yersini enterocolitica:** found in undercooked pork, milk, or water.
- **Vibrio parahaemolyticus:** found in seafood and shellfish.
- **Hepatitis A virus:** found in foods handled by ill food workers prepared with bare hands.
- **Bacillus cereus:** found in beans, rice, and potatoes.
- **Cyclospora:** found in imported fruit.



## Hand Washing: Why and How?

Viruses and bacteria are invisible to the naked eye, but may be present on your hands if you do not wash them thoroughly. Hand washing with soap and water is the single most effective way to prevent the spread of bacteria and viruses, which are the major causes of foodborne illness.

Thorough hand washing (scrubbing with soap and warm water for 20 seconds) is needed:

- Upon entering mobile facility and prior to food preparation or service
- After using the restroom
- After breaks
- After sneezing or coughing
- After handling raw meats
- After handling garbage or chemicals

**Note:** Hand washing facilities must be separate from utensil washing facilities for Category 3 and Category 2 Mobile Food Facilities that involve potentially hazardous food.



### Information About Hand Sanitizers

Hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol have been shown to be effective in killing bacteria and some viruses on clean hands. However, use of hand sanitizers does not replace the need for frequent hand washing by food service employees.

The hands of foodworkers are often wet and may be contaminated with fatty material or with food high in proteins. The presence of water, food, fatty materials, animal feces, and blood on the hands can significantly reduce the effectiveness of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Norovirus, the leading cause of foodborne illness, is not killed by hand sanitizers.

## Utensil Washing Information

Mobile food facilities with food preparation and reusable preparation utensils need to have the ability to wash, rinse, and sanitize utensils that are used to prepare and serve the food. Utensil washing facilities should consist of a three compartment stainless steel sink with hot and cold running water from an adequate approved source and shall drain to a holding tank. Discuss with staff whether taking extra utensils to be washed at the end of the day or disposable utensils for single-service use would be acceptable alternatives.



**Step 1:** Wash in soapy water

**Step 2:** Rinse in clear water

**Step 3:** Soak for 60 seconds in sanitizing solution

**Step 4:** Air dry

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information about Mobile Food Facility requirements, please feel free to contact Butte County Environmental Health, Consumer Protection Program:

**Butte County Public Health Department, Environmental Health Division**

**202 Mira Loma Drive, Oroville CA 95965**

**Office Telephone: (530) 538-7281**

**Kim Haas, Senior Environmental Health Specialist: [khaas@buttecounty.net](mailto:khaas@buttecounty.net)**

**<http://www.buttecounty.net/publichealth/environmental/environmental.html>**