

Mobile Food Vending Units

FOOD HANDLING PERMIT

Before starting the operation of a mobile food vending unit, outside of a special event, the operator must hold a valid food handling permit issued by Alberta Health Services.

DEFINITIONS

Mobile Food Vendor Decal

A permanent sticker issued to the mobile food vending unit by Alberta Health Services which displays an identification number.

Handle

In relation to food, the supply, sale, offering for sale, processing, preparation, packaging, providing, display, service, dispensing, storage or transportation of any food that is intended for public consumption.

Approved Food Establishment

Means a food establishment that has a food handling permit issued by Alberta Health Services.

High-risk Food

Means a food with a pH level or a water activity level, or a combination of pH and water activity levels, that will support the growth of pathogenic micro-organisms or the production of their toxins.

Low-risk Food

Means a food with a pH level or a water activity level, or a combination of pH and water activity levels, that generally will not support the growth of pathogenic micro-organisms or the production of their toxins;

Minimal Food Handling

Includes the handling of low-risk and high-risk foods where there is no direct contact with specified food products. Examples include handling of pre-packaged foods, hot dogs, pastries, and fries (which can be handled with utensils only), and the dispensing of beverages (including smoothies, coffee, and other specialty drinks).

Limited Food Handling

Includes the cooking, reheating and assembly of both low-risk and high-risk foods where:

- food handling involves up to two (2) temperature changes (e.g. from cold to hot then kept hot) including most foods from fast food establishments
- the facility has a limited menu
- many food products have been prepared ahead of time off-site
- it involves the repetitive assembly of food products that have been prepared ahead of time

- there is little direct contact from food handlers
- the preparation and handling is for single meal service

Extensive Food Handling

Includes thawing, portioning, cooking, cooling and re-heating, etc. of both high-risk and low-risk foods. This handling may involve:

- up to three (3) or more temperature changes (e.g. from cold to hot, then chilled, then reheated, etc.) and the cooking and portioning dozens of servings of high-risk food
- preparation of large quantities of high-risk food for buffets which includes frequent handling of raw high-risk foods of animal origin (meat, poultry, or seafood)
- frequent direct bare-hand contact during food preparation

Base of Operation:

An approved food establishment where the food preparation, food storage and cleaning for the mobile food vending unit are carried out.

Fruit / Vegetable Hawker:

Means a vendor selling whole, raw fruits and vegetables only.

Special Event:

Means an event open to and where food is made available to the general public that operates for not more than 15 days within a calendar year in any one health zone and includes, without limitation, fairs, festivals, exhibitions, promotional events and carnivals.

TYPES OF MOBILE VENDING UNITS

Type A - Mobile Food Vending Unit:

Means a mobile unit where only pre-packaged foods are sold and coffee is dispensed. This includes mobile sandwich vendors.

Type B - Mobile Food Vending Unit:

Means a mobile unit that must operate from a base of operation. A Type B mobile is approved for:

- pre-packaged low-risk and high-risk foods
- minimal to limited handling of low-risk foods (e.g. popcorn, nachos, mini-donuts, beverages), pre-made beverages and cappuccino
- dispensing of soft serve ice cream, gelato or similar product , pre-made beverages and cappuccino
- the minimal handling of certain high-risk foods restricted to cooking / heating and serving of foods with sufficient bacterial inhibitory ingredients (i.e. salt, food additives, low water activity, low pH, high lactic acid bacteria) to inhibit the growth of pathogenic bacteria. This would include food such as hot dogs and smokies but NOT other pre-cooked foods (e.g. hamburgers, chicken) that have no inhibitory ingredients.

Type C – Mobile Food Vending Unit:

Means a mobile unit that operates from an approved base of operation and is approved for minimal and limited food handling of low-risk foods and high-risk foods that have been pre-cooked / prepared at the approved base of operation, or from another approved source.

Type D - Mobile Food Vending Unit:

Means a mobile unit that is self-contained (i.e. does not have a base of operation) and does minimal handling of low-risk and most high-risk foods. A Type D mobile is restricted from handling raw meat products (e.g. beef, chicken, fish, etc.).

Type E – Mobile Food Vending Unit:

Means a mobile unit that is self-contained and is approved for minimal to extensive food handling of any type of food.

Type F - Mobile Food Hawker:

Means a food vending mobile unit from which primal cuts of meat, whole fish or seafood are sold. Type F mobiles require permitting.

OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Plans

Owners of mobile units must submit plans showing the layout of all equipment, plumbing design and construction details for approval by Alberta Health Services before construction and equipping of a new mobile unit.

Mobile Food Vendor Decal

Each mobile food vending unit will be issued an identifying decal. This decal is to be affixed to the mobile unit in a visible location.

Food Handling Permit

Each mobile food vending unit will be issued a Food Handling Permit. This permit is also to be displayed on the mobile unit in a visible location.

Base of Operations

1. A designated area (e.g. house, warehouse, food establishment) used for the storage of food products, minor processing of food products (e.g. condiments), cleaning and sanitizing of equipment, storage and maintenance of the mobile, must meet the following:
 - The area has been approved for the intended use by Alberta Health Services.
 - It is equipped with mechanical refrigeration and other food preparation equipment for the intended processing as required by Alberta Health Services.
 - Walls and ceiling are smooth, washable and non-absorbent (e.g. painted drywall or gyproc).
 - All light fixtures have protective covers.
 - Floors are smooth, washable and non-absorbent (e.g. vinyl asbestos tiles, linoleum or sealed concrete).
 - A non-corroding metal two-compartment sink is installed with hot and cold running water.
 - Cleaning areas are separate from storage/processing areas.

Garages are acceptable provided the facilities meet the above requirements and are physically separated from the rest of the garage and its contents. Storage in a garage may not need to be in a completely separate room as long as the storage compartment (cupboard, freezer, etc.) protects the food from contamination.

2. Where a base of operation is not used for the storage of the mobile unit, storage must comply with one of the following:
 - No structure / location is required for outside storage when the mobile unit (trailer style) is enclosed with floors, walls and a ceiling.
 - A garage or shed type structure is used for the storage of the cart(s). If the garage / shed is used for any other purpose, then the cart must also be covered to protect it from contamination from the other uses.
 - Washable and waterproof cover (e.g. vinyl or similar material) is fitted over the entire cart.

Plumbing / Base of Operation:

Table 1: Sinks, Water Supply and Base of Operation

Mobile Unit Type	Food Handling Examples	Number of Sinks	Minimum Water Volume (litres)	Base of Operation
A	Carts with pre-packaged foods, coffee trucks, mobile packaged sandwich vendors	0	0	No
B	Beverage, popcorn, or hot dog carts	1	20	Yes
C	Dependant mobile serving high-risk foods prepared at an approved base	2	75	Yes
D	Independent mobile doing minimal food handling (scooping ice cream, serving pizza)	2	75 (130 if dipper well in use)	No
E	Food preparation involving any type of food and any level of food handling (no reuseable customer utensils)	3 (one hand washing sink and two dishwashing sinks)	130	No
F	Pre-portioned primal cuts and whole gutted fish	0	0	No

1. Number of sinks and water volumes for all mobile units must comply with Table 1.
2. All dishwashing sinks must be made of non-corrodible metal of sufficient size and volume needed for the washing and sanitizing of serving and cooking utensils and equipment, for food preparation and for general cleaning of the unit. No sink shall be smaller than 25 cm x 25 cm x 14 cm deep.
3. Every dishwashing sink must be equipped with a drain plug or similar device that enables compartments to be filled with water.
4. Fresh water holding tanks must be filled with potable water from an approved source.

5. Samples of water used for food preparation or handwashing must be collected from the mobile unit's faucets. Submit the water samples to the provincial laboratory for analysis at a minimum:
 - Municipal Water Supply - sample before initial operation for the season or if in continuous operation throughout the year, sample once a year.
 - Private Water Supply (Well) – sample before initial operation for the season or if in continuous operation throughout the year, sample once a month.
6. Pressure for all faucets other than a hand sink must not be from gravity feed.
7. The entire water supply must be immediately available (i.e. drawn from a single source without needing to switch tanks).
8. All Types B, C, D and E food vending mobile units must be equipped with a hot water heater or similar device that provides active heating of the hot water supply.
9. Hoses or water lines that connect the potable water supply to the plumbing fixtures must be made of food grade material.
10. The faucets on all sinks must be provided with potable running water at suitable temperature and pressure.
11. For mobile units that intend to run during winter months, adequate steps must be taken to ensure that water supplies will not freeze up during cold weather.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

1. A mobile food vending unit must be a permanently assembled / affixed / built facility unless the operator can demonstrate that all necessary components of the unit can and will be properly assembled at a defined location each time the unit operates.
2. When present, the walls, floors and ceilings shall have a smooth, non-absorbent, washable finish.
3. There should be a reasonable separation between the driver area and the kitchen. This may be a solid wall or door, or adequate space.
4. All openings, including service windows, should be fitted with screens in enclosed food vending units, like food trucks and trailers.
5. Adequate storage space shall be provided on the unit for dry goods and low-risk foods.
6. All cupboards, shelving and counters shall be constructed to allow easy cleaning.
7. All light fixtures shall have protective covers.

HANDWASHING BASINS

1. Temporary handwashing basins are not allowed on a mobile food vending unit. All handwashing basins shall be connected to the central plumbing and wastewater system of the mobile unit.
2. Water supplied to a handwashing basin must be at a temperature between 30°C and 45°C.
3. Handwashing basins must be readily accessible to employees and located in every area where food is prepared or processed.
4. Handwashing basins must be supplied with hand soap and single-use towels in suitable dispensers.
5. The handwashing faucet must allow for both hands to be washed at the same time in the stream of water.

SEWER SYSTEM

1. The wastewater tank must be enclosed and should be 10% larger than the total water supply volume.
2. If the wastewater holding tank within a mobile food vending vehicle cannot be removed, there must be a drain in the tank suitably located to allow for easy draining into a sanitary sewer.
3. Wastewater shall be disposed into an approved sanitary sewer.
4. Operators of a stationary food vending unit or mobile unit operating from a fixed location shall use a method for managing, removing, and disposing wastewater that is approved by Alberta Health Services.

DIPPER WELLS

1. All mobile food vending units, where frozen dairy or dairy substitute products are scooped, shall be equipped with an adequate number of dipper wells. Alternatively, if the owner receives approval from Alberta Health Services, scoops can be:
 - cleaned and sanitized after each use, or
 - immediately returned into the product container after each use, provided neither the food nor the scoop becomes contaminated. Each product is required to have a separate scoop.
2. The dipper well must be connected to a continuously running approved potable water supply during the mobile unit's operating hours and at a rate that will ensure adequate rinsing of the scoop.
3. Operations using a dipper well must have a potable water supply of at least 130 litres.

VENTILATION

1. Every enclosed mobile food vending unit used for deep frying or where extensive grease is produced during cooking must have a properly operating ventilation system. This ventilation system must be equipped with a hood, fan and filters to remove odours, fumes, steam, vapour, smoke or excess heat.
2. Every ventilation filter must be easy to remove to allow for cleaning and replacement or designed to be cleaned in place.

FOOD PREPARATION AND PROTECTION

1. All foods must be protected from contamination at all times.
2. Cooking or barbecuing outside of an enclosed mobile unit is allowed when the outside preparation area is immediately adjacent to a handwashing basin and is approved by Alberta Health Services .
3. Food and utensils must be stored off the floor.
4. Sandwiches, hot dogs, submarines, pizzas, salads and other portioned, pre-packaged, high-risk foods must be packaged in food grade material and clearly marked with the date and place of preparation.

5. Condiments must be individual packages, dispensed from a squeeze or pump container or from a container with a self-closing lid.
6. Only single-use customer utensils may be provided unless Alberta Health Services approves the alternative.

MEAT OR FISH SOLD BY A HAWKER

1. Food shall not be sold in **self-serve** bulk form.
2. Oysters and any other shellfish may be sold in bulk form if protection is provided by natural shells.
3. Food products offered for sale must:
 - Not be processed or packaged on or about the vehicle.
 - Be pre-wrapped with a food grade packaging material and processed in a permitted establishment.
 - Be obtained from approved sources and must be properly labeled. This can be achieved by either labeling the product itself, using labeled bags or supplying business cards with each purchase. Information should include the name of the business, address and telephone number.

FOOD SOURCE

1. All foods including ice must be from approved sources.
2. Where foods require pre-cooking, processing or other forms of preparation before storing on the mobile unit, the work must only be conducted in approved food premises.
3. An operator must keep receipts or purchase records showing the date and place where the food was supplied.

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

1. If high-risk foods are sold or stored on a food vending mobile unit, the mobile unit must have facilities to maintain these foods at 4°C or colder or at 60°C or warmer.
2. All refrigeration equipment must be equipped with individual thermometers.
3. A probe thermometer must be provided and used to monitor cooking and hot holding temperatures.
4. All mobile units selling already prepared high-risk hot foods must receive the foods hot or have a means to heat the food to 74°C before hot holding.

CLEANING AND SANITIZING

1. After being cleaned and rinsed, all food equipment must be sanitized using one of the following:
 - Clean water at a temperature of not less than 77°C. Sinks meant for sanitizing with hot water will have a properly installed heating element.
 - A solution containing between 100 ppm and 200 ppm available chlorine (2mL - 4mL or 1/2 tsp. - 1 tsp. household bleach per litre of water).
 - A solution containing 200 ppm quaternary ammonium.
 - A solution containing at least 12.5 ppm available iodine at a temperature of less than 45°C (Iodine solutions are most effective between 20°C and 45°C).
2. Dishes and utensils must be allowed to air dry after being cleaned and sanitized.

FOOD HANDLERS

Table 2: Food Handler Training

Type	Types of Foods	Operator
A	Coffee and packaged foods	None
B,C, D, & E	Handling high-risk foods	Requirements of Section 31, Food Regulation
F	Whole primal cuts and fish	None

1. Operators of mobile food vending units must successfully complete food handler training as shown in Table 2.
2. It is recommended that any food handling staff who work the unit alone and are subsequently in care and control of the operation complete a food handler training as shown in Table 2.
3. A food handler while engaged in food handling shall be clean, free from infected sores or wounds, wear only clean clothing, refrain from chewing or smoking tobacco and keep hair effectively under control.
4. A food handler must wash hands after activities such as taking a break, using the washroom, sneezing, handling soiled articles and before resuming food service activities or food handling.

GARBAGE

1. Every mobile food vending unit must have adequate garbage containers.
2. Garbage must be managed properly by keeping it in suitable containers and removing it often to prevent foul odours and conditions that attract insects or other pests.
3. All waste must be disposed of in an approved manner.

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE VENDORS

Fruit / Vegetable vendors do not require a permit or inspection.

For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health office.

Edmonton Main Office
Calgary Main Office
Lethbridge Office

780-735-1800
403-943-2295
403-388-6689

Grande Prairie Main Office
Red Deer Main Office

www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph.asp

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