

APPOINTMENT DATE



DEPARTMENT OF BUILDING
AND ZONING SERVICES



2026

Mobile Food Vending Inspection Guidelines

Columbus Fire

City of Columbus Department of Health

City of Columbus License Section



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 THE CITY OF COLUMBUS DIVISION OF FIRE	Code Compliance Guideline	
	MFV Safety Inspection Requirements	
	Fire Prevention Bureau 3639 Parsons Ave Columbus, Ohio 43207 (614)645-7641 Ext. 7-5604 www.columbus.gov	Issued: 4/20/2020
		Revised:1/14/2026
	Permit Required	

COLUMBUS FIRE DIVISION WILL NOT DO A SAFETY INSPECTION FOR LICENSURE ON ANY MOBILE FOOD UNIT NOT MEETING THE FOLLOWING MINIMUM CRITERIA LISTED BELOW.

- ☐ All Mobile Food Vending Units must arrive ready for operation with propane tanks.
- ☐ All systems must be prepared to demonstrate: cooking, electrical, and ventilation.
- ☐ Propane Pressure Leak Test completed within one year of the date of license renewal.
- ☐ Carbon Monoxide Detector - Battery Backup preferable.
- ☐ Hand-held UL listed Flammable Gas Leak Detector.
- ☐ 1-5lb ABC Dry Chemical Portable Fire Extinguisher. (906.2 OFC)
- ☐ 1-1.6Gal / 6L Class K Extinguisher is required for Units cooking with solid fuels, vegetable oils and fats, and animal oils and fats. (904.12.5.1 OFC)
- ☐ All hood systems require 1 annual inspection/cleaned per calendar year.
- ☐ Suppression System: **vehicles manufactured or initially titled on or after May 1 2026**

ALL EXTINGUISHERS MUST HAVE A CURRENT (WITHIN 12 MONTHS) INSPECTION TAG WITHIN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



Mobile Food Unit Checklist

* A check mark in any box that is not shaded green may indicate a violation of the Ohio Fire Code (unless the condition is not applicable).

All Mobile Food Units	Yes*	No	N/A
Carbon Monoxide detection			
Is there at least one carbon monoxide detection device in the unit? (except where no CO is produced)			
Portable Fire Extinguishers			
Is there at least one 5# ABC portable fire extinguisher in the unit? (except open air hand propelled carts)			
Is the extinguisher readily accessible by unit operator?			
Was each fire extinguisher installed and is it being maintained in accordance with OFC sec. 906?			
Electrical Equipment and Wiring			
Is all electrical equipment and wiring in the mobile food unit installed per NFPA 70 (2017)?			
No Smoking Signs (no smoking in unit) (no smoking w/ 10' of unit if there is a fuel source other than vehicle fuel tank)			
Are "no smoking" signs conspicuously posted inside the mobile food unit?			
If compressed gas is stored or kept, are there also "no smoking" signs posted outside the unit in the vicinity of every location where the gas is stored or kept?			
Generators			
Is the generator being fueled while the mobile food unit is in operation?			
Is the generator being fueled while the generator is in use?			
Is the generator turned off and the surface temperature of both the engine and the fuel tank being cooled to below the autoignition temperature of the fuel before the generator is being fueled?			
Is the generator being operated, used or fuel within the occupant space of the mobile food unit?			
Not Obstructing Fire Protection Equipment			
Does the mobile food unit block fire lanes?			
Does the mobile food unit block fire hydrants?			
Does the mobile food unit block other fire protection equipment?			
Separation Distances (for units with a generator or fuel source other than the vehicle fuel tank)			
Is the mobile food unit separated from other mobile food units by a clear space distance of 3 feet ? (not including awnings and other appurtenances)			
Is the mobile food unit separated from entrances and other exits of buildings or structures by a clear space distance of 10 feet ? (not including awnings and other appurtenances)			
Is the mobile food unit separated from combustible materials by a clear space distance of 10 feet ? (not including awnings and other appurtenances)			
Mobile Food Units with Commercial Cooking Equipment			
Portable Fire Extinguishers			
If the unit uses cooking equipment that involves vegetable or animal oils and fats, is there at least one Class K portable fire extinguisher in the unit? (in addition to the one 5-pound ABC extinguisher)			
Was each fire extinguisher installed and is it being maintained in accordance with OFC sec. 906?			
Egress			
Are there at least 2 means of egress in the unit?			
Are the means of egress remotely located from each other?			
Are the means of egress at least 5.7 square feet?			
Mobile Food Units with LP-Gas			
If LP-Gas equipment is being used while unit is in transit, is the equipment designed for operation while in transit (ex: cargo heater) and does the equipment have a mechanism in place to stop fuel flow in the event of a line break (ex: excess flow valve)?			
Emergency Shut-off Controls			
Does the mobile food unit have marked exterior emergency shut off controls?			
Are the controls readily distinguishable and accessible?			
Do the controls have a quarter-turn manual gas ball valve?			
Do the controls have permanent signage mounted at the location of the controls that states: "EMERGENCY GAS SHUT-OFF VALVE"?			
Is the signage clearly visible and unobscured?			

Is the signage weather resistant and of contrasting colors?			
Is the signage readable from a distance of 25 feet?			
LP-Gas Storage, Use and Handling (See also OFC Rules 53, 57, 58, 61)			
Containers			
Are only certified ASME or DOTn mobile LP-Gas containers being used?			
Do all LP-Gas containers installed in the enclosed spaces of the mobile food unit have a maximum allowable working pressure of 312 psi (2.2 MPag) or higher?			
Do all LP-Gas containers installed on the exterior of the mobile food unit have a maximum allowable working pressure of 250 psi (1.7 MPag) or higher?			
Are all propane tanks kept in a secure manner?			
Is the maximum aggregate capacity of all LP-Gas containers in the mobile food unit 200-gallons aggregate water capacity or less?			
Location and Installation			
Are all LP-Gas supply systems installed either outside the vehicle or in a recess or cabinet?			
If in a recess or cabinet, is the recess or cabinet vapor tight to the inside of the vehicle but accessible from and vented to the outside?			
If in a recess or cabinet, are there also vents located near the top and bottom of the enclosure and 3 feet horizontally away from any opening into the vehicle?			
Unless they have been removed during operation activities, are LP-Gas containers securely mounted on the vehicle or within an enclosing recess or cabinet?			
If LP-Gas containers have been removed during operation activities, are all propane tanks secured to a stationary object or otherwise securely stabilized to prevent movement, overturn and damage?			
Are LP-Gas containers secured with non-combustible material or devices?			
Are cylinders located in such a manner as to minimize exposure to excessive temperature rises, physical damage, and/or tampering?			
If propane tanks are mounted to the rear of the vehicle, are they mounted with a minimum 30-inch clearance from the bottom of the tank to the ground?			
Are LP-Gas containers installed on the roof of a mobile food unit? (they cannot be)			
If LP-Gas containers are mounted within the vehicle housing, is the housing secure to the vehicle and are all removable parts of the housing secured to the housing while the mobile food unit is in transit?			
Are all LP-Gas container valves, appurtenances, and connections protected to prevent damage from accidental contact with stationary objects, loose object, stones, mud, and/or ice?			
Are all LP-Gas container valves, appurtenances, and connections protected from damage due to overturn or similar vehicular accident?			
Do LP-Gas cylinders have permanent protection for cylinder valves and connections?			
If LP-Gas cylinders are located on the outside of a mobile food unit, is weather protection provided?			
Are all devices or materials used to secure an LP-Gas container made of non-combustible material?			
Piping and Connectors			
Is all piping installed per NPFA 58 (2014), section 6.9.3?			
Does all steel tubing have a minimum wall thickness of 1.2 mm?			
Is a flexible connector installed between any regulator outlet and the fixed piping system (to protect against expansion, contraction, jarring, and vibration strains)?			
Is flexibility provided between cylinders and the gas piping system or regulator?			
Are flexible connectors installed in accordance with NFPA 58 (2014), section 6.9.6?			
Are flexible connectors that are installed between apparatus and the piping system installed in accordance with ANSI Z21-69-2015/CSA 6.6-2015?			
If there are any flexible connectors that are longer than the length allowed in the OFC, have they been approved?			
If there are any fuel lines that incorporate hose, have they been approved?			
Are fixed piping systems designed, installed, supported, secured in such a manner as to minimize the possibility of damage due to vibration, strains, or wear, and in such a manner to preclude loosening while in transit?			
Is piping installed in a protected location?			
Is piping fastened or does it have other protection to prevent damage due to vibration or abrasion?			
Is a rubber grommet or equivalent protection installed to prevent chafing at each point where piping passes through sheet metal or a structural member?			
Do isolated sections of liquid piping have hydrostatic relief valves and are they installed in accordance with NPFA 58 (2014), section 6.13?			
Have all piping systems (including hose) been pressure tested and proven free of leaks in accordance with NPFA 58 (2014), section 6.14?			



CODE COMPLIANCE GUIDELINE

Mobile Food Vending Unit Safety Inspection

Below are guidelines to be used for the Columbus Division of Fire (CFD) portion of the Mobile Food Vending Unit safety inspections. This list does not cover every possible item that will be inspected, nor does meeting all the guidelines listed below guarantee that a unit will pass inspection.

The CFD inspection is an operational safety inspection only of the MFVU on the date that it is inspected. It is not an approval of the MFVU's design, construction, road worthiness or an indication of the long term safety of its combined elements. CFD reserves the right to modify these guidelines as needed. Additional MFVU CFD Information can be found at: [Columbus Mobile Food Vendor](#)

It is advised that all electrical, ventilation and propane/natural gas piping, tanks, fittings, appliances and systems be constructed and installed by licensed bonded professionals in accordance with NFPA, DOT and Ohio Fire Code standards.

All Mobile Food Vendor inspections are conducted at 4252 Groves Rd by appointment only after **passing** a Propane Pressure Leak Test and Health Inspection by calling Licensing at 614-645-8366.

Units must arrive ready for operation. All systems may be required to be demonstrated: cooking, electrical, and ventilation.

Appropriate Paperwork:

- Fire Inspection form issued by License Bureau with truck/trailer identification information; e.g. (VIN, SN or manufacturer ID, License Plate).

This form will be received from the Safety License Section as part of the application process.

Propane:

- Propane/natural gas piping must be constructed and installed in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. Propane/natural gas lines that are routed beneath an MFVU must be constructed with rigid pipe. Includes piping to LP generators.
- Any propane/natural gas line that penetrates a wall/partition must be constructed of rigid piping.
- Any propane/natural gas line/connector that it is not easily identifiable as to its construction or type will not be allowed and the burden of proof that it is being used according to manufacturer's recommendations will be on the MFVU owner.
- All propane tanks DOT approved (within re-qualification date) not to exceed 200lb total for all tanks. Painting of tanks that obscure tank manufacturing or qualification information will not be approved.

- All tanks securely mounted with metal to exterior of vehicle.
- Rear mounted tanks at least 30" above ground to bottom of tank.
- No quick disconnects on any exterior propane tanks (quick disconnects on chassis mounted tanks may be allowed).
- No copper lines connected to LPG tanks.
- Rubber propane hose from regulator to tank to be stamped "Approved for LP Gas 350 psi".
- Movable-grade, braided, PVC-coated, 304 stainless steel commercial gas connector designed for use with movable equipment and caster-mounted equipment that is moved on a regular basis for cleaning and repair. Movable equipment is defined in ANSI Standard Z21.69/CSA 6.16 as gas utilization equipment that may be counted on casters or otherwise be subject to movement.
- A daily propane system leak check should be performed prior to putting the unit into service and after any movement of the vehicle and after movement/change or addition of any gas fed appliance. These leak checks shall be performed with a hand-held listed flammable gas leak detector.
- Exterior emergency shut off sufficient to stop the supply from all propane/natural gas tanks. Required emergency shut off sign.

Extinguishers:

- All units will have at least (1) 2A:40 B-C rated extinguisher (1A:20B-C for pushcarts).
- Any unit using a deep fryer electric or gas will, in addition to the above extinguisher, have at least (1) 6L type "K" wet chemical extinguisher.
- Fire extinguishers shall bear a current inspection tag validated within the past twelve months OR a receipt of purchase within the last 12 months shall be available for inspection.

Truck/Trailer Ventilation:

- It is recommended that any unit using an appliance that produces grease laden vapors should have a Type 1 hood system installed.
- Hood systems shall be of commercial grade: inspected, cleaned and maintained per the Ohio Fire Code.
- All trucks/trailers must be equipped with a working adequate ventilation system. Small - trailers will be evaluated for adequate ventilation on a case by case basis.
- Units with deep fryers (electrical/propane/natural gas) must have a commercial/restaurant grade hood system.

Cooking Appliances:

- All cooking appliances must be listed by Underwriters Laboratories or NSF International for mobile applications for the appropriate fuel and be clearly marked with the appropriate rating sticker.
- All deep-fat fryers shall be installed with at least a 16 in. space between the fryer and surface flames from adjacent cooking equipment. Where a steel or tempered glass baffle plate is installed at a minimum 8 in. in height between the fryer and surface flames of the adjacent appliance, the requirement for a 16 in. space shall not apply.

- Movement of appliances with casters shall be limited by a restraining device installed in accordance with the connector and appliance manufacturer's installation instructions.

Detection Systems:

- All food trucks/trailers must be equipped with a working UL listed carbon monoxide detector suitable for commercial use.
- All food trucks/trailers/push carts must have a hand-held listed flammable gas leak detector.

Signage:

- Signs shall be clearly visible and of contrasting colors and shall be readable from a distance of 25 feet.
- Signs shall indicate type of fuel present (1) "PROPANE" (2) "NO SMOKING" (3) "EMERGENCY SHUT OFF".

Electrical:

- All wiring should meet commercial restaurant standards/NFPA 70.
- No exposed wiring.

Egress/Exits:

- Egress/exits must be adequate and unencumbered by storage, appliances or design.

Generators:

- Must be safely mounted as not to extend into the public right of way.
- Must be securely mounted.
- Must be mounted so as not to impact propane/natural gas systems.

Suppression System: vehicles manufactured or initially titled on or after May 1 2026

- Protected by an automatic fire extinguishing system that is listed, labeled, installed and maintained in accordance with this section and Section 904.13.

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Health Inspection Checklist for MFV Licensing Event

- ☐ Adequate hot and cold water supply, under pressure, must be available during inspection and at all times of operation.
- ☐ Backflow prevention device must be provided, if not a self-contained plumbing system - model number ASSE 1012 or 1024.
- ☐ Waste water tank must be provided and be at least 15% larger than fresh water tank.
- ☐ Mobile must have all commercial equipment, that is powered on and holding proper temperatures.
- ☐ Provide Thermometers to monitor all temperatures, including:
 - Hot, cold, and cooking temperatures.
- ☐ Drain stoppers, Sanitizer and test strips for 3 compartment sink.
- ☐ Pushcarts only – Must provide current commissary agreement.
- ☐ Provide copy of “person in charge” food safety certificate, if originally licensed after September 1st, 2024.
- ☐ MUST provide your own generator, no power source is available at the licensing event.

Note: Columbus Public Health issued Mobile Food Service Operation License MUST be paid prior to your scheduled inspection time at the License Section, at a cost of \$315.00 for high risk mobiles or \$171.50 for low risk mobiles (selling prepackaged items only.) No payments will be accepted at the time of the licensing event. If the mobile is new, please contact Columbus Public Health – [Environmental Health at 614-645-7005 or email EH@columbus.gov](mailto:EH@columbus.gov).

*** Mobiles who are not issued their Mobile Food Service Operation License from Columbus Public Health Department must provide a current Mobile Food Service Operation License from their local Health Department.**

Note: If your residence is not within the City of Columbus Jurisdiction you must obtain your Health Inspection from Franklin County Health Department or the County Health Department of your resident county. This inspection must be completed before your appointment with Fire and License Section inspections.

Contact Franklin County Health at 614-525-3160.

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MOBILE FOOD VENDING INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS LICENSE SECTION

- 1) All required paperwork and payments must be submitted prior to the License Section to obtain an appointment for inspection.
- 2) Your Mobile Food Vending unit will be measured and must not be over the maximum allowed for the type of unit and the type of permit you are trying to obtain.
 - a) Truck and Trailer maximum for Public Right of Way permit
 1. Shall be twenty-five (25) feet or less.
 - b) Pushcarts maximum for Public Right of Way permit
 1. Four (4) feet or less in width, including wheels;
 2. Nine (9) feet or less in length, of which not more than six (6) feet of length shall be used for the display storage, or preparation of items for sale or barter; and
 3. Six and one-half (6½) feet or less in height.
 4. Pushcart must have NSF Approved Mat
- 3) A mobile food vending unit operating in the public right of way utilizing a generator shall meet one (1) of the following:
 - a) The generator shall be wholly enclosed inside the frame of the mobile food vending unit; or
 - b) The generator shall be external to the unit, but fully enclosed other than space necessary for ventilation, securely affixed to the unit during operation, placed in a location as prescribed or approved by the Division of Fire, and, during operation, produce less than an average of sixty-six (66) decibels of sound as measured nine (9) feet from the generator over the course.



- 4) All Mobile Food Vending Units' will be inspected to ensure that all tail lights, turn signals brake lights and emergency flashers are working properly. All units must also have a working Emergency Brake
- 5) Mobile Food Trucks will be required to have working windshield wipers.
- 6) Mobile Food Trucks and Trailers' Propane Tanks will be checked for being secured to the unit with non-flammable items (such as metal or chains).

Any Mobile Food Vending Unit that does not pass their License Section Inspection will not receive their operating decals until repairs have been made and all issues have been rectified.

Example of a external enclosed generator for the
Mobile Food Vending Public Right of Way Permit

