

COLUMBUS PUBLIC HEALTH'S

# INTRODUCTION TO MOBILE FOOD UNITS



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Each section includes information on:

- Type Definition
- Basic Requirements
- Related Regulations
- Concession Identification

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## Questions?

For information on mobile licensing in Columbus and Worthington, call Tim Basak at 614-645-6741.

# I. CONCESSION TRAILERS/TRUCKS

## Type Definition

Concession Trailers / Trucks are totally self-contained units. There is mechanical refrigeration, a complete plumbing system including a hot water tank, and plenty of storage space for multiple day events.

## Basic Requirements

- Concession Trailers / Trucks that prepare or cook food for customers should contain the following:
  1. Commercial cooking equipment
  2. Commercial refrigerators/freezers that are not moved from the concession
  3. Sink systems that are large enough to handle all items that must be washed/rinsed/sanitized in the concession. There must be a three-compartment sink with a faucet.
  4. There must be a hand wash sink with a faucet.
  5. Water systems that can handle the hot water needs of the food service. (A minimum of 5 gallons of water is recommended).
  6. There must be adequate food/dry goods storage.
  7. There must be an adequate wastewater storage tank.
- Food to be served from the Concession will be prepared on the Concession. No food preparation will be allowed from a home and brought to the Concession for sale.



## Related Regulations

- All the food handling regulations that pertain to a restaurant are exactly the same for a Mobile Food Concession.
- There are three exceptions to the Food Safety Regulations that do not completely pertain to a Mobile Food Concession. These exceptions are:
  1. No restroom is required.
  2. A ventilation hood is not normally required. Facility should check with local fire department to verify if hood is required.
  3. A grease interceptor is not required.
  4. Waste water must be disposed of in an approved manner and never dumped in a storm sewer.

## Concession Identification

- An ID must be at least 3" tall and 1" wide, placed anywhere on the concession, and contain the following information:
  1. Company Name
  2. City, State, Zip Code
  3. Area Code and Phone Number

## II. PUSHCARTS

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### Type Definition

Pushcarts come in two varieties, those in which the operator stands on the ground or those in which the operator stands inside the cart. Typically, there is no electric or mechanical refrigeration associated with a pushcart.

### Basic Requirements

- Pushcarts usually have a fixed grill or flat top that is manufactured into the body of the cart. The warmers and cold storage are also part of the body of the Pushcart.
- Pushcarts normally have limited infrastructure and no electricity associated with their operation. Therefore, ice coolers serve as refrigerators and the sinks are very small. The water supply and dry storage are also very limited.
- Although the sinks are small, there must still be a hand wash sink and a three-compartment (wash/rinse/sanitize) sink. There must also be a faucet. See examples below.
- Because of the limited infrastructure, Pushcarts must work out of a commissary. A commissary is nothing more than a licensed food service.
- A restaurant or grocery store are common commissaries that Pushcarts work out of.
- The Pushcart must begin and end each working day at the commissary.



**Commissary Agreement,** (supplied by the Health Dept.), must be signed by the Pushcart owner and the Commissary owner on a yearly basis before a Mobile Food Service License is issued. This Commissary Agreement basically states that the commissary owner knows, and agrees to let the Pushcart owner work from their facility. The Commissary owner must agree to have the commissary open for use whenever the Pushcart owner needs to use it. This agreement allows the Pushcart owner to use the infrastructure of the commissary that the Pushcart lacks.

### Related Regulations

- Food to be served from the Concession will be prepared on the Concession. No food preparation will be allowed from a home and brought to the Concession for sale.
- All food handling regulations that pertain to a restaurant are exactly the same for a Mobile Pushcart Food Concession.
- Pushcarts are referred to as "restricted mobiles".
- There may be local regulations that limit where and when this type of Pushcart Concession operates. An example of this may be a Mobile Food Vending License issued by the City of Columbus Department of Public Safety. Go to: <https://columbus.gov/Templates/Detail.aspx?id=65511> for more information.

## II. PUSHCARTS, continued

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### Concession Identification

- An ID 3" tall and 1" wide and contain the following information:
  1. Company Name
  2. City, State, Zip Code
  3. Area Code and Phone Number

### Examples of Pushcarts



*An example of a pushcart with a three compartment sink and a handsink.*



*An example of a three compartment sink and a handsink on a pushcart.*



# III. KNOCKDOWN CONCESSIONS

## Type Definition

A Knockdown Concession is exactly what the name implies. It must be built and knocked down for each event.

At first glance, it may seem like the easiest way to get into the mobile concession business. However, they actually require the most work of all the mobile types. Remember, all the regulations for a normal food service business apply.



## Basic Requirements

- There are three exceptions to the food safety regulations that do not completely pertain to a Mobile Food Concession. These exceptions are:
  1. No restroom is required.
  2. A ventilation hood is not normally required, check local fire codes.
  3. No grease interceptor is required.
- A Knockdown Concession would not be allowed to stand on a soft surface such as the grass or bare ground due to dust, dirt, or possibly mud (if bad weather occurred before or during an event). You must have some type of floor.
- All Commercial cooking equipment is required.
- Food to be served from the Knockdown Concession will be prepared on the concession. No food preparation will be allowed from a home and brought to the concession for sale.
- There must be sink systems that are large enough to handle all items that must be washed/rinsed/sanitized in the concession. The sink system must be set-up for each event. There must be a three-compartment sink with a faucet and a hand wash sink with a faucet.
- Water systems that can handle the hot water needs of the food service must be set-up at each event (a minimum of 5 gallons of hot water is recommended).
- There also must be a system in place at each event to dispose of the wastewater from the hand sink and three-compartment sink. This also can be quite challenging.
- Some type of roof is required for those rainy days. Food must be protected from dust, dirt, rain, and occasional birds flying directly overhead. An open flame used to cook (such as a grill) under a tent is not allowed, according to the Fire Dept.
- Commercial refrigerators and/or freezers must be placed in the Knockdown Concession for each set-up.
- There must be adequate food/dry goods storage space inside. Many times a stock truck can provide additional storage space. But remember, additional storage space will be inspected for cleanliness or any other conditions that may apply.

### III. KNOCKDOWN CONCESSIONS, continued

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#### Related Regulations

- All the food handling regulations that pertain to a restaurant are exactly the same for a Knockdown Mobile Food Concession .

#### Concession Identification

- An ID must be at least 3" tall and 1" wide and contain the following information:
  1. Company Name
  2. City, State, Zip Code
  3. Area Code and Phone Number

#### Example of Knockdown Concession



# IV. FROZEN FOOD TRUCKS/CARTS

## Type Definition

A Frozen Food Truck / Cart is a mobile motorized or non motorized concession on wheels that normally contains a commercial freezer. All product is frozen and prepackaged.

Examples of Frozen Food Trucks / Carts include, but are not limited to, frozen meats and ice cream. This does not include soft serve ice cream trucks. Those trucks will be addressed in the next category.



## Basic Requirements

- The frozen foods must be received frozen and are prepackaged. These foods must come from a commercial distributor.
- Frozen Food being held in storage before its sale to the public is prohibited from being stored inside a residence.
- Freezers holding the food for sale must be of commercial grade. There must be a label or data plate on the unit that states for "commercial use".
- This is the only type of Concession in which no plumbing system is required. No hand wash sink is required on a Frozen Food Truck / Cart.

## Related Regulations

- The Frozen Food Concession is legal to sell its product anywhere within Ohio (as long as local regulations are satisfied).
- There may be local regulations that limit where and when this type of Frozen Food Truck / Cart operates. An example of this may be a Mobile Food Vending License issued by the City of Columbus Department of Public Safety.

## Concession Identification

- An ID must be at least 3" tall and 1" wide and contain the following information:
  1. Company Name
  2. City, State, Zip Code
  3. Area Code and Phone Number



# V. CATERING TYPE TRUCK

## Type Definition

Catering Type Trucks carry prepackaged and non-prepackaged hot and cold type foods.

## Basic Requirements

- These type trucks that carry only prepackaged hot or cold foods are not required to have a hand wash sink .
- Food must maintain proper temperatures at all times .
- Packaged food on these type trucks must come from a licensed and inspected wholesale type facility . The Ohio Department of Agriculture inspects these wholesale facilities .
- Catering Trucks that have a commercial grill or soup warmer must meet the same requirements as a Concession Trailer / Truck Mobile .



## Related Regulations

- There may be local regulations that limit where and when this type of Truck Cart operates . An example of this may be a Mobile Food Vending License issued by the City of Columbus Department of Public Safety .

## Concession Identification

- An ID must be at least 3" tall and 1" wide and contain the following information:
  1. Company Name
  2. City, State, Zip Code
  3. Area Code and Phone Number

# VI. SOFT SERVE ICE CREAM TRUCK

## Type Definition

A Soft Serve Ice Cream Truck traditionally has a soft serve ice cream machine on board with all the favorite toppings .

## Basic Requirements

- Commercial refrigerators/freezers that are not moved from the concession
- Sink systems that are large enough to handle all items that must be washed/rinsed/sanitized in the concession . There must be a three-compartment sink with a faucet .
- There must be a hand wash sink with a faucet .
- Water systems that can handle the hot water needs of the food service . (A minimum of 5 gallons of water is recommended) .
- There must be adequate food/dry goods storage .
- There must be an adequate wastewater storage tank .



## Related Regulations

- Soft Serve Ice Cream Concessions fall under the same regulations as a Concession Trailer / Truck .
- There may be local regulations that limit where and when this type of Soft Serve Ice Cream Truck operates . An example of this may be a Mobile Food Vending License issued by the City of Columbus Department of Public Safety .

## Concession Identification

- An ID must be at least 3" tall and 1" wide and contain the following information:
  1. Company Name
  2. City, State, Zip Code
  3. Area Code and Phone Number

# VII. MOBILE COOKERS/BBQ PITTS

## Type Definition

A Mobile Cooker / BBQ Pit is virtually an oven on wheels. The cooking unit is mounted to the frame of the concession.

## Basic Requirements

- The Mobile Cooker / BBQ Pit type concessions must have all the infrastructure of a Concession Trailer or Knockdown. Notice the sink set-up on this Cooker. If the unit is large enough to house cooking equipment, refrigeration system, full plumbing system (including three- compartment utensil sink, hand wash sink, hot & cold running water, and waste water holding tank), and adequate storage space, an auxiliary trailer or knockdown may not be needed.
- Most Mobile Cooker / BBQ Pit type concessions require an auxiliary unit due to infrastructure needs.
- Food to be served from the Concession will be prepared on the Concession. No food preparation will be allowed from a home and brought to the Concession for sale.



## Related Regulations

- There may be local regulations that limit where and when this type of Truck Cart operates. An example of this may be a Mobile Food Vending License issued by the City of Columbus Department of Public Safety.

## Concession Identification

- An ID must be at least 3" tall and 1" wide and contain the following information:
  1. Company Name
  2. City, State, Zip Code
  3. Area Code and Phone Number