



Placer County Health and Human Services Department

Mobile Food Facility (MFF) Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What exactly is a Mobile Food Facility?

A: A mobile food facility (MFF) is defined as

“any vehicle used in conjunction with a commissary or other permanent food facility upon which food is sold or distributed at retail.”

This includes full service catering trucks, taco trucks, hot dog carts, ice cream trucks, and coffee carts.

For more detailed information, please see our handout for Classification and Permitting Requirements.

Q: Can I operate my MFF wherever I want?

A: All MFF's (including carts) shall obtain approval from the local Planning and Zoning departments to operate on either private and public property, and also the property owner for private property.

Q: Do I have to put anything besides the name of my business on the side of my MFF?

A: All MFF's shall have the business name or name of the operator (3" high lettering) and the city, state, and zip code (1" high lettering) permanently affixed on two sides of the vehicle.

Q: What is CA Housing & Community Development, and why do I need their approval?

A: CA Housing & Community Development is a State agency that inspects and certifies vehicles as “special purpose commercial modular.” California Health & Safety Code section 18012.5 defines a special purpose commercial modular as:

“...a vehicle with or without motive power, designed and equipped for human occupancy for industrial, professional or commercial purposes...”

This includes any fully enclosed MFF in which the operator occupies the vehicle to cook or prepare food for service. No Environmental Health Permit to operate will be issued to any fully enclosed MFF that does not contain an HCD Insignia from having passed HCD inspection.

Q: What does the HCD insignia look like?

A: Here is a sample HCD special purpose commercial modular insignia.



Q: I bought my Food Truck used and I can't find an HCD Insignia on it. How can I find out if it has passed inspection in the past?

A: Contact Manufactured Housing @ 916-445-3338. For a small fee they will research their records to see if the mobile vehicle has ever been issued the insignia. If it has they will provide you with a duplicate insignia.

Q: My vehicle has never been issued the HCD insignia, who do I contact to schedule an inspection?

A: Contact the HCD Northern California Field Office @ 916-255-2501. They will have you submit the following items to schedule your inspection:

- Form 415 (www.hcd.ca.gov/codes/mhp/HCD415_Rev07-13.pdf)
- A copy of current vehicle registration
- A required fee

Once your vehicle contains the HCD insignia, you are ready to complete the permitting process with Placer County Environmental Health.

Q: What is a commissary and why do I need one?

A: A commissary is an approved, permitted commercial kitchen which an MFF shall use for storage of food and supplies, cleaning and sanitizing of utensils, sanitary disposal of garbage and liquid waste, filling of the potable water tank, cleaning and maintenance of the MFF, and any food prep that can't be performed inside the vehicle. An MFF operator is NOT PERMITTED to do any of these activities at home.

Q: What is considered limited food preparation?

A: See below, an excerpt from the definition of limited food preparation, per California Retail Food Code section 113818:

- (a) *Limited food preparation means food preparation that is restricted to one or more of the following:*
- (1) *Heating, frying, baking, roasting, popping, shaving of ice, blending, steaming or boiling of hot dogs, or assembly of non-prepackaged food.*
 - (2) *Dispensing and portioning of non-potentially hazardous food.*
 - (3) *Slicing and chopping of food on a heated cooking surface during the cooking process.*
 - (4) *Cooking and seasoning to order.*
 - (5) *Preparing beverages that are for immediate service, in response to an individual consumer order, to do not contain frozen milk products.*
- (b) *Limited food preparation does NOT include any of the following:*
- (1) *Slicing and chopping unless it is on the heated cooking surface.*
 - (2) *Thawing.*
 - (3) *Cooling of cooked, potentially hazardous food.*
 - (4) *Grinding raw ingredients or potentially hazardous food.*
 - (5) *Reheating of potentially hazardous foods for hot holding, except for steamed or boiled hot dogs and tamales in the original, inedible wrapper.*
 - (6) *Hot holding of non-prepackaged, potentially hazardous food, except for roasting corn on the cob, steamed or boiled hot dogs, and tamales in the original inedible wrapper.*
 - (7) *Washing of foods.*
 - (8) *Cooking of potentially hazardous foods for later use.*

Q: I want to open a hot dog cart and serve brats and other specialty sausages. Can I do this?

A: To prepare and serve sausages from a cart (or other unenclosed vehicle) without the requirement of a 3-compartment sink, the sausages are required to meet the definition of a hot dog per CalCode section 113807:

“Hot dog means a whole, cured, cooked sausage that is skinless or stuffed in a casing...”

Preparation of any sausage that does not meet the definition of a hot dog is considered full prep and will require a fully enclosed mobile facility.

Q: Am I allowed to use my custom built BBQ in conjunction with my MFF?

A: An MFF may only utilize an open-air BBQ or outdoor wood-burning oven at a permitted Community Event. Please speak with the event coordinator or contact Placer County Environmental Health to determine if it is a permitted Community Event.

Q: Am I allowed to set up a pop-up tent or a table to make fresh squeezed lemonade?

A: An MFF may only set up pop-up tents and tables outside the vehicle at a permitted Community Event. Please speak with the event coordinator or contact Placer County Environmental Health to determine if it is a permitted Community Event.

Q: I've been asked to come to the local brewery/winery on Friday evenings. Is this considered a Community Event?

A: Community events must be temporary in nature to meet Placer County Environmental Health's requirements for permitting. A local brewery/winery that serves beverages to the public on a daily or weekly basis, year-round, cannot be permitted as a Community Event.

As a permitted MFF, you may operate at the brewery/winery, however, YOU MAY NOT set up pop-up tents or utilize an open-air BBQ or outdoor wood burning oven, as those are only allowed at Community events.

Q: Do I have to fill out the Restroom Verification Form?

A: The restroom verification form (Section F of the application packet) shall be filled out if your MFF conducts business in a specified location for more than one hour. The owner of the restroom must sign the form stating they are granting permission for your facility to use the restroom, and that they will maintain the cleanliness and the supplies inside the restroom.