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Atlantic City Mobile & Temporary Food Vendor Guidance

This guide explains the requirements associated with the Atlantic City Health Department Mobile Food Vendor Application and Event Coordinator Application. It is designed to improve application accuracy, reduce inspection delays, and promote compliance with state and local food safety regulations.

WHEN APPROVAL IS REQUIRED

Any individual, organization, or entity that prepares, serves, sells, or distributes food to the public within the City of Atlantic City must obtain approval from the Atlantic City Health Department prior to operating. This requirement applies whether food is sold or given away, including nonprofit and charitable events.

DEFINITIONS

Mobile Food Establishment: Any movable restaurant, truck, van, trailer, cart, tabletop, bicycle, watercraft, or other movable unit used to transport, store, prepare, or serve food.

Temporary Food Establishment: A food establishment that operates for no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration.

REQUIRED APPLICATIONS

Food Vendors must complete the Atlantic City Health Department Mobile Food Vendor Application.

Event Coordinators must complete the Atlantic City Mobile/Temporary Event Coordinator Application. Event Coordinators are responsible for ensuring all participating food vendors have current health approvals.

APPLICATION TIMELINES

Event Coordinator Applications must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the event start date. Final vendor lists must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the event.

Retail food vendor applications must be submitted at least 30 days prior to the intended start of operation.

Incomplete applications will not be accepted and will be returned for correction.

INSPECTION POLICY

Inspections are conducted only after a complete application has been submitted, reviewed, and approved by the Atlantic City Health Department. Inspections are by appointment only and will not be scheduled for applications that are incomplete, under review, or not approved. If an inspection reveals that the operation does not match the approved application or required equipment is missing or non-functional, approval may be denied or rescinded.

HANDWASHING REQUIREMENTS

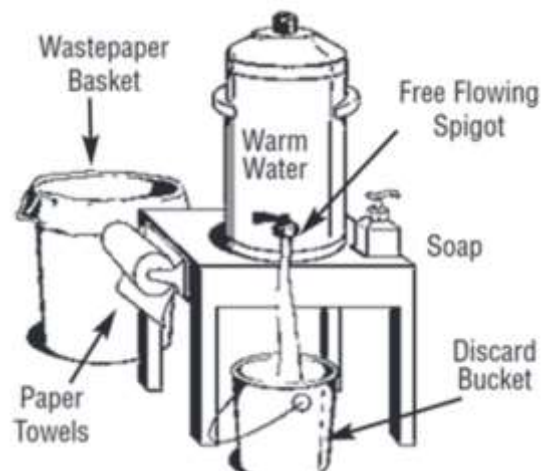
All mobile and temporary food operations must provide a functional handwashing station prior to the start of food handling and maintain it throughout operation. Handwashing stations must include potable water with continuous flow, liquid soap, paper towels, and an approved wastewater drain or catch container. Hand sanitizer does not replace handwashing.

Handwashing facilities must be capable of providing potable water at a temperature between 90°F and 110°F, delivered in a continuous flow, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 8:24-6.7. For mobile and temporary food operations, the required handwashing water temperature may be maintained using heated potable water, provided the temperature is actively monitored and maintained during operation.

Acceptable practices include heating potable water at an approved servicing area or approved facility prior to operation, placing heated water into an insulated container capable of providing continuous flow, monitoring water temperature using a thermometer, reheating or replacing water as needed to maintain temperatures between 90°F and 110°F, and ensuring the handwashing station remains set up, accessible, and functional at all times during food preparation and service.

This method is acceptable for both mobile and temporary food operations when temperature control is consistently maintained. The following practices do not meet handwashing requirements: water temperatures below 90°F or above 110°F, failure to monitor water temperature, or unapproved heating devices, handwashing stations without continuous flow, and hand sanitizer used in place of handwashing.

During inspection, R.E.H.S. staff will measure handwashing water temperature, request to see the thermometer used for monitoring, and require water replacement if temperature falls outside the approved range. Failure to maintain required handwashing conditions may result in delay, denial, or revocation of approval.



FOOD PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

Food must be protected from contamination at all times during storage, preparation, transport, holding, and service, in accordance with New Jersey Administrative Code N.J.A.C. 8:24.

Food must be protected by using adequate overhead protection to prevent exposure to dirt, debris, condensation, weather, and other environmental contaminants. Food must be kept in covered containers or otherwise protected when not actively being prepared or served.

Raw animal foods must be kept separate from ready-to-eat foods to prevent cross-contamination. Separation must be maintained during storage, preparation, and holding by using separate containers, proper placement, and approved food handling practices.

Ready-to-eat foods may not be touched with bare hands. Food employees must use suitable utensils such as gloves, deli tissue, tongs, scoops, or other approved dispensing methods when handling ready-to-eat foods. Gloves must be single-use and changed as often as necessary to prevent contamination.

Food contact surfaces, utensils, and equipment must be clean and sanitary, and food employees must wash their hands as required before engaging in food preparation or handling activities.

Failure to properly protect food from contamination or to prevent bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat foods may result in corrective action, denial of approval, or required disposal of food.

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Cold foods must be maintained at 41°F or below at all times. Hot foods must be maintained at 135°F or above at all times, in accordance with New Jersey Administrative Code N.J.A.C. 8:24. These temperature requirements apply during storage, preparation, transport, holding, and service.

Cold holding must be maintained using approved equipment capable of keeping food at 41°F or below. Acceptable cold holding equipment includes mechanical refrigeration units, refrigerated trucks or trailers, refrigerated prep tables, ice baths, or insulated coolers (with manufacture specifications), provided temperatures are consistently maintained. When ice or coolers are used, food must be fully surrounded by ice or otherwise protected to maintain proper temperature, and ice must be replenished as needed throughout operation.

Hot holding must be maintained using approved hot holding equipment capable of keeping food at 135°F or above. Acceptable hot holding equipment includes steam tables, chafing dishes with approved heat sources, electric warmers, hot holding cabinets, or similar equipment designed to maintain food temperature. Hot holding equipment may not be used to reheat food. Food must be brought to required temperatures prior to placement in hot holding equipment and maintained at proper temperature during service.

Food thermometers must be available, accurate, and used to monitor hot and cold food temperatures throughout operation. Vendors are responsible for checking food temperatures at setup, during service, and anytime food is replenished, moved, or held for extended periods.

Food temperature monitoring may require the use of temperature logs, particularly when time and temperature control for safety foods are held for service. Temperature logs should document the date, time, food item, and measured temperature. Logs may be maintained on paper or electronically and must be available for review upon request by the Health Department during inspection.

If food temperatures fall outside required ranges, corrective action must be taken immediately. Corrective actions may include reheating food to proper temperatures, rapidly cooling food using approved methods, or discarding food that cannot be brought back into compliance.

Failure to properly maintain, monitor, and document food temperatures may result in corrective action, denial or revocation of approval, or removal of food from service.





SERVICING AREA (COMMISSARY)

Mobile food vendors must operate from an approved servicing area. Private residences may not be used. Servicing area agreements must be completed and signed by the servicing area owner. A copy of the most recent inspection report must be provided when applicable.

FLOOR PLANS & EQUIPMENT LAYOUT

Vendors must submit a floor plan or layout drawing so the Atlantic City Health Department can understand how food will be stored, prepared, held, and served during operation. The layout helps verify that the proposed setup can support safe food handling and proper sanitation.

The layout does not need to be professionally drawn or to scale. A simple hand-drawn sketch is acceptable, provided it clearly shows the placement of all equipment and work areas. The drawing must identify each piece of equipment used during operation, including cooking equipment, refrigeration or coolers, hot holding equipment, handwashing stations, prep tables, storage areas, and service areas.

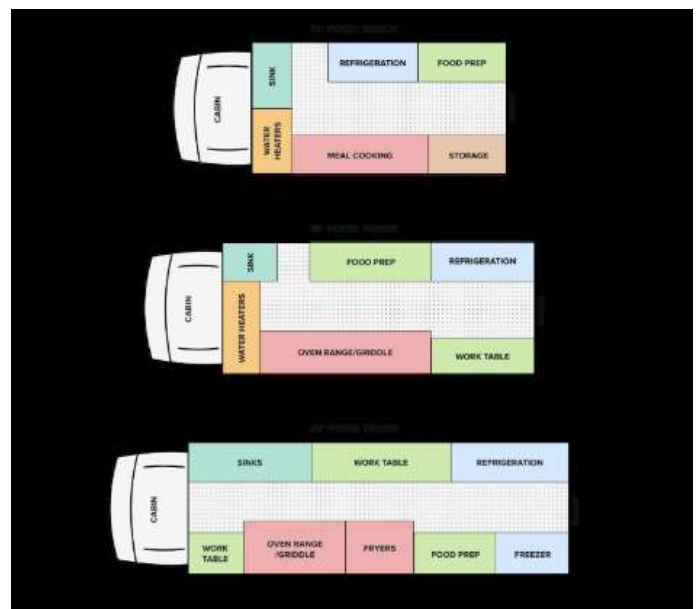
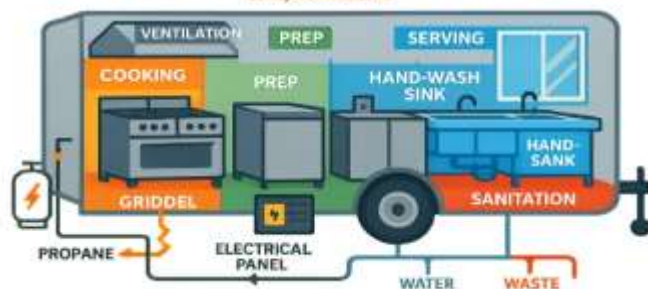
Food preparation areas, handwashing locations, and equipment used for hot and cold holding must be clearly labeled. The layout should also show how raw foods are kept separate from ready-to-eat foods and how food is protected from contamination.

For mobile units, the layout should represent the inside of the truck, trailer, or cart. For temporary setups, the layout should represent the tent, table, or booth configuration as it will be set up at the event.

The layout must accurately reflect the actual setup used during operation. Changes to the setup or equipment that are not shown on the approved layout may result in delays, denial of approval, or corrective action during inspection.

CONCESSION TRAILER COOKING EQUIPMENT

Optimal kitchen layout with equipment placement, workflow zones, and utility connections



EVENT COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Event coordinators are responsible for submitting the Event Coordinator Application in a timely manner and for verifying that all participating food vendors have current health approvals prior to the event.

Event coordinators must ensure that only approved food vendors are permitted to operate at the event. Vendors who do not have current health approval may not operate under any circumstances.

Failure to submit the Event Coordinator Application on time, to provide required vendor information, or to ensure vendor compliance may result in vendor removal, inspection delays, or disruption of the event.

COMMON REASONS FOR DISAPPROVAL

Common reasons for inspection failure include incomplete applications, missing handwashing stations, unapproved food sources, inadequate temperature control, and discrepancies between the application and actual operation.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This guidance document is for informational purposes only and does not replace compliance with New Jersey Administrative Code N.J.A.C. 8:24 or official determinations made by the Atlantic City Health Department.