



Food Safety and Permitting Guidance for Food Trucks and Mobile Food Vendors

Mobile food truck and mobile food vendors can use this fact sheet as a quick overview of the permitting and preparation steps needed to operate at events in Massachusetts. It is designed to help vendors plan, meet local requirements, and support safe food service.

Planning and permitting

- Before you begin operations, **contact the Local Board of Health for the town or city where you plan to sell food** in Massachusetts. If you plan to cross state lines, you will also need to contact the appropriate authorities in that state.
- **Follow the local Board of Health's guidance** on applying for the proper food permit: A mobile food permit, a temporary event food permit, and/or a hawkers and peddlers license for units that move around
- **Submit your application and all required documentation** at least 30 days before the event
- Be sure to **schedule an inspection with the local Board of Health** before the event where you plan to operate
- If you operate an ice cream truck, **you must apply for and pass a CORI check**. For more information, check out [Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information \(CORI\)](#) and [Ice cream truck vendors FAQs](#).



Documentation required for applications

- Food Protection Manager & Allergen Awareness Certificates
- A copy of the retail food permit for the commercial kitchen and commissary agreement, if the city or town requires a commissary for preparation of food and beverages
- A list of approved and permitted suppliers and their delivery schedules (if onsite) for ingredients, prepared food, beverages, and ice
- A list of food and beverage items that will be served
- A HACCP Plan, if you make high-risk foods, such as acidified rice for sushi or smoked foods
- Production schedule for when items will be prepared
- Food Defense Plan outlining measures to ensure products are not tampered with

Scan to
learn more:



Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health
Division of Food Protection
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Learn more at
mass.gov/RetailFood

- Floor plans for sinks, equipment, dry storage, refrigeration units, hot holding or specialized equipment, waste and wastewater locations, method for grease collection and removal, water and electrical sources.
- An approved CORI check if you are an Ice cream truck operator.

Celebrate safely!



Inspection and operation tips to support safe mobile food operations

- **Post the Food Protection Manager certificate, Allergen Awareness certificate, and permit** where customers can see them.
- All menus, including digital menu boards, must have the allergen statement and a consumer advisory that consuming animal foods that are raw or undercooked that can make you sick
- **Do not handle or serve food while sick**
- **Wear gloves or use utensils when handling ready-to-eat foods**
- **Routinely verify food temperatures** and have backup thermometers on hand
- **Manage temperature control for cold and hot holding** as required. Keep hot foods above 135°F (57°C) and cold foods below 41°F (5°C) to prevent bacterial growth.
- **Use authorized solid & liquid waste disposal systems**
- **Screen or use approved methods for insect control** during normal activities and in extreme heat
- **Park and/or operate in authorized vendor areas only**
- Check out the Standard Operating Procedures for Mobile Food Establishments for more detailed information

Reminder: Requirements may vary by location and event. Check with the local permitting authority early, so you have enough time to prepare.

Keep yourself and your workers safe in hot weather

- If you operate in the summer, use the [Unhealthy Heat Forecast](#) to plan your workday
- Consider your location. Is there a cooler or shady area to set up in the approved area?
- [Learn how to recognize and monitor the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness \(HRI\) and the actions to take](#)
- Consider using a buddy system to watch for early signs and symptoms of heat-related illness. [People who work outdoors, older adults \(age 65+\), pregnant people, and people with chronic health conditions are at higher risk.](#)
- Make sure you and your staff drink water, even when you are not thirsty. Read [CDC/NIOSH Heat Stress Hydration Guidance](#) for more information.



Additional resources

The following links provide access to key regulations, guidance, and public health resources related to mobile food establishment permitting and compliance in Massachusetts.

[MA Merged Food Code](#)

This document contains the Massachusetts Merged Food Code, which brings together the state sanitary code and adopted FDA food code requirements for retail food establishments.



[Report My Meal: report a food-related illness or concern](#)

Report My Meal is an online system for reporting suspected foodborne illness to public health officials in Massachusetts.



[105 CMR 590 food establishment sanitation standards](#)

This regulation establishes minimum sanitation standards for food establishments in Massachusetts.



[2013 FDA Food Code](#)

This resource provides the FDA's model Food Code, which offers science-based food safety guidance for retail food and food service operations.



[MA Allergen Awareness Guidance](#)

This page provides food allergen awareness guidance and related resources for food establishments.



[Retail food information and resources](#)

This page provides retail food information, guidance, and resources from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.



[Hawker and Peddler license information](#)

Use this page to learn about hawker and peddler licensing requirements in Massachusetts, including how to apply and what may be needed before selling goods in different communities.

