



# Quick Reference Guide

## Food Trucks

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Updated: June 2025



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Food trucks have quickly become a popular way to eat in Massachusetts. As there is a growing trend of food truck businesses and operations, it is of the utmost importance that they operate safely in our communities. This document serves to provide a basic overview of the legal and regulatory considerations for food truck operations and inspections. As such, the information presented here is for informational purposes only and does not, nor is it intended to, constitute legal advice. Questions about specific enforcement scenarios should be directed to your city solicitor or town counsel. It is also highly recommended that you work in conjunction with the local Board of Health and other regulatory partners when inspecting such vehicles.

## **II. PERMIT REQUIREMENTS**

The State Sanitary Code, in 105 CMR 590.009 (B) requires a food permit form and inspection by the local health department. Each food truck must have a separate permit from the local Board of Health for each mobile facility and from each municipality where the food truck intends to operate. The permit may be issued for any period of time approved by the Board of Health, and should include the dates, location(s), and any restrictions in the operation.

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 101, Section 3 requires transient vendors to possess a license issued by the Division of Standards. Such license shall be subject to such local rules as may be made in a city by the mayor and city council and, in a town, by the selectmen. For example, some cities or towns may require a Fire Permit or a Hawker and Peddler license to operate.

527 CMR 1.00 Section 50.8.1.2 states that where required by the AHJ, permits shall be required for the location, design, construction and operation of mobile and temporary cooking operations.

As a permit is required from the local Board of Health, it is suggested that you work in conjunction with them and other local partners in ensuring compliance with the Fire Code.

## **III. COMPLIANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

527 CMR 1.00 (Section 50.8) Contains detailed requirements for mobile and temporary food service operation. The following are some of the more common issues encountered, but it is not an exhaustive list of requirements.



## Department of Fire Services Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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50.2.1.1 Cooking that produces smoke or grease laden vapor must have a Type I hood and be protected with a fire suppression system.

50.6.2.1 Fire Suppressions systems shall be serviced on a semi-annual basis by a person holding a fire suppression Certificate of Competency.

50.6.4 Exhaust systems shall be inspected and cleaned in accordance with Table 50.6.4 by a person holding a Hood Cleaning Certificate of Competency

50.8.1.6: Flammable and combustible liquids shall not be stored inside vehicles or cooking areas.

50.8.2.1 and 50.8.2.2: Food trucks shall be separated by a clear distance of 10 feet from buildings, vehicles, other food trucks, and any combustible materials

50.8.4.4 and 50.8.4.9: Gas fired heating appliances shall be equipped with shutoffs and shall be located so that a fire at such appliance will not block egress of persons from the vehicle.

Vehicle-mounted generators shall meet the requirements of 50.8.6.2 through 50.8.6.5

50.8.7.1.2 for LP-Gas cylinders, where a shutoff valve is provided, it shall be accessible and identified with a sign permanently affixed to the vehicle

50.8.7.3.3 and 50.8.7.4.3.2 LP-Gas systems shall be inspected prior to each use and containers installed on vehicles shall not exceed 200 gallons.

50.8.9.1 if the heat source is non-electric and open flames are used, at least one carbon monoxide detector shall be installed.

Each department or AHJ may decide whether to require a permit for mobile food service operations. If a permit is required by the department, it can and **should** include propane if it affixed to the truck. A separate permit not required.

If the propane cylinder is on the ground and it exceeds 42 lbs., a separate permit is required.



#### IV. RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

NFPA has created a Food Truck Safety Fact Sheet that includes an inspection checklist that may be helpful in conducting inspections (Appendix A) and can be found online at <https://www.nfpa.org/downloadable-resources/fact-sheets/food-truck-safety-fact-sheet>. Additionally, The U.S. Department of Transportation has created a guide on compressed gas cylinders for food truck operators (Appendix B) and can be found online at <https://www.phmsa.dot.gov/regulatory-compliance/phmsa-guidance/food-truck-cylinder-safety-0>.

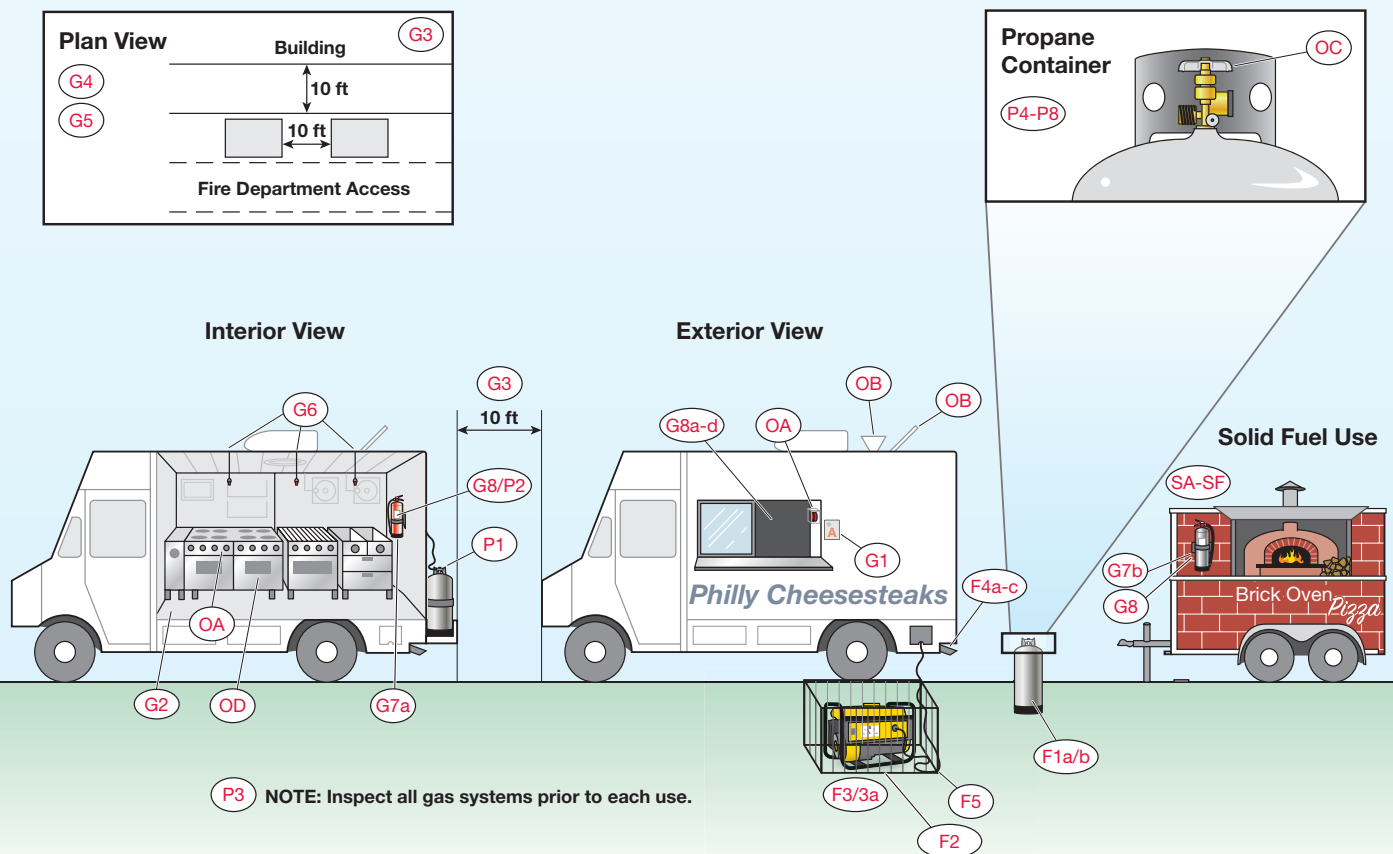
Further assistance is always available from the Division of Fire Safety on this and similar issues. If you have further questions or seek additional information, please contact the Code Compliance and Enforcement Unit at (978) 567-3375 or by email at [DFS-TM-Compliance@Mass.Gov](mailto:DFS-TM-Compliance@Mass.Gov).

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## FOOD TRUCK SAFETY



NFPA code references are provided at the end of each item. The red keys correspond to the NFPA food truck safety diagram. For more detailed information, see NFPA 1, Chapter 17 in NFPA 96, and Chapter 16 in NFPA 58.

### General Safety Checklist

- ☐ Obtain license or permits from the local authorities. [1:1.13.8] **G1**
- ☐ Ensure there is no public seating within the mobile food truck. [1:50.8.3.2] **G2**
- ☐ Check that there is a clearance of at least 10 ft away from buildings, structures, vehicles, and any combustible materials or as prescribed by the AHJ. [96:17.2] **G3**
- ☐ Verify fire department vehicular access is provided for fire lanes and access roads. [1:18.2.4] **G4**
- ☐ Ensure clearance is provided for the fire department to access fire hydrants and access fire department connections. [1:13.1.4; 1:13.1.5] **G5**
- ☐ Check that appliances that produce grease-laden vapors and that might be a source of grease in the hood, grease removal device, or duct are protected by fire-extinguishing equipment. [96:10.1.2] **G6**
- ☐ Verify portable fire extinguishers have been selected and installed in kitchen cooking areas in accordance with NFPA 10. [96:10.9] **G7a**
- ☐ Where cooking appliances that use solid fuel, such as charcoal or wood, produce grease-laden vapors, make sure the appliances are protected by listed fire-extinguishing equipment. [96:15.7.1] **G7b**
- ☐ Ensure that workers are trained in the following: [96:17.11]: **G8**
  - ☐ Proper use of portable fire extinguishers and extinguishing systems [96:17.11.1(1)] **G8a**
  - ☐ Proper method of shutting off fuel sources [96:17.11.1(2)] **G8b**
  - ☐ Proper procedure for notifying the local fire department [96:17.11.1(3)] **G8c**
  - ☐ Proper procedure for how to perform simple leak test on LP-Gas connections [96:17.11.1(5)] **G8d**



# FOOD TRUCK SAFETY CONTINUED

## Fuel & Power Sources Checklist

- ❑ Verify that fuel tanks are filled to the capacity needed for uninterrupted operation during normal operating hours. [1:10.14.11.1 for carnivals only] **F1a**
- ❑ Ensure that refueling is conducted only during non-operating hours. [96:17.8.3] [1:10.14.11.2 for carnivals only] **F1b**
- ❑ Check that any engine-driven source of power is separated from the public by barriers, such as physical guards, fencing, or enclosures. [96:17.6.2.2] **F2**
- ❑ Ensure that any engine-driven source of power is shut down prior to refueling from a portable container. [1:10.15.4] **F3**
- ❑ Check that surfaces of engine-driven source of power are cool to the touch prior to refueling from a portable container. **F3a**
- ❑ Make sure that exhaust from engine-driven source of power complies with the following: **F4**
  - ❑ At least 12 ft in all directions from openings, air intakes, and means of egress [96:17.6.2.3(1)] **F4a**
  - ❑ Directed away from all buildings [96:17.6.2.3(2)] **F4b**
  - ❑ Directed away from any mobile or temporary cooking operations [96:17.6.2.3(3)] **F4c**
- ❑ Ensure that all electrical appliances, fixtures, equipment, and wiring complies with the NFPA 70®. [96:17.9.1] **F5**

## Propane System Integrity Checklist

- ❑ The main shutoff valves on a container for liquid and vapor are either accessible without the use of tools, or other equipment is provided to shut off the container valve. [58:16.3.4] **P1**
- ❑ Ensure that during cooking operations at least one person is trained in emergency response procedures and knows how to shut off fuel sources, change out LP-Gas containers, and the properties of LP-Gas. [58:16.8.1] **P2**
- ❑ Visually inspect LP-Gas systems daily for damage and proper operation prior to each use. [96:17.8.2.3] **P3**
- ❑ Perform pressure testing on all new or modified piping systems. [58:16.6.10] **P4**
- ❑ Perform leak testing on cylinder connections with a noncorrosive leak-detecting fluid or other approved leak detection method each time a cylinder(s) is replaced. [58:16.11.5] **P5**
- ❑ Document leak testing and keep documentation in the mobile food facility. [58:16.11.3, 16.11.3.1] **P6**
- ❑ Ensure that on gas system piping, a flexible connector is installed between the regulator outlet and the fixed piping system. [58:16.6.8.1] **P7**
- ❑ Where a gas detection system is installed, ensure that it is tested monthly. [96:17.8.2.2] **P8**

## Operational Safety Checklist

- ❑ Do not leave cooking equipment unattended while it is still hot. (This is the leading cause of home structure fires and home fire injuries.) **OA**
- ❑ Operate cooking equipment only when exhaust systems are on. [96:12.1.1] **OB**
- ❑ Close LP-Gas container valves when system is not in use. [58:6.26.8.3] **OC**
- ❑ Keep cooking equipment, including the cooking ventilation system, clean by regularly removing grease. [96:12.4] **OD**

## Solid Fuel Safety Checklist (Where Wood, Charcoal, Or Other Solid Fuel Is Used)

- ❑ Fuel is not stored above any heat-producing appliance or vent. [96:15.9.2.2] **SA**
- ❑ Fuel is not stored closer than 3 ft to any cooking appliance. [96:15.9.2.2] **SB**
- ❑ Fuel is not stored near any combustible flammable liquids, ignition sources, chemicals, and food supplies and packaged goods. [96:15.9.2.7] **SC**
- ❑ Fuel is not stored in the path of the ash removal or near removed ashes. [96:15.9.2.4] **SD**
- ❑ Ash, cinders, and other fire debris should be removed from the firebox at regular intervals and at least once a day. [96:15.9.3.6.1, 15.9.3.6.2] **SE**
- ❑ Removed ashes, cinders, and other removed fire debris should be placed in a closed, metal container. [96:15.9.3.8.1] **SF**

### Learn More

- ▶ Get free digital access to NFPA codes and standards at: [nfpa.org/docinfo](https://nfpa.org/docinfo)
- ▶ Read the latest news and updates at: [nfpa.org/foodtrucksafety](https://nfpa.org/foodtrucksafety)
- ▶ Review the following and other NFPA resources at: [nfpa.org](https://nfpa.org)
  - NFPA 1, *Fire Code*, 2024 Edition
  - *NFPA 1 Fire Code Handbook*, 2021 Edition
  - NFPA 10, *Standard for Portable Fire Extinguishers*, 2022 Edition
  - NFPA 58, *Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code*, 2024 Edition
  - *LP-Gas Code Handbook*, 2024 Edition
  - NFPA 70®, *National Electrical Code®*, 2023 Edition
  - *National Electrical Code® Handbook*, 2023 Edition
  - NFPA 96, *Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations*, 2024 Edition
  - NFPA 96, *Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations Handbook*, 2017 Edition



# Is your propane cylinder **SAFE?**

Propane cylinders must be periodically requalified to be safe for use\*. Do not use cylinders that have not been requalified because you risk property damage, severe injuries, or death.

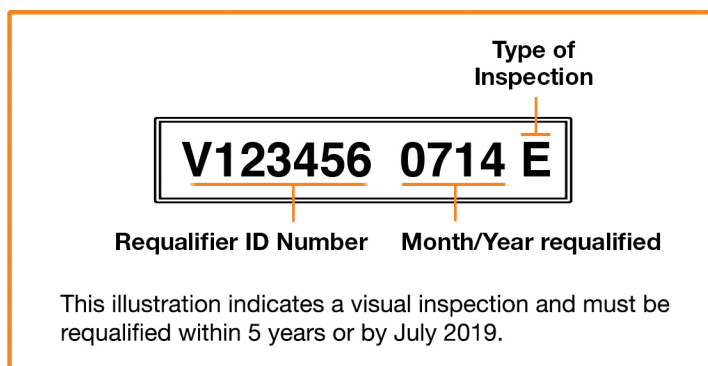
To see if your cylinder is okay to use, look for these markings:

## **A** Manufacturing Date:

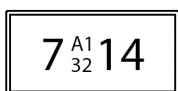
Cylinders must be requalified within 10 years of manufacture (in this illustration by May 2015).

## **B** Requalification Date:

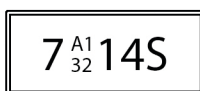
If the cylinder is older than 10 years, look for a "requalification date."



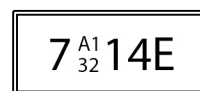
Other possible requalification markings:



No alphabetic expiration date means the cylinder must be requalified within 10 years (by July 2024 in this example).



"S" means the cylinder must be requalified within 10 years (by July 2024 in this example).



"E" means the cylinder must be requalified within 5 years (by July 2019 in this example).



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PHH50-0159-1116

A list of US DOT approved requalifiers and their ID number (RIN) is available on the PHMSA website: <https://portal.phmsa.dot.gov/rinlocator>. See also §173.301

A video guide is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83UUfNIWjuU>  
For more information, contact the Hazmat Info Center: **1-800-467-4922**



# ¿Es su cilindro de propano **SEGURO?**

Cilindros de gas propano deben ser recalificado periódicamente para ser seguro para su uso\*. No use los cilindros que no se han recalificado porque corre el riesgo de daños materiales, lesiones graves o la muerte.

Para ver si su cilindro está bien para usar, busque estas marcas.

## **A** Fecha de Fabricación:

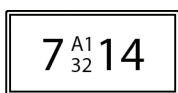
Cilindros deben ser recalificado un plazo de 10 años de fabricación (en esta ilustración de mayo de 2015).

## **B** Fecha de Recalificación:

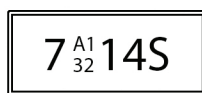
Si el cilindro es mayor de 10 años, busca una "fecha de recalificación."



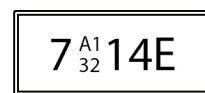
Otras marcas de recalificación posibles:



Sin fecha de vencimiento alfabético significa que el cilindro debe ser recalificado dentro de 10 años (antes de Julio 2024 en este ejemplo).



"S" significa que el cilindro debe ser recalificado dentro de 10 años (Antes de Julio 2024 en este ejemplo).



"E" significa que el cilindro debe ser recalificado dentro de 5 años (Antes de Julio 2019 en este ejemplo).



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Una lista de los recalificadores aprobado DOT de los EE.UU. y su número de identificación (RIN) se encuentra disponible en el sitio web PHMSA: <https://portal.phmsa.dot.gov/rinlocator>

Para más información, por favor llame al Centro de Información de Materiales Peligrosos **1-800-467-4922** y mire al video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83UUfNIWjuU>