



This document has been created to provide guidance on the different types of non-fixed food operations and their individual requirements.

It is important for the plans/paperwork to be approved by the Health Division prior to building a new unit or updating an existing unit. This will make sure any equipment or units purchased will meet the minimum requirements of the licensing jurisdiction.



For information on licensing a non-fixed food operation in Oakland County, contact our plan review department at **248-424-7191** or **OCHDplanreview@oakgov.com**.

Associated documents, including the Special Transitory Food Unit and Mobile Food Establishment Plan Review Manual, Temporary Food Establishment Application and Procedures, and fee schedule can be found at www.oakgov.com/health.

TYPES OF NON-FIXED FOOD OPERATIONS

Food Truck/Trailer

Food trucks/trailers are self-contained units that include mechanical refrigeration, a complete plumbing system with hot and cold running water, and adequate refrigerated and dry storage space for multiple day events.



Basic Requirements

- All food served from the food truck/trailer must be obtained from an approved/licensed source. No home prepared food is allowed on the unit.
- Equipment and capacity requirements are dependent on the proposed menu. Food trucks/trailers that prepare or cook food should contain:
 1. Commercial cooking equipment, refrigerators, and/or freezers.
 2. A three-compartment sink with water that is under pressure with drainboards on both ends. The sink basins must be large enough to handle all items that require warewashing in the truck/trailer.
 3. A hand wash sink with water that is under pressure.
 4. A water heater unit that is sized appropriately to support the hot water needs of the unit.
 5. Adequate refrigerated and dry food storage capacity to support the proposed menu.
 6. Adequately sized fresh water and wastewater storage tanks to support the needs of the unit.
 7. An approved fresh water supply and wastewater disposal location.
 8. Screened pass through service windows.
 9. A power source, which typically includes a generator (a shore/long term power connection is highly recommended).

Related Regulations

- Most of the food safety regulations that pertain to a fixed food service operation are the same for a non-fixed food operation. Employee restrooms are not required on the unit; however, one must be readily available during times of operation.
- An overhead ventilation hood and fire suppression system are usually required. This requirement is regulated by the local fire department.
- There may be local regulations that limit where and when this type of unit operates. An example of this is a vendor's permit that is issued by the local building/zoning department.

Prior to operating, it is highly recommended to check with the local municipality to determine if there are additional regulations or requirements.

Catering/Cold/Steam Table Truck

Catering type trucks carry prepackaged and non-prepackaged pre-made hot and cold food/beverages.

Basic Requirements

- All food served from the food truck must be obtained from an approved/licensed source. No home prepared food is allowed on the unit.
- Food must be maintained at proper temperatures at all times.
- Equipment and capacity requirements are dependent on the proposed menu. Catering type trucks should contain:
 1. Commercial refrigerator and/or freezer.
 2. Adequate power supply.
- Trucks that carry only prepackaged hot or cold foods are not required to have a hand wash sink.



Related Regulations

- Most of the food safety regulations that pertain to a fixed food service operation are the same for a non-fixed food operation. Employee restrooms are not required on the unit; however, one must be readily available during times of operation.
- Fire suppression requirements are regulated by the local fire department.
- There may be local regulations that limit where and when this type of unit operates. An example of this is a vendor's permit that is issued by the local building/zoning department. Prior to operating, it is highly recommended to check with the local municipality to determine if there are additional regulations or requirements.

Additional Requirements

- Due to the limited infrastructure, catering type trucks usually work out of an approved licensed commissary.

Prior to operating, it is highly recommended to check with the local municipality to determine if there are additional regulations or requirements.

Pushcart/Small Trailer

Pushcarts come in two varieties, those in which the operator stands on the ground and those in which the operator stands inside the cart. Typically, pushcarts do not have mechanical refrigeration.

Basic Requirements

- All food served from the pushcart must be obtained from an approved/licensed source. No home prepared food is allowed on the unit.
- Pushcarts have very limited capacity and typically require an additional set-up with storage, warewashing, and water capacity.
- Equipment and capacity requirements are dependent on the proposed menu. Pushcarts should contain:
 1. Steamers/warmers and/or a fixed grill/griddle manufactured into the body of the pushcart.
 2. Adequate power supply, as needed.
 3. Ice coolers or refrigerators as cold holding equipment.
 4. Overhead protection.
 5. A hand wash sink with water that is under pressure.
 6. A water heater that is sized appropriately to support the hot water needs of the pushcart.
 7. All food and beverages shall remain in closed/covered containers during service.
 8. Attached warewashing sinks. If the attached sinks are too small to fit the food storage containers, additional warewashing means shall be provided.
 9. Fresh water storage. If the attached water supply storage capacity is limited, additional fresh water capacity shall be provided.
 10. Additional dry storage capacity that keeps product off the ground.



Related Regulations

- Most of the food safety regulations that pertain to a fixed food service operation are the same for a non-fixed food operation. Employee restrooms are not required with the unit; however, one must be readily available during times of operation.
- Fire suppression requirements are regulated by the local fire department.
- There may be local regulations that limit where and when this type of unit operates. An example of this is a vendor's permit that is issued by the local building/zoning department.

Prior to operating, it is highly recommended to check with the local municipality to determine if there are additional regulations or requirements.

Knockdown/Tent Concession

A knockdown concession typically consists of a tent and tables that must be built for each event. At first glance, it seems like the easiest way to get into the non-fixed food business, however, knockdown concessions typically require the most work.

Basic Requirements

- All food served from the knockdown concession must be obtained from an approved/licensed source. No home prepared food is allowed in the concession.
- Equipment and capacity requirements are dependent on the proposed menu. Knockdown concessions that prepare or cook food should contain:
 1. Commercial cooking equipment, refrigerators and/or freezers.
 2. A three-compartment warewashing set-up with adequate water supply. The basins must be large enough to handle all items that require warewashing in the concession.
 3. Means to store soiled equipment prior to cleaning and means to air-dry equipment after sanitizing.
 4. A hand wash set-up with water that is under pressure.
 5. A water heater unit that is sized appropriately to support the hot water needs of the concession.
 6. Adequate refrigerated and dry food storage capacity to support the proposed menu.
 7. Adequately sized fresh water and wastewater storage tanks to support the needs of the unit.
 8. An approved fresh water supply and wastewater disposal location.
 9. Some type of flooring (typically a tarp or mats) if a cement surface is not available. A knockdown concession must be set-up on a surface that is durable and cleanable. Surfaces such as grass, gravel, or sand are not approved.
 10. Overhead protection shall be provided. An enclosed tent is typically required when food preparation is being conducted. Some local fire regulations may require the cooking equipment to be located outside of the overhead protection.
 11. Adequate power supply, which typically includes a generator (a shore/long term power connection is highly recommended).
- All food and beverages shall remain in closed/covered containers during service.



Related Regulations

- Most of the food safety regulations that pertain to a fixed food service operation are the same for a non-fixed food operation. One exception is that an employee restroom is not required with the unit; however, one must be readily available during times of operation.
- Fire suppression requirements are regulated by the local fire department.
- There may be local regulations that limit where and when this type of unit operates. An example of this is a vendor's permit that is issued by the local building/zoning department.

Prior to operating, it is highly recommended to check with the local municipality to determine if there are additional regulations or requirements.

Portable Grill/Smoker Unit

A portable grill/smoker is a cooking unit that is typically mounted to the frame of a trailer.

Basic Requirements

- All food served from the portable grill/smoker unit must be obtained from an approved/licensed source. No home prepared food is allowed on the unit.
- Equipment and capacity requirements are dependent on the proposed menu. Portable grill/smoker units typically utilize a knockdown concession as a part of their operation and should contain:
 1. Commercial cooking equipment, refrigerator, and/or freezer.
 2. Adequate power supply.
 3. A three-compartment sink with water that is under pressure with drainboards on both ends. The sink basins must be large enough to handle all the items that require warewashing from the operation.
 4. A hand wash sink with water that is under pressure.
 5. A water heater unit that is sized appropriately to support the hot water needs of the operation.
 6. Adequate refrigerated and dry food storage capacity to support the proposed menu.
 7. Adequately sized fresh water and wastewater storage tanks to support the needs of the operation.
 8. An approved fresh water supply and wastewater disposal location.
 9. Some type of flooring (typically a tarp or mat) needs to be provided if a cement surface is not available. Surfaces such as grass, gravel or sand are not approved.
 10. Overhead protection shall be provided. An enclosed tent is typically required when food preparation is being conducted. Some local fire regulations may require the cooking equipment to be located outside of the overhead protection.
- All food and beverages shall remain in closed/covered containers during service.



Related Regulations

- Most of the food safety regulations that pertain to a fixed food service operation are the same for a non-fixed food operation. Employee restrooms are not required with the unit; however, one must be readily available during times of operation.
- Fire suppression requirements are regulated by the local fire department.
- There may be local regulations that limit where and when this type of unit operates. An example of this is a vendor's permit that is issued by the local building/zoning department.

Prior to operating, it is highly recommended to check with the local municipality to determine if there are additional regulations or requirements.

LICENSING OPTIONS

Michigan has three types of licenses available for a non-fixed food operation:

1. Mobile Food License

This type of license requires the operation to return to an approved commissary kitchen at least once every twenty-four (24) hours. Food preparation, extra food and paper product storage, and equipment cleaning and maintenance is conducted at the commissary location. A mobile food unit can serve food in any county in Michigan as long as it returns to the commissary every twenty-four (24) hours when in operation. The county where the commissary kitchen is located is usually the licensing agency for the mobile food license. Food and equipment may not be stored within a personal home. This type of operation requires a plan review, annual license, two (2) annual inspections, and a food safety certified manager. The dates and locations of operation, or a route schedule, must be provided to the licensing health department.

2. Special Transitory Food Unit License (STFU)

This type of license does not require the operation to return to an approved commissary kitchen at least once every twenty-four (24) hours, and usually includes additional storage along with additional capacities to clean and service the equipment and utensils. Any county in Michigan can license this type of operation and the STFU can serve food in any county. It is recommended that an STFU license is obtained from the county where the STFU operation is located most frequently. This type of operation requires a plan review, an annual license, two (2) annual paid inspections while in operation, and a food safety certified manager. Notification of Operation forms must be provided to the local health department where the STFU will be operating at least four (4) days prior to operation.

3. Temporary Food License

This type of license is valid for fourteen (14) consecutive days in the same location and is issued by the county where the food service is being conducted. A new licensing application and payment must be made every fourteen (14) days or for each individual event. The license is issued the first day of the event prior to the beginning of food preparation. A plan review and certified manager are not required. Oakland County will not issue more than six (6) consecutive temporary licenses to the same operator operating out of the same permanent structure/location.

There are several limiting factors related to non-fixed food operations including cold food storage capacity, dry food storage capacity, clean water storage capacity, and wastewater storage capacity. These limitations minimize the ability for the operation to conduct certain complex food processes, such as, cooling of hot food items or washing and preparation of fresh produce. A licensed commissary/support kitchen is typically needed if complex food processes will be conducted.

A Quick Summary of Non-Fixed Food Operations

Licensing Options and Requirements	Special Transitory Food Unit (STFU)	Mobile	Temporary Food
Annual food service license	●	●	
License expires after 14 consecutive days and is only good for one location			●
Plan review required	●	●	
Certified food safety manager required	●	●	
Licensed commissary (must return to commissary at least every 24 hours of operation)		●	
Licensed support kitchen (may be required depending on proposed menu and equipment)	●		●
Two paid annual routine inspections between May 1 - April 30 required	●		
Two annual routine inspections required		●	
Submittal of Intent to Operate form required	●		
Approved standard operating procedures (SOPs) and menu required on unit during operation	●		
Overhead protection required	●	●	●
Approved potable water source and approved wastewater disposal	●	●	●
Hand washing and warewashing (utilizing hot water) required	●	●	●
Additional regulations from local fire departments and/or local municipalities may be required	●	●	●
All food must be obtained from an approved source (no food stored or prepared in a home kitchen)	●	●	●
Food Truck	●	●	●
Food Trailer	●	●	●
Pushcart	●	●	●
Knockdown Tent	●	●	●
Portable Grill/Smoker	●	●	●
Catering Truck (Cold/Steam Table)		●	●