

# Mobile Food Unit Guidelines



Washoe County



Health District

Washoe County Health District  
1001 E. Ninth Street  
Reno, Nevada 89512  
(775) 328-2434  
[www.washoecounty.us/health](http://www.washoecounty.us/health)

## **INTRODUCTION**

A **Food Establishment Permit to Operate** is required when food or drinks are sold, offered or displayed for sale, or served. Food establishment permits can be obtained in the Environmental Health Services Division of the Washoe County Health District (WCHD) located at 1001 E. Ninth St., Reno, Nevada. These guidelines will help you become familiar with the requirements and procedures for selling foods from a Mobile Food Unit. The term “Mobile Food Unit” refers to any moveable unit from which food is sold. This includes pushcarts, cold trucks, hot trucks, ice cream trucks, frozen food trucks and trailers that can be towed. The information provided pertains to annual food permits and does not include information for temporary/special events. Information for temporary/special events can be obtained at the WCHD.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

The Food Establishment Permit to Operate may not be the only permit or license that will be required to operate your Mobile Food Unit in Washoe County. Laws and ordinances within City, County, and State boundaries may not allow you to sell in certain areas without their own form of approval. Attached is a list of other agencies you should contact prior to starting your business.

**Prior to building a new Mobile Food Unit (push cart, hot truck, trailer, etc.) or a new Mobile Food Depot, a set of plans must be submitted to and approved by the Health Authority.**

### **Steps to Obtaining a Mobile Food Unit Permit**

#### **Step 1: Read the Washoe County District Board of Health Regulations Governing Food Establishments (Regulations)**

- Obtain a copy of these Regulations at WCHD (\$5.00) or find them online at <http://www.co.washoe.nv.us/health/ehs/regulations.html>.
- Attached is a portion of the Regulations that pertain to Mobile Food Units. This section will be helpful in getting started with the permitting process, but it may be necessary to obtain the full document.

#### **Step 2: Decide on a Menu**

- The items on your menu will determine what type of vehicle, depot and equipment will be needed to support your specific operation.
- Read the Regulations carefully, some food items are not allowed to be served from a Mobile Food Unit.

- Do not hesitate to call us with questions; the menu must be approved prior to the issuance of the Mobile Food Unit Permit.

### **Step 3: Decide what Type of Mobile Food Unit**

- Push cart, hot truck, cold truck, ice cream truck, frozen food truck, or trailer.
- The type of vehicle will determine the manner in which you operate your business as well as what will be required at your Mobile Food Depot.
- Prior to purchasing or constructing a Mobile Food Unit it is advisable to contact the WCHD to determine if the vehicle will meet the Regulations for the type of operation you are planning. This preliminary step may help you avoid costly changes to the vehicle.
- Basic requirements for all Mobile Food Units (except for Ice cream and Hot Holding Trucks) include:
  - Name of business on two sides of vehicle;
  - Mechanical refrigeration (ice and/or cold plates may be approved in some cases);
  - Hot and cold running water under pressure;
  - Potable water tank;
  - Wastewater tank (min. 15% larger than potable water tank);
  - Hand sink; and
  - Sink for cleaning utensils
- Other requirements will apply depending on your type of Mobile Food Unit:
  - **Hot truck, trailer**  
-Cleanable walls, floors and ceiling;  
-Proper ventilation; and  
-Proper lighting
  - **Frozen/ice cream truck**  
-Inverter for power.
  - **Push Carts**  
-Umbrella or other protective awning; and  
-Restricted menu

### **Step 4: Find an Approved Mobile Food Depot**

- All Mobile Food Units are required to work out of a Mobile Food Depot - **there are no exceptions to this requirement.** Mobile Food Depots are an approved location where the Mobile Food Unit is serviced and stored. The depot must be a permitted food establishment or you must obtain a permit to operate the depot. Mobile Food Depots serve as facilities to:

- Obtain potable water;
  - Disposal of wastewater;
  - Disposal of garbage;
  - Storage of vehicle;
  - Storage of food and other needed items;
  - Backup refrigeration;
  - Food preparation; and
  - Utensil/dishwashing and any other cleaning
- If the food establishment has a permit to operate a depot permit is not required. However, a Mobile Food Depot Authorization form to operate the Mobile Food Unit from that food establishment must be submitted to and approved by the health authority. The WCHD does not maintain a list of available food establishments of Mobile Food Depots.
  - Some operators find facilities they can permit as a food establishment themselves such as storage units, warehouses, or other places of business.
  - Depots must be inspected and approved by the WCHD prior to operation.
  - All of the above items may not be needed if they can occur solely on the vehicle, or if they are not needed due to the limited menu items.
  - **A MOBILE FOOD DEPOT WILL ALWAYS BE REQUIRED.**

#### **Step 5: Apply for Health Permits**

- Submit a completed application for permit to operate a Mobile Food Unit to the WCHD.
- Submit a completed supplemental application to operate a Mobile Food Unit to the WCHD.
- Submit a completed application for permit to operate a Mobile Food Depot or submit a Mobile Food Depot Authorization form.
- Call the WCHD at 328-2434 for current permit fees.

#### **Step 6: Make Appointment**

- Generally your health inspector will contact you to set up your appointment.
- If several days have elapsed since the time of permit application, you may call the WCHD to set up an inspection of the Mobile Food Unit and the Mobile Food Depot at (775) 328-2434.
- Approval must be given and permits issued prior to operating your business.

**Other Topics and Requirements**

The WCHD is not the only agency that requires permits and/or licenses. Below is list of other agencies that may have additional requirements. It is advisable to contact each agency. **There may be other agencies not listed that may have additional requirements as well.**

**Other Permitting Agency Contact Information**

<p><b>Washoe County Health District (WCHD)</b> (775) 328-2434 1001 E. Ninth Street Fax (775) 328-6176 P.O. Box 11130 Reno, Nevada 89520-0027 <a href="http://www.washoecounty.us/health">http://www.washoecounty.us/health</a></p> <p>WCHD Regulations: <a href="http://www.co.washoe.nv.us/health/ehs/regulations.html">http://www.co.washoe.nv.us/health/ehs/regulations.html</a></p> <p><b>Washoe County Business License</b> (775) 328-3733 1001 E Ninth Street Fax (775) 328-6133 P.O. Box 11130 Reno, Nevada 89520-0027</p>	<p><b>Reno Business License</b> (775) 334-2090 1 East First Street Fax (775) 334-1212 Second Floor Reno, Nevada 89501</p> <p><b>Reno Environmental Control</b> (775) 334-2168 (Grease interceptors)</p> <p><b>Sparks Business License</b> (775) 353-2360 431 Prater Way Fax (775) 353-7802 Sparks, Nevada 89431</p> <p><b>Sparks Environmental Control</b> (775) 861-4152 (Grease interceptors)</p> <p><b>State of Nevada Bureau of Health Protection</b> (775) 687-7548 1179 Fairview Dr. #104 (775) 687 7539 Carson City, Nevada 89701</p>
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**To verify the information provided and obtain specific regulations contact the appropriate agencies listed above.**

**The information included in the following chart is to be used as a guideline to determine what each agency may require.**

## Mobile Food Unit Regulatory Requirements

	WCHD	Reno	Sparks	Washoe County
Mobile Truck	Permit NRS 446.870	Annual business license	Annual business license	Annual business license
Truck and Trailer	Permit NRS 446.870	Annual business license	Annual business license	Annual business license
Push Carts	Permit NRS 446.870	Sidewalk vendor permit provided it meets RMC 5.15	Only downtown Special events	Annual business license
Park at Home	Prohibited	Determined by size of vehicle and location	Prohibited	Yes, must meet home business regulations
Sell on Private lot	Permit	Yes, with written permission of property owner and annual business license	Yes, but needs to be mobile	Yes, need written permission from property owner*
Sell on Street	Permit	Non-dedicated streets with annual business license <b>or</b> ice cream peddlers license	No, Section 10.48.190 Ice cream/Yes with approval through police department	No, Ice Cream truck Okay
Sell in park	Permit	No - Special events only	No	Park approval
Length of time allowed to park	N/A	N/A	½ hour stay**	No more than 4 hours
Depots allowed	Required	N/A	?	Yes
Grease Interceptor	Notify City	Verify Capacity	Environmental control mobile permit***	N/A
Business License/cart	City Req.	Sidewalk vendor RMC 5.15	Yes	Yes
Business License Mobile	City Req.	Annual mobile vending license	Yes	Yes
Business License Frozen Truck	City Req.	Ice cream peddler license	Yes, each truck	Yes
Permit Transferable (location change)	No- New permit, Inspections Required	No- New license Inspections Required	No- New license Inspections Required	No- New license Inspections Required
Change in Ownership	New permit, Inspection Etc. Required	New license Inspections Etc. Required	New license Inspections Etc. Required	New license Inspections Etc. Required
Peddlers	N/A	Privilege license Required	License required through business department and police department	Temporary License
Car Wash grey-water disposal	N/A	N/A	Prohibited	

\* Temporary License required-31 days calendar year max

\*\* Need temporary permit to sell in one location for more that ½ an hour.

\*\*\* Sparks, Spanish Springs, Sun Valley