



Elkhart County Health Department

Environmental Health Services

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FOOD TRUCK BASICS

This document is only a brief outline of the requirements to operate a mobile food service.

The fully detailed requirements for planning and designing a mobile unit and commissary are found in Elkhart County Health Department's MOBILE FOOD SERVICE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS and FOOD SERVICE PLAN REVIEW CHECKLIST & APPLICATION FORM documents.

There are two parts to food truck operation

- The commissary is the base of operations where the truck returns each day for servicing and where storage of supplies, advanced preparation and cleaning occurs. EVERY MOBILE MUST HAVE A COMMISSARY.
- The truck itself

Identify types of food to be served and size and scope of operation required

- What equipment is necessary in the truck to prepare and serve? In the commissary?
- How big does the truck need to be? Whatever you think is big enough, it's not. Go bigger.
- Just big enough to barely fit the necessary equipment won't be big enough to work in. You'll wish you had more space.

Find a potential commissary

- It must have a servicing area with overhead protection for loading, unloading and cleaning the truck.
- An awning or canopy is the minimum requirement, a covered loading dock or garage door to completely pull inside are the best options.
- There must be an approved water supply connection to fill the fresh water holding tank and an approved sewer or septic system connection to drain the wastewater holding tank.

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Commissary Options

- A) Existing restaurant adding a mobile
 - Identify what modifications are necessary for commissary operations
 - Verify planning and zoning approval is possible
 - Building permits required?
 - ECHD plan review and approval
- B) Shared facility- co-op of existing food service
 - Is it already a commissary?
 - If not see A above
 - Plan review and written contract for shared facility
 - You must have your own food license to operate at the commissary
- C) Build new from the ground up
 - Verify planning and zoning approval is possible
 - Building permits required?
 - ECHD plan review and approval

The food truck

- Purchase used existing
- Purchase new pre-fabricated base model
- Order custom built model
- Submit plans for review and approval of layout before buying or ordering any unit
- What motor vehicle operator licenses, registrations and insurance are required?

After plans have been reviewed and approved and you have obtained any necessary building permits you may begin construction activities for the commissary and purchase the vehicle. You will need licensing inspections for the commissary and truck as well as any required motor vehicle licenses and solicitor/peddler permits before you can operate.