



AUSTIN/TRAVIS COUNTY HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
 ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION

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**Walk-in Location:** 1520 Rutherford LN, NE corner of Rutherford LN @ Cameron RD, Building 1 East Entrance (Not a Mailing Address)

**Mobile Food Business: Requirements & General Information**

**Permit Background**

The Mobile Food Vendor permit allows a vendor to sell, serve, or give away food/beverages to the public. Under the provisions of this permit, a vendor may offer food and/or beverages from a mobile vending unit. The permit does not replace or supersede the base food enterprise permit and is required for all mobile vendors operating within the City of Austin, Travis County or contracted municipalities.

**Permit Types**

Vendors can apply for a Restricted or Unrestricted Mobile Food Vendor permit.

**Unrestricted:** Under this permit type a vendor can offer food that is packaged and/or prepared in the mobile unit.

**Restricted:** Under this permit type a vendor can only offer prepackaged foods. These vendors cannot conduct food handling or open food preparation. All food items, including beverages and condiments, must be prepackaged at an approved food establishment by the employees of that establishment or come prepackaged from an approved source.

**Operational Jurisdictions**

Vendors who want to operate in the City of Austin need to apply for a City of Austin Mobile Vending permit. Vendors who want to operate in the unincorporated areas of Travis County will require a separate Travis County Mobile Vending Permit. Contracted municipalities also require a separate City of Austin Mobile Vending permit for permission to operate within those city limits. Currently, those municipalities include Manor, West Lake Hills, Rollingwood, Lakeway, Bee Cave, Sunset Valley, and Volente.

**Permitting Location And Times**

Permitting and inspection for Mobile Food Vendors takes place from 7:45 AM to 12:00 PM, Tuesday & Thursday mornings at 1520 Rutherford Ln. (Building 1), Austin, TX. Operators must obtain a visitor sticker from security officer where mobile vending vehicles are staged. Then, sign in with the Environmental Health Officer located in Suite 205 to apply for a permit and secure a place in line. Vendors who fail to arrive before 11:00 AM without a complete application will not receive an inspection on that day.



Vendors must provide their own source of power, if applying for a *new* mobile food unit permit or undergoing a re-inspection, to demonstrate full equipment functionality. Power sources are not available at the permitting location.

**Initial Permitting Process**

All mobile vendors must obtain a Mobile Food Vendor permit before operating within the City of Austin/Travis County/Contracted municipalities. The permit process will require an application review and a physical inspection of the mobile unit. Vendors must complete the application review and pass the physical inspection before they receive a permit.

- **Application review** requires submission of: 1) permit application 2) supporting documents 3) payment in full
  - Supporting documentation may include active sales tax permit, current government photo ID with an address, signed restroom agreement, current itinerary, a notarized central preparation facility agreement (no older than 30 days prior to date of submission), and out of jurisdiction form (if applicable).
  - Travis County permits only require a completed application, signed central preparation facility form and current government photo ID
  
- **Physical inspection** requires the unit be present at the time of permitting *see Permitting Location & Times*

**Permit Expiration**

Mobile Food Vendor permits expire annually, one year from the date approved. Vendors must renew their permit on or before the expiration date. (Please note: the earliest a permit may be renewed is 45 days prior to the permit’s expiration date). Failure to renew the permit on or before expiration will result in the assessment of a late fee.

Vendors will receive a reminder notification, by mail, prior to permit’s expiration. Failure to receive the notification does not absolve the mobile owner/operator from the responsibility of applying for permit renewal prior to expiration.

**Operational Requirements**

Any and all vending activity must occur inside the permitted mobile food unit.

The unit must remain in a state of ready mobility at all times. Do not add permanent utility (gas, electrical, or plumbing) connections or any other connections to the unit which would prevent it from being readily mobile. Hold all equipment or service items utilized in the operation on the unit or at the Central Preparation Facility (CPF) at all times. Do not place operational items on the ground surface off of unit. This includes, but is not limited to: coolers, propane tanks, generators, BBQ pits, disposal bins (for oil, grease, etc.) and cash registers.

**Wastewater Disposal (Grey Water)**

All wastewater generated must be kept in a manner which does not create unsanitary conditions while being held for disposal. Disposal of all wastewater must occur in a continuous manner. Once wastewater is removed from the unit it must be taken to the CPF for immediate disposal. No staging of wastewater off the unit for future disposal is allowed except at the vendor’s CPF on record. Vendors may utilize approved waste haulers to service the unit directly under the following guidelines: Pumping of liquid and grease waste must occur from the exterior of unit in a manner which does not result in contamination of unit or ground surface. Records of all service visits (i.e. trip tickets) conducted must be maintained on the unit at all times for review at the request of the Health Department. Waste hauler contracts must be approved by Environmental Health Services prior to conducting wastewater hauling operations.

**Certified Food Manager & Registered Food Handlers**

Vendors with an Unrestricted Mobile Food Vendor permit must obtain and post at least one (1) employee’s original and valid City of Austin Certified Food Manager Certificate (City of Austin only). The original document must be visible on the unit, for the Health Department to review at all times of operation. Failure to comply with this requirement will result in a re-inspection for an additional fee and/or filing legal charges against the unit’s owner/responsible party. Employees not certified as food managers must complete a Food Handlers course certified by the State of Texas.

**Mobile Unit Re-Inspections**

Deficiencies observed during a mobile vending inspection may require the department to perform a re-inspection. If the department issues a re-inspection notice, the vendor must bring the unit to the permitting location for inspection and there will be a re-inspection fee assessed. (*Note: Re-inspection fees only assessed in City of Austin & contracted municipalities. See Permitting Location And Times*)

## SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR PUSHCART AND FOOT PEDDLERS

### Pushcart Units

Requirements for a Mobile Food Vending Pushcart permit:

- Pushcarts must be non-motorized.
- Pushcarts must be maneuverable by one person when fully loaded.
- Austin's Right-of-Way Management limits pushcart to dimensions of 4' X 5' for all vendors operating on City of Austin right-of-ways
  - There are no specific dimensions for pushcarts required by the Health Department
- Pushcart construction must be smooth, durable, and easily cleanable surfaces.
- Unrestricted Mobile Vending Permit Pushcarts
  - Unrestricted Pushcarts must provide an overhead covering mounted to unit covering the entire food preparation and service area.
  - Unrestricted Pushcarts must provide three fully enclosed sides of protection to the food preparation and service area. The sides must extend above the preparation and service area to the extent that it provides adequate protection from potential contamination.
  - Unrestricted Pushcarts must provide a 3-compartment sink with hot and cold water supplied under pressure and a separate hand sink
  - Unrestricted Pushcarts must meet the physical requirements for fresh/wastewater holding tanks (10 gallon minimum) and fill/clean-out valves.
  - Due to a lack of full enclosure the list of food offered is limited to: coffee, hot dogs, sausages, and frozen treats such as snow cones or ice cream
    - All other foods need specific approval from the Health Department.
- Restricted Mobile Vending Permit Pushcarts
  - Restricted Pushcarts must adhere to the same requirements outlined for all Restricted Mobile Vendor permits.

### Foot Peddler (Restricted Mobile Food Vendor)

The Restricted Mobile Food Vending Foot Peddler permit is for vendors who provide food that is not held on the mobile vending unit. Under the provisions of this permit, a vendor must adhere to the same guidelines in place for Restricted Mobile Food Vendors; providing only prepackaged food items from an approved source. Additionally all item storage and vending must occur from this single conveyance device. Foot Peddlers may not use tables or stands in conjunction with this type of operation.

\* Single Conveyance Devices may include coolers or small ice chests. Ice chests must be lite enough for an individual foot peddler to carry when fully loaded.