Food Cart

A food cart (FC) is a food and beverage service establishment that is a nonmotorized vehicle self-propelled by the operator. All FC must operate in compliance with the Minnesota food code. This fact sheet provides information about plan review, licensing, and operation of a FC in Minnesota.

**Plan submittal and licensing**

Individuals or groups interested in operating a food cart must submit a plan review application with fees and obtain prior approval.

The menu and location of operation determine which agency is responsible for plan review and licensing. To determine whether your license will be issued by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) or another agency, see the [Licensing](#) website.

MDH plan review submittal requirements, application, and additional resources are available at the [Plan Review](#) website.

Once plans are approved and construction is completed contact MDH to request a license application. **The license fee is separate from the plan review fee.** Submit the completed license application and required license fee before contacting MDH to request a preoperational inspection.

Contact MDH 14 days before the first day of operation to schedule a preoperational inspection. MDH staff cannot conduct inspections at a private residence. Have all equipment present, correctly installed and operational.

MDH will issue a license after approval. Post the original license on the unit at all times. The license is valid for one year and must be renewed annually.

**Construction and location**

The FC must be constructed to NSF Standard No. 59. A FC operation must be from a single self-contained unit. Tables, picnic coolers and other equipment may not be used with the FC. The FC cannot be changed or altered from its original design.

Locate the cart away from possible contamination sources. Carts located outdoors must be equipped with an easily cleanable, detachable awning or umbrella. Carts located indoors must not be located on carpet.

**Commissary**

A commissary is a permanent food establishment that is approved for the purpose of providing support services that are not available on the unit.

FC component that requires cleaning and maintenance must return to a permanent approved commissary each day of operation for supply and cleaning.
The following support services take place at the commissary.

- Food preparation - washing or cutting produce, cooking, cooling
- Storage of food, utensils and single-service items
- Cleaning and sanitizing of utensils and equipment
- Storage of the FC
- Fresh water supply and grey water disposal

### Equipment

The FC must be equipped with a handwashing sink supplied with hot and cold running water under pressure or by gravity. The handwashing sink must be supplied with soap and disposable towels.

Provide single-service articles, such as paper cups or plates and plastic utensils for customer use.

### Food sources

All food, beverages and ice must be obtained from approved sources. Ice must be stored and handled as a food product. Drained ice used to cool beverages must not be used in drinks or food preparation.

Food cannot be prepared or stored in a home. Off-site preparation or storage must be done at a commissary.

### Water supply

Water must be from an approved source. Some approved sources are a public water supply system or commercially bottled drinking water.

### Sewage disposal

Wastewater must be removed in such a manner that a public health hazard or nuisance is not created. Wastewater must be discharged into a sanitary sewage system. Dumping any wastewater onto the ground or storm sewer is prohibited.

### Resources

- [Licensing](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/index.html)
- [Plan Review](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/planreview.html)
- [Food Business Safety](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/index.html)

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