



# Mobile Food Unit, Seasonal Temporary Food Stand, and Seasonal Permanent Food Stand Construction Guide

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION  
FOOD, POOLS, AND LODGING SERVICES SECTION

**MDH** Minnesota  
Department of Health

## MOBILE FOOD UNIT, SEASONAL TEMPORARY FOOD STAND, AND SEASONAL PERMANENT FOOD STAND CONSTRUCTION GUIDE

Minnesota Department of Health

Environmental Health Division

Food, Pools, and Lodging Services Section

P.O. Box 64975

St. Paul, Minnesota 55164-0975

Phone: 651-201-4500

Website: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/planreview.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/planreview.html)

*If you require this document in another format contact 651-201-4500.*

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# Purpose

This document is intended to assist individuals or groups in submitting plans to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) for mobile food units (MFU), seasonal temporary food (STF) stands, and seasonal permanent food (SPF) stands. Construction, equipment, and operational standards outlined in this guide are minimum requirements per the Minnesota food code.

MFU, STF, and SPF in Minnesota are licensed by a variety of different agencies. The menu and location of operation will be used to determine which agency is responsible for plan review, licensing, and inspection.

To determine whether your license will be issued by MDH, your local jurisdiction, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), or Indian Health Services, see the Food, Pools, and Lodging Services' website at [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/index.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/index.html) or call MDH at 651-201-4500.

**MDH will not review plans nor license mobile food units and seasonal temporary food stands that do not have scheduled events or areas of operation in MDH jurisdictions.**

# Definitions

Minnesota Statutes, section 157.15 defines a mobile food unit, seasonal temporary food stand, and seasonal permanent food stand as:

## Mobile Food Unit

“Mobile food unit means a food and beverage service establishment that is a vehicle mounted unit, either:

(1) motorized or trailered, operating no more than 21 days annually at any one place, or operating more than 21 days annually at any one place with the approval of the regulatory authority as defined in Minnesota Rules, part 4626.0020, subpart 70; or

(2) operated in conjunction with a permanent business licensed under this chapter (157) or chapter 28A at the site of the permanent business by the same individual or company, and readily movable, without disassembling, for transport to another location.

## Seasonal Temporary Food Stand

“Seasonal temporary food stand” means a food and beverage service establishment that is a food stand which is disassembled and moved from location and location, but which operates no more than 21 days annually at any one location, except as provided in paragraph (b).

(b) A seasonal temporary food stand may operate for more than 21 days annually at any one place with the approval of the regulatory authority, as defined in Minnesota Rules, part 4626.0020, subpart 70, that has jurisdiction over the seasonal temporary food stand.

## Seasonal Permanent Food Stand

“Seasonal permanent food stand” means a food and beverage service establishment that is a permanent food service stand or building, but operates no more than 21 days annually.

# Restrictions

Menu and process determine the type of equipment required and whether the operation can be approved. Complex food items usually require additional or specialized equipment, and will not be approved unless necessary equipment is provided.

All food storage and preparation must take place in the stand, unit or at a permanent approved food establishment. Food may not be stored or prepared in a private home.

The challenges of safely preparing, storing, and transporting large volumes of food typically associated with catered events present increased food safety risks. Catering operations cannot be conducted from MFU, STF or SPF unless approved by the regulatory authority and adequate provision is made for the safe storage and handling of the large volume of foods associated with catered events.

([Minnesota Statutes, sections 157.15 and 157.16](#))  
([Minnesota Rules, parts 4626.0130; 4626.1425; 4626.1720, item D](#))

## Plan Submittal and Review

**Plans must be submitted to MDH at least 30 days before beginning construction, extensive remodeling or conversion of an existing structure to MFU, STF or SPF.** Follow steps outlined in Plan Review Process and Plan Submittal sections.

### Plan Review Process

The MDH plan review process follows these steps:

#### New construction or extensive remodeling\*

*\*Extensive remodeling is an addition or change to the physical facility, major equipment addition or the addition of equipment due to menu change of MFU, STF or SPF.*

1. Submit your plan review application, all required information and appropriate fee. MFU, STF or SPF plan review application is available at [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/praptfs.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/praptfs.pdf).
2. MDH plan review staff reviews plans in the order they are received. In order to provide timely and accurate review of your application, all required information listed in "[Plan Submittal](#)" must be received before MDH staff can complete your plan review.
3. MDH plan review staff calls or emails you when review starts, and to request any needed additional information.
4. When review is complete, you will receive a letter reporting the findings of the review (approval or denial).
5. Wait to begin construction until after plans are approved.

#### Previously or currently licensed in another state

1. Submit pages 1 and 2 of your plan review application and appropriate fee. MFU, STF or SPF plan review application is available at [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/praptfs.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/praptfs.pdf).
2. MDH plan review staff reviews plans in the order they are received. MDH staff will contact you to make an appointment to inspect your MFU or STF.
3. If MFU or STF does meet requirements, MDH staff will provide a license application.
4. If modifications are required before licensure, you will need to complete all steps for new construction or remodeling.

In some circumstances, MDH can issue a license without plan submittal and review for MFU, STF or SPF if the establishment has previously been licensed by MDA or MDH- or MDA-delegated agency. However, an inspection and license fee is required to determine if the MFU, STF or SPF is in compliance with Minnesota statutes and rules, and other applicable regulations.

Please contact MDH at 651-201-4500 if you have questions about whether a plan review is needed for your MFU, STF or SPF.

## Plan Submittal

Submit plans with the completed application, all the required information and correct fee to:

Mailing Address	Street Address
Minnesota Department of Health Food, Pools, and Lodging Services - Plan Review P.O. Box 64975 St. Paul, MN 55164-0975	Minnesota Department of Health Orville L. Freeman Building 625 Robert Street North St. Paul, MN 55155

Plans may take up to **30 days** to review. Incomplete plans may take longer. Your plan review will not be completed until all information has been received. Make sure to include all of the following when you submit your completed plan review application and the required fees.

- A brief description of the proposed project.
- Intended menu including a description of how, when, and where food will be received, stored, prepared, and served.
- Easily readable layout to scale indicating the location of all equipment (e.g., cooking equipment, hood, refrigerators, food prep counters, handwashing sink(s), three-compartment sink, and food prep sink).
- Intended materials for floors, base coving, walls and ceilings.
- Manufacturer’s equipment specifications sheets for all equipment, including sinks.
- Size of water heater, and fresh water and wastewater holding tanks.
- Intended materials for counters and cabinetry.
- Commissary agreement, if required.
- List of intended, scheduled events or areas of operation if known.

In addition to the items listed above, other information may be requested during the plan review process.

For further information and application, please refer to the websites below or contact MDH at 651-201-4500.

Mobile Food Unit: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/mfureview.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/mfureview.html)

Seasonal Temporary Food Stand: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/tempseason.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/tempseason.html)

Seasonal Permanent Food Stand: [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/seasperm.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/food/license/seasperm.html)

# Licensing and Preoperational Inspection

Once plans are approved and construction is completed, follow these steps to get your MFU, STF, or SPF licensed:

**1. Apply for a license.**

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.

**2. Have your MFU, STF or SPF inspected.**

Contact MDH 14 days before the first event to schedule a preoperational inspection. Bring the MFU or STF to an agreed MDH office or public location for the preoperational inspection. MDH staff cannot conduct inspections at a private residence. Have all equipment present, correctly installed and operational. Completely set up a STF. SPF preoperational inspections are conducted on site.

**3. Post the license during operation.**

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

[\(Minnesota Statutes, section 157.16\)](#)

[\(Minnesota Rules, parts 4626.0020, 4626.1720, 4626.1725, 4626.1745, 4626.1750, 4626.1755, 4626.1765, 4626.1770\)](#)

# General Equipment Information

Include specifications, proposed locations and intended uses for all equipment in submitted plans.

## Equipment Design and Construction

The most common certifying groups for equipment are:

Certifying Group	Mark
NSF International (NSF)	
Intertek Marked "ETL Sanitation."	
Underwriters Laboratory (UL) Marked "classified UL EPH."	
Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Marked "CSA sanitation to NSF/ANSI."	

Equipment may not be changed or altered from its original design.

All custom fabricated equipment must be made by an NSF custom fabricator and bear a sticker indicating the equipment meets the standard. Equipment must be designed for its intended use. Equipment (e.g., heating elements for hot holding units, sinks, smokers or any other equipment) cannot be homemade.

Used equipment may be approved as part of your plan if it:

- Met existing applicable standards when it was manufactured.
- Is in good repair.
- Is easy to clean.
- Has non-toxic food-contact surfaces.
- Does not pose a health hazard.

## Equipment Numbers and Capacities

Provide mechanical equipment that meets the cooking, heating, ventilation and hot and cold holding needs of the establishment. Install and use equipment as intended by the manufacturer. Picnic coolers may not be used for food storage except for bottled and canned beverages. Display coolers may only be used for canned or bottled beverages or prepackaged foods.

# Unapproved Equipment

Examples of equipment that is frequently submitted but ***not approved*** include:

- Unfinished wood
- Household roasters/slow cookers
- Galvanized hoods and containers
- Enamelware
- Paintbrushes
- Wooden spoons
- Plastic tables
- Drills
- Non-food grade plastic containers
- Tubing or beverage cold plates in contact with stored ice

([Minnesota Rules, parts 4626.0020, 4626.0450, 4626.0495, 4626.0505, 4626.0540, 4626.0590, 4626.0595, 4626.0675](#))

# Sinks

Include specifications, proposed locations and intended uses for all sinks in submitted plans. All sinks must be manufactured to **NSF Standard No. 2** and may not be constructed from stainless steel pans or other components not originally designed as sinks.

## Handwashing Sinks

Provide at least one handwashing sink, either free standing or installed into an approved counter. Locate handwashing sinks to provide easy access for all employees who are preparing food, dispensing food and beverages, conducting warewashing, and using the restroom.

Each handwashing sink must be provided with hot and cold water under pressure through a mixing valve or combination faucet. MDH may require splash guards at handwashing sinks to limit contamination of food, beverages, clean equipment or single-use items. Handwashing sinks in MFU must be permanently installed. Portable handwashing sinks are allowed in STF and SPF.

## Manual Warewashing Sink

Provide a sink with at least three compartments either free standing or installed into an approved counter. Each compartment must be large enough to allow immersion of the largest utensil or piece of equipment used in the operation. All compartments must be part of the same piece of equipment. The warewashing sink must be supplied with water under pressure with a mixing valve. Warewashing sinks in MFU must be permanently installed. Portable warewashing sinks are allowed in STF and SPF.

## Food Preparation Sink

If the proposed menu calls for a food preparation process requiring washing or thawing of food in a sink, include a food preparation sink in submitted plans. The sink must be designed for use as a food preparation sink.

## Summary of Sink Requirements

The following table summarizes the sink requirements for MFU, STF, and SPF. Handwashing and warewashing sinks are **always required**. Food preparation sinks may or may not be required.

<i>Type of Sink</i>	<i>Mobile Food Unit (Water must be supplied under pressure)</i>	<i>Seasonal Temporary Food Stand &amp; Seasonal Permanent Food Stand</i>
<i>Handwashing Sink(s)</i>	Permanently installed	May be portable
<i>Warewashing Sink</i>	Permanently installed	May be portable
<i>Food Preparation Sink</i>	Permanently installed	May be portable Water must be supplied under pressure

([Minnesota Rules, parts 4626.0300, 4626.0315, 4626.0320, 4626.0505, 4626.0680, 4626.0780, 4626.0955, 4626.1095, 4626.1110, 4626.1860](#))

# Ventilation Systems

Include specifications and proposed locations for ventilation hoods in submitted plans. Design and install ventilation systems according to [Minnesota Rules, chapter 1346](#), Minnesota mechanical and fuel gas codes. [Part 1346.0507](#) provides commercial kitchen hood requirements for some equipment.

Adequate ventilation constructed to **NSF Standard No. 2** is required for cooking equipment that produces excessive steam, condensation, vapors, obnoxious or disagreeable odors, smoke and fumes.

Design ventilation systems to prevent grease or condensation from draining or dripping onto food, equipment, utensils, walls, ceiling, linens and single-service articles. Grease filters used in an exhaust ventilation hood or other grease extracting equipment must be designed to be readily removable for cleaning and/or replacing if not designed to be cleaned in place.

([Minnesota Rules, parts 4626.0495](#), [4626.0505](#), [4626.0550](#), [4626.0690](#), [4626.1380](#), [4626.1475](#), [4626.1860](#))

## Tables, Counters and Cabinetry

Include specifications, proposed locations and intended uses for all tables, counters, cabinetry, and customer self-service areas in submitted plans.

### Food-contact Surfaces

Provide enough approved food-contact surfaces to meet the food preparation and warewashing needs of your establishment.

Plastic laminate surfaces or plastic tables are not acceptable as food preparation surfaces. All food preparation must take place on approved food-contact surfaces.

Examples of activities requiring approved food-contact surfaces include:

- Chopping, cutting or mixing raw foods
- Cooking foods using equipment such as grills, deep fryers, flat tops, or ovens
- Assembling foods such as sandwiches or salads

Place tabletop cooking equipment on **NSF Standard No. 2** tables. Examples include:

- Grill
- Deep fryer
- Flat top
- Oven

**Stainless steel top** surfaces are required for some types of equipment. Examples include:

- Hot plate
- Waffle iron
- Sauté station

## Non-food-contact Surfaces

Provide enough approved non-food-contact surfaces to meet the needs of your establishment.

If non-food-contact surfaces will be exposed to splash or other food soiling, or will require frequent cleaning, they must be constructed of a corrosion-resistant, nonabsorbent, and smooth material. Non-food-contact counters and cabinets can be plastic laminate or other nonabsorbent material. Unfinished wood is not allowed.

Make sure that counters and cabinets do not have unnecessary ledges, projections, and crevices. Hollow enclosed base cabinets are prohibited. Design and construction should allow easy cleaning and maintenance.

**Stainless steel, laminated top** or other equivalent nonabsorbent surfaces are allowed for some types of equipment. Examples include:

- Beverage dispensing such as espresso or coffee machines, pop or milk dispenser and blenders
- Display merchandiser such as popcorn machine, pizza display, hot dog roller
- Counter-top warmer such as soup warmer
- Handwashing, food preparation sink and warewashing sink
- Tabletop refrigerator or freezer

([Minnesota Rules, parts 4626.0450, 4626.0490, 4626.0495, 4626.0505, 4626.0515, 4626.0540, 4626.0545](#))

*Non-food-contact surfaces are commonly approved for: point of sale counters, dry goods storage cabinets, and drop-in sinks.*

# Floors, Walls and Ceilings

Design, construct and install floors, walls and ceilings in MFU, STF, and SPF so that they are smooth and easily cleanable. Use durable, nonabsorbent, non-wood materials.

Prior to selecting floor, wall and ceiling surfaces for a MFU, STF or SPF; owners, design professionals, and others involved in preparing the plans should consider the following factors:

- Type and amount of traffic
- Type of soil and cleaning methods
- Life span of the surface

## Floors

When operating STF and SPF on machine-laid asphalt or concrete that is sloped to drain, an additional flooring surface is not required.

When operating STF and SPF on grass, dirt or gravel, provide a surface such as mats, removable platforms or duckboards that are easily cleanable. Mats and duckboards must be constructed of nonabsorbent, nonwood, grease-resistant material.

*Common flooring surfaces include: ceramic, porcelain or quarry tile; commercial grade vinyl or epoxy flooring.*

## Walls and Ceilings

Wall and ceiling surfaces must be smooth, durable, and easily cleanable.

Stainless steel is required behind cooking equipment.

Provide a canopy or other form of overhead protection for STF and SPF. All equipment must fit under the overhead protection.

MFU, STF, or SPF must provide protection during adverse weather. Food activities must cease if protection from adverse weather fails.

Protect food preparation and cooking areas by a shield or separation distance to ensure customer safety and to prevent food contamination by customers. Examples include ropes, equipment or other structures.

*Common wall surfaces include: fiberglass-reinforced panel (FRP), ceramic tile, or stainless steel behind cooking equipment.*

*Common ceiling surfaces include: painted drywall or smooth metal or vinyl tile.*

[\(Minnesota Rules, parts 4626.1325, 4626.1335, 4626.1355, 4626.1360, 4626.1860\)](#)

# Utilities

Include specific information for water supply, water heaters, sewage disposal system, and other utilities in submitted plans. Provide utilities to meet the needs of your MFU, STF and SPF.

## Water Supply

Identify the source of water for your establishment in submitted plans. Provide an adequate supply of water to meet the needs of your establishment.

Use only drinking water from an approved source according to [Minnesota Rules, chapter 4715](#), plumbing code; [chapter 4720](#), public water supplies; and [chapter 4725](#), wells and borings.

The water inlet must be protected from contamination and be designed to prevent attachment of a non-potable service connection. Hoses used to obtain water must be of food grade quality and be provided with an approved backflow preventer. Garden hoses are not allowed.

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*Several different terms, such as drinking water, potable water, and fresh water, are used to describe water that is safe for use in a MFU, STF and SPF.*

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## Drinking Water and Wastewater Holding Tanks and Water Heaters

Drinking water tanks must be designed for holding potable water, be easily cleanable, of sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the operation and constructed of an approved food grade non-toxic material.

A wastewater, or grey water, holding tank must be provided which is sized 15 percent larger in capacity than the water supply tank. MFU must have wastewater and fresh water tanks permanently installed on the unit.

A water heater must be adequately sized to meet the demands of the foodservice facility.

Recommended guidelines for MFU:

- 20 gallon fresh water tank
- 25 gallon grey water tank
- 6 gallon water heater

## Sewage Disposal

Identify the method of sewage disposal (public or private) for your establishment in submitted plans. Provide a sewage disposal system that meets the peak sewage needs of your establishment.

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.

## Utility Service Lines

Exposed utility service lines and pipes must be installed so they do not obstruct or prevent cleaning of the floors, walls and ceilings. Electrical service must comply with [Minnesota Rules, chapter 1315](#). Contact electrical inspections for information at [www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Electrical.asp](http://www.dli.mn.gov/CCLD/Electrical.asp) or 651-284-5026.

([Minnesota Rules, parts 4626.0980, 4626.0995, 4626.1015, 4626.1025, 4626.1060, 4626.1340, 4626.1845, 4626.1860](#))