



TARRANT COUNTY

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

1101 SOUTH MAIN STREET
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76104
<http://health.tarrantcounty.com>

Food Carts

- A. A cart, for the purpose of these guidelines, is defined as an open, vehicle mounted food service establishment designed to be readily moveable. A cart may be used for packaged or unpackaged non-potentially hazardous food and prepackaged potentially hazardous food. The only open potentially hazardous food allowed on a cart will be fully cooked, hot dog like products including bratwurst. A complete menu must be submitted for approval. Please be advised that if food products not approved by this department are found on the cart this could mean closing of the establishment and revocation of the permit.
- B. If any unwrapped foods are prepared, stored, displayed, or served, on the cart then a three-compartment sink, and hand sink with soap and paper towel will be required on the cart.
- C. Carts, which require a water system, must have a potable water system which is under pressure or gravity feed and able to provide hot and cold water at one-half (.5) gallon per minute minimum. The system must be of an adequate capacity, as determined by the department, for food preparation, utensil cleaning and hand washing. The water inlet must be located so it will not be contaminated by waste discharge, road dust, oil, grease, etc. The water outlet must be capped at all times except during time of service. Liquid waste must be stored in a retention tank that is at least 15% larger than the water supply tank. Liquid waste may only be disposed of in an approved sanitary sewer. Discharge of waste water on to the ground or into a storm sewer is prohibited.
- D. Mechanical refrigeration and hot food storage must be provided for the maintenance of all potentially hazardous foods. All potentially hazardous food must be kept at 41°F or below or at 140°F or above. The use of ice, dry ice, and sterno as a means of maintaining proper food temperatures is not approved unless written permission from this department is given. Coolers that are smooth, durable, and easily cleanable may be used for the storage of soft drinks. The use of Styrofoam is not approved.
- E. All food products must come from approved sources. All prepackaged foods must be properly labeled. Home-prepared foods of any kind are not permitted.
- F. All finishes on the cart must be smooth, durable, nonabsorbent, and easily cleanable.

- G. All food and food contact items are to be stored off of the ground and protected from contamination. The use of open condiments is not approved. Condiments must be dispensed from individual packets or from a closed dispenser, e.g. a ketchup squeeze container.
- H. Wiping cloths must be stored in an approved sanitizer at appropriate strength when not in actual use.
- I. A covered trash container must be provided for use by the public and public restrooms must be easily accessible to employees.
- J. All portions of the cart must be properly situated under a canopy or building overhang.
- K. The following items must be kept on site and used as necessary:
 - 1. A calibrated product thermometer scaled 0°F to 220°F
 - 2. Test strips for the type of sanitizer used
 - 3. Food grade gloves (highly recommended)
- L. Each employee must obtain a Food Handlers Card prior to the permit being issued and the owner must obtain a Food Managers Certification if required.
- M. All carts are required to obtain an annual Food Service Permit from the Tarrant County Public Health Department prior to setting up business. The cart must be in compliance with the Texas Food Establishment Regulations and this guideline to obtain the food service permit. Please be advised that the Tarrant County Public Health Department does not have jurisdiction in all of the cities in Tarrant County and some cities have zoning or vending ordinances that limit or will not allow carts to operate. You may contact this department as to what cities we regulate but please contact the individual city in which you plan to operate as to any other restrictions.
- N. All carts must operate from an approved commissary. The cart operator must submit to this department a letter, from the owner of the commissary, giving permission to use that establishment as a commissary and that commissary must be approved by this department. All carts must report at least once per day to the commissary for supplies, clean up of the cart, and any other activities related to the operation of the cart, e.g. use of a three-compartment sink for washing large items. When not in use the cart must be stored at the commissary in a covered area protected from the weather.
- O. If the cart is existing, the owner must demonstrate that the cart meets the requirements of this guideline. If the cart will be new, a set of plans, drawings, etc, that fully describes the cart must be submitted to this department for approval. The plans will be reviewed by the inspector for completeness and conformity to the regulations and this guideline. The plans are to include but are not limited to:
 - 1. A menu
 - 2. Potable water and waste water retention tank capacities
 - 3. The number and size of the sinks
 - 4. The make and model numbers of equipment to be used
 - 5. How food and supplies are to be stored on site
 - 6. What materials are used to construct the cart
 - 7. What locations the mobile unit will serve

8. A drawing or picture of the unit if already built

P. Any adjunct equipment in addition to the cart must be approved by this department. Grills or other such equipment must be of commercial grade and be physically attached to the cart. If this equipment is to be added after the permitting inspection then this department must be contacted for approval.