

THINKING ABOUT STARTING A FOOD TRUCK OR MOBILE FOOD CART?

Here's what you need to know before you begin.

A mobile food unit is essentially a **restaurant on wheels**. That means you'll need to meet many of the same health and safety standards as a traditional restaurant.

What this means for you:

- Your unit must return regularly to a Base of Operations (licensed commissary kitchen)
- Food must be prepared in your unit or in a licensed kitchen—not at home
- Many operators partner with churches, fire stations, or permitted kitchens
- A Food Permit is required in each Maryland county where you sell
- If you already have a Maryland permit, reciprocity may make expansion easier.

Why this matters:

Understanding these requirements early can save time, money, and frustration later.

Ready for the next step?

Turn this postcard over to see how to get licensed. Supporting local entrepreneurs—courtesy of your Health Department and Business & Economic Development Office.



Washington County Health Department
Environmental Health
240-313-3400 wchd.eh@maryland.gov
washcohealth.org



READY TO GET LICENSED FOR YOUR FOOD TRUCK OR MOBILE CART?

Follow these steps to get open for business.

Start smart. Before buying your equipment:

✓ **Submit a Mobile Food Establishment Plan Review & Application** to the Health Department. This helps ensure your setup is approved and avoids costly changes later.

✓ **Secure a licensed Base of Operations (licensed commissary kitchen):**

You'll need a permitted food facility where you can:

- Dispose of wastewater
- Fill fresh water tanks
- Store food
- Wash larger equipment

✓ **Schedule required inspections:**
Fire Marshal inspection (Washington County or City of Hagerstown)
Opening inspection with the Health Department

✓ **You're almost there!** Once approved, obtain your annual food permit—then you are ready to sell.

Need help along the way?

Visit our website for forms or call our office—we're happy to email what you need and guide you through the process. Your Health Department & EDO are here to help you launch safely, legally, and successfully.



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