



# HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES

2201 Warwick Way, Marriottsville, MD 21104

410-313-6000

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CALVIN BALL, COUNTY EXECUTIVE

## Mobile Food Vendor Inspection Guide

All mobile food vending platforms are required to be inspected annually by Howard County Fire and Rescue's Office of the Fire Marshal. Inspection Permits will be valid for 12 months from the date of issue. One day Inspection Permits will also be available. Failure to obtain a permit as outlined below is a class "C" violation of the Howard County Fire Prevention Code and may result in the issuance of a civil citation and the levy of fines not to exceed \$250 per violation.

### Scope

The operation of mobile food vending platforms shall be done in a fashion that is safe for the public and the operators.

### References

**NFPA 1** – National Fire Protection Association: Fire Code

**NFPA 58** - National Fire Protection Association: LP Gas Code

**NFPA 70**- National Fire Protection Association: The National Electric Code

**NFPA 96** – National Fire Protection Association: Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations

**NFPA 1192** – National Fire Protection Association: Standard on Recreational Vehicles

**Howard County Code Subsection 17.104**: Howard County Fire Prevention Code

### Purpose

All mobile food vending platforms shall be inspected and approved by the Howard County Fire Marshal.

### Definitions:

**Mobile Food Vendor Platform** – Any push cart, trailer, enclosed trailer, or enclosed truck that uses propane or any other heat source to prepare food for sale

### Licensing Requirements

1. Current Howard County Health Inspection
2. Valid Driver's License
3. Current Vehicle Registration



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4. Current Vehicle Inspection Sticker/Documentation
5. Current State Vehicle Inspection
6. Current Vehicle Insurance

## Fee Schedule

1. One Day Inspection fee - \$45.00
2. 12 Month Inspection fee - \$75.00
3. Re-Inspection fee - \$45.00
  - a. Upon receipt of the inspection sticker, it shall be applied by a member of the Fire Marshal's Office in a prominent and easily visible location on the mobile food vending platform.
  - b. The inspection fee as outlined covers the **initial inspection and a single re-inspection.**
  - c. If additional re-inspections are necessary, a re-inspection fee may be required

## Licensing Procedure

1. Complete the attached pre-inspection checklist to ensure vehicle compliance
2. Complete and submit the attached inspection application and payment by check (made out to Howard County Director of Finance) to the **Office of the Fire Marshal, 6751 Columbia Gateway Drive, Suite 400, Columbia, MD 21046.** Other billing options may be available.
3. Upon receipt of the application and payment, an inspection will be conducted in one of the two following methods:
  - a. Inspections will take place at The Thomas Dorsey Building at 9250 Bendix Road, Columbia, Maryland, on the first Saturday of each month from 9am-12pm.
  - b. Inspections may also be scheduled by emailing [MobileFood@howardcountymd.gov](mailto:MobileFood@howardcountymd.gov) to schedule an inspection on an alternative date and time.
  - c. Spot checks will be conducted by Fire Officials throughout the County and at venues and special events. Should a vendor be found to have an absent or expired inspection permit:
    1. An inspection shall be conducted;
    2. Upon a completed inspection with no violations, a One Day inspection permit shall be issued
    3. The business shall receive an invoice for the inspection. Return the invoice with payment to the Howard County Director of Finance (refer to item 3. above)
    4. Should a vendor refuse inspection, or fail the inspection (i.e.- unable to abate the violation), the vendor may not operate pursuant to the Howard County Fire Code
4. Mobile food vending platforms are to be inspected and billed individually



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## Pre-Inspection Checklist

### Requirements

#### 1) Egress

- a) All exits shall be unlocked and clear of obstructions at all times

#### 2) Fire Protection Systems

- a) Fire Suppression Systems shall comply with the appropriate provisions of the Howard County Fire Code, NFPA 1, and NFPA 96
- b) All Mobile Food Trucks that have any commercial cooking equipment that produce grease laden vapors shall be required to have an Automatic fire-extinguishing system.
- c) If more than two frying vessels or 10 gallons of frying media are used, a commercial hood (Type 1) shall be installed above all commercial cooking appliances or domestic cooking appliances used for commercial purposes
- d) At the time of inspection, hood & exhaust systems must be clean and the hood shall have the appropriate sticker attached by a Maryland registered cleaner
- e) Fire extinguishers are required for all Mobile Food Vendor operations
  - i) All fire extinguishers shall be maintained and inspected on an annual basis
  - ii) If deep fat fryers are used operators shall have and maintain a Class K portable fire extinguisher
  - iii) A fire extinguisher (minimum size of 2A-40-BC) will be required in addition to any class K extinguisher
- f) Portable fire extinguishers shall be located in conspicuous locations where they will be readily accessible and immediately available for use
  - i) Should the platform be a towed trailer, the extinguisher must be kept in the trailer, when operating
- g) All employees working in the vehicle shall be trained in the proper use of the fire extinguisher
- h) Fire extinguishers shall bear a current inspection tag validated within the past twelve months OR a receipt of purchase within the last 12 months shall be available for inspection

#### 3) Ventilation Control systems

- a) Ventilation control systems shall be appropriate for the cooking operations conducted
- b) Ventilation systems shall be capable of exhausting all byproducts of cooking operations
- c) The hood must be designed to adequately collect and exhaust fumes, smoke and vapors from the area over which it is installed
- d) Hood systems shall be maintained and cleaned in accordance with the Howard County Fire Code, NFPA 1, and NFPA 96
- e) All fire extinguishing systems shall be inspected by a certified fire protection company every 6 months. Records shall be maintained as required in the Howard County Fire Code, NFPA 1, and NFPA 96
  - i) Records shall be submitted to the AHJ in an approved method



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## 4) Hazardous Materials and Storage of Flammables

- a) The storage and use of Flammable Liquids shall be in accordance with any applicable regulations under the Howard County Fire Code and NFPA 1
- b) Individual containers, cartons, or packages shall be conspicuously marked or labeled in an approved manner
- c) Hazardous materials or liquids shall be disposed of in the proper manner. They shall not be released into any sewer, storm drain, ditch, drainage canal, creek, stream, river, lake or tidal water or on the ground, sidewalk, street, highway, or into the atmosphere

## 5) Compressed Gas handling Requirements

- a) The vendor shall follow the provisions under the Howard County Fire Code and NFPA 1 for Liquefied Petroleum Gases, handling, transportation, and installation of Liquefied Petroleum Gas equipment
- b) A "No Smoking" sign next to or directly above the propane container and visible to the public
  - i) The sign shall be posted with a minimum of 2 inch lettering
- c) The main gas shut-off shall be marked, be in plain view, and be accessible
- d) Compressed gas cylinder capacity limit shall be determined by the Fire Official after consideration of features that secure and protect the container, as well as the level of acceptable risk to the general public
- e) Vessels shall be affixed and secure to the portable food service platform in a manner that provides a reasonable expectation of security while parked or in transit
- f) All applicable DOT regulations shall be followed
- g) Hydrostatic test dates of all cylinders will be checked by the Fire Marshal
- h) Compressed gas tanks shall be shut off while the mobile food vehicle is in motion, unattended and/or in overnight storage
- i) Generator and LPG storage compartments located on the exterior of the vehicle shall be enclosed
  - i) Compartments shall have venting to the exterior and must not allow any venting to the interior of the vehicle
- j) There shall be no use or storage of LPG cylinders within the tow vehicle at any time
- k) Mounting and placement of compressed gas cylinders
  - i) The mounting of cylinders must withstand impact equal to four times the weight of the filled propane or natural gas container according to NFPA 58-6.23.3.4
  - ii) Tanks must be secured (NFPA 58-5.2.4) and conform with NFPA standards relating to the safe mounting of tanks as described in NFPA 58-6.23.3.3
  - iii) Outside mounted in a semi-enclosed cabinet, with vents at the top and bottom to facilitate the diffusion of vapors, vapor-tight to the interior of the vehicle, with a weather-protected regulator and a leak indicator as described in NFPA 1192—6.4.8
  - iv) Outside mounted, secured on top and bottom and stabilized (e.g. with a strap), vapor-tight to the interior of the vehicle, mounted no less than 28" above the ground with a weather-protected regulator
  - v) If an LPG storage compartment is added on the rear of the truck, the bumper shall extend beyond the compartment to provide added impact protection
  - vi) If an LPG tank is chassis mounted, it shall be done according to NFPA 58—6.23.3.4

## 6) Electrical Requirements

- a) The electrical equipment shall be in compliance with NFPA 70



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## Daily Operations Checklist

Date   /  /  

<b>General</b>	
Cooking equipment must be attended at all times	
Are all required ventilation openings open during cooking operations?	
Is the cooking hood/ventilation system free from grease?	
The platform shall be at least 10 feet from any building, other vehicles, or combustibles.	
The vehicle, when parked, shall not block an emergency exit, fire hydrants, or fire department connections. Also, it shall not be parked in a fire lane.	
<b>Egress</b>	
All exits from the platform shall be kept clear and unobstructed.	
<b>Fire Protection</b>	
<b><i>Fire Extinguishers</i></b>	
Portable fire extinguishers shall be in conspicuous locations where they will be readily accessible and immediately available for use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should the platform be a towed trailer, the extinguisher must be kept in the trailer, when operating.</li> </ul>	
All employees working in the vehicle shall be trained in the proper use of the fire extinguishers.	
Fire extinguishers shall bear a current inspection tag validated within the past twelve months OR a receipt of purchase within the last 12 months shall be available for inspection.	
<b><u>Hood Fire Suppression System</u></b>	
The hood suppression system shall be charged and in operating condition, if required by the AHJ.	



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<b>Fuel and Power Source</b>	
<i><b>Propane</b></i>	
The system shall be inspected prior to use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The system shall be in good condition (i.e. no leaks or rust.)</li> </ul>	
The propane tanks shall be secured and upright.	
The tanks shall be within their hydrostatic test date.	
The system shall be shut-off when not in use, or in transit.	
<i><b>Electrical</b></i>	
The electrical system, and other equipment, shall be in good working condition.	
Extension cords shall be in good condition	
<i><b>Generators</b></i>	
Shall be at least 10 feet from buildings, structures, vehicles, and combustibles.	
Generator exhaust shall be directed away from the mobile food platform, vehicles, buildings, structures, exits, entrances, or other openings.	
Generators shall be protected from contact by the public.	
Fuel supplies shall be properly stored.	
When refueling, generators shall be shut down, cooled down, and then refueled.	
<i><b>Solid Fuels</b></i>	
Combustible solid fuel shall be stored away from other combustibles or heat producing appliances.	
<b>Fire Debris</b>	
Ashes, cinders, and other fire debris removed at the end of the day shall be stored in a tightly covered metal container no less than 15 feet from any vehicle, structure, or other combustibles.	



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## Mobile Food Vendor Permit Application

**Circle One:** One DAY Vendor Inspection      12 MONTH Vendor Inspection

**NAME OF BUSINESS OR PLATFORM** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME OF OWNER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PHONE #** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMAIL ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**MAILING ADDRESS:**

STREET \_\_\_\_\_ APT/SUITE # \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

**TYPE OF PLATFORM:**      TRAILER TRUCK      FOOD CART      TENT

**OTHER, PLEASE DESCRIBE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**LICENSE PLATE NUMBER** \_\_\_\_\_ **ISSUING STATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**HOWARD COUNTY HEALTH DEPT. LICENSE #** \_\_\_\_\_

**DOES IT HAVE A VENTILATION SYSTEM?**      YES      NO

IF YES, WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME IT WAS SERVICED/CLEANED: \_\_\_\_\_

**DOES THE FOOD YOU COOK PRODUCE GREASE LADEN VAPORS?**      YES      NO

**DOES IT HAVE A FIRE SUPPRESSION SYSTEM?**      YES      NO

**DOES THE VEHICLE HAVE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS?**      YES      NO

TYPE \_\_\_\_\_ SIZE \_\_\_\_\_ QUANTITY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF LAST SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE \_\_\_\_\_ SIZE \_\_\_\_\_ QUANTITY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF LAST SERVICE \_\_\_\_\_

DOES THE VEHICLE USE PROPANE OR COMPRESSED NATURAL GAS TO HEAT OR COOK FOOD?

YES      NO

IF YES: DATE OF LAST HYDROSTATIC TEST \_\_\_\_\_

IF NO: WHAT TYPE OF FUEL IS USED TO COOK \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_