



Guidelines for **Mobile Food Businesses**



About this Guide

Food prepared or sold from markets or outdoor events must comply with food safety laws. There are certain minimum requirements that need to be met. This ensures Tasmanians are eating food that has been safely stored, prepared, cooked, and served.

This guide is for individuals, businesses, charities, and community organisations that operate mobile food businesses. It is also a tool for councils, who are responsible for the registration and inspection of food businesses, and for the enforcement of food laws in Tasmania.

Mobile food businesses are those food businesses that operate from a mobile structure, including: a vehicle, trailer, cart, tent, stall, booth, pontoon, table, barbeque, pizza oven, or other mobile structure.

The purpose of this guide is to provide an overview of the food safety requirements that apply to mobile food businesses, and information to help food businesses meet those requirements. For further information, you should contact an Environmental Health Officer (EHO) at your local council.



Note: It is an offence to operate a food business without first contacting your local council, penalties may apply.

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Notification and Registration Requirements

If you intend to operate a mobile food business, you must **notify** your local council before you commence operation. Some businesses may also need to **register** with council.

A council EHO will assess your notification and will classify your business based on the level of food safety risk.

P1, **P2** and **P3** are higher risk food businesses and need to formally register with council.

P3-N and **P4** businesses are lower risk and only need to notify council.

Food businesses with higher risk are inspected more frequently than lower risk businesses.



Notification (for **P3-N** and **P4**) businesses is a one-off requirement. Registration (**P1**, **P2** and **P3** businesses) can be for short term events (such as fundraising BBQ), or it can be taken out for a period of up to 12 months.

More information about risk-classification can be found on the Department of Health website:

Information for food businesses and community organisations (health.tas.gov.au).

If you have questions about notification, registration, or starting a new food business contact your local council EHO.

Statewide Notification

Tasmanian food laws allow for a mobile food business to operate throughout the state on a single notification or registration (ie 'statewide'). EHOs in all council areas have the authority to inspect a food business operating in their council area and may issue warnings, notices, or other penalties as appropriate.

A mobile food business risk-classified as **P3-N** or **P4** only needs to notify council before commencing operation; it does not need to register with council. Council should provide a 'letter of acknowledgment' stating that you have notified them.

If you intend to operate in more than one council area and have already notified one council, you don't need to notify again. If you have a letter confirming notification, you should carry that with you when operating in other council areas.

If you change your food handling activities or the types of food you sell, you should contact council in case your risk-classification has changed, and you need to register.

Note: Your home council is the council area where the equipment and materials for the food business are stored when not in use, or the garage address for a vehicle. This is the Council that the initial notification should be made to.

Statewide Registration

Mobile food businesses risk-classified as **P1**, **P2** or **P3** need to formally register. Registration involves paying an application fee and providing information to the Council. Once registered, council will provide you with a Certificate of Registration, which may include specific conditions stating how you can operate.

You should carry your Certificate of Registration with you when operating in other council areas.

Event Registration

An event organiser may have their own process for accepting and allowing a mobile business to attend an event. This is different to the registration and notification requirements described above. You should check with the event organiser prior to operating at a specific event.

Design, Construction, Fit-out and Location

Mobile food businesses can vary noticeably in their appearance, set-up, and operation. It is important that the design and construction of the mobile structure allows all activities to occur safely to prevent food becoming contaminated.

Adequate space

Provide adequate space for all equipment, food, and the activities conducted on site. Because space is often limited, careful consideration of the layout is needed. The layout will vary depending on the types of foods being handled, cooking facilities (if required), food display areas, food storage, refrigeration, handwashing and the number of people operating the business.

Example: A mobile food van sells hamburgers. They have separate spaces for cooking meat, assembling the burgers and display. Salad ingredients and raw meat are stored in separate sealed containers in a fridge.

Layout

A floor plan or layout must be included with your food business application to council. The layout should show all benches, cooking equipment, storage and washing facilities. If you operate in more than one council area, the layout approved by your home council is the layout that should be used when operating in all other council areas.

Site

Where possible the site you use should be level, dry under foot, and in an area where the wind is not able to blow dust or other contaminants onto food or food contact surfaces. You may be limited in your choice of site at an event (e.g. the event organiser may allocate a specific site) but, ultimately, it is the responsibility of the business to ensure the site is suitable.

If weather or other conditions change, you must manage the situation to ensure food remains safe and suitable and is not subject to unexpected contamination.

- If you intend to trade from a public road or footpath, please speak to the council for any additional permits you may require under the *Traffic and Highways Act* or council by-law.
- If you intend to operate regularly on private land, please speak to the council regarding any planning implications for the proposed location.

Equipment, fixtures, and fittings

Use equipment, fixtures, and fittings that are in good condition, and constructed of smooth and impervious material to aid easy and effective cleaning. The construction and design of the internal fittings and fixtures must be appropriate.

Floors, walls, and ceilings

The floors, walls and ceiling must be designed to maintain adequate ventilation, protect food from contamination, and allow effective cleaning.

Ground or floor covering may be needed in situations where the existing surface is unsuitable (such as when operating out of a tent or marquee). Flooring should be durable, impervious to dirt and grease and able to be readily cleaned. Council may specify which ground surface or covering is adequate.

Unsealed ground cover may deteriorate over time due to changing weather conditions or the length of time in use. If the deterioration of the ground surface poses a risk to food safety or suitability, alternative arrangements are required.

If your set-up is in a sheltered area, a ceiling may not be necessary – this will also depend on the foods and processes used at the stall. For example, a cake stall selling packaged cakes may not require a ceiling/roof covering, but a business making full take-a-way meals will.

Note: Some stalls may require a temporary occupancy permit issued under the *Building Act 2016*. There are exemptions outlined in the *Building Act* and relevant *Building Regulations*. Contact a building surveyor to check if your structure needs a building permit.

Ventilation and Gas Safety

If cooking within certain mobile structures (e.g. van or truck), an exhaust system or similar may be necessary to comply with gas safety requirements and to minimise the build-up of steam, mould, grease, and fumes. The exhaust must be constructed in a way that prevents entry or harbourage of pests.

If using LPG gas appliances within a tent or marquee, minimum ventilation requirements apply, including:

- have two permanently open sides, or
- have one open side equal to 25% of the total wall area, with 30% of the remaining total wall area open and unrestricted.

More information on the Gas Standards and Safety Guidance Note can be found from the CBOS website:

Storing and Using LP Gas at Public Events (cbos.tas.gov.au)

Other considerations

Other requirements relating to fire, structural, and electrical safety may apply. For more information, contact a building surveyor.



Washing Facilities

An adequate supply of potable water needs to be available. The amount of water required will vary based on the type of activities performed and the duration of operation. There needs to be sufficient water to clean surfaces, wash hands, clean and sanitise equipment and wash food, plus any other water use needed.

If only non-potable water is available, it is the responsibility of the business to demonstrate that using non-potable water will not pose a food safety hazard – this must be done before the water is used with formal approval obtained from the relevant council.



Hand washing facilities

Purpose built food vans/trucks should have a permanent hand basin installed in them. For other mobile businesses such as those operating from a tent or marquee provide hand washing facility at the stall with warm running potable water from a single spout. Handwashing facilities must be set-up before starting food handling activities and must be in a location readily accessible by food handlers. Discuss the proposed set up with the relevant EHO for approval. You must have sufficient liquid soap and single use paper towel, and a container to collect waste-water.

As a minimum, you must have 20-litre water container with a tap and a container to collect wastewater. Liquid soap and paper towel are also required. Portable hand washing and equipment washing stations can be hired (e.g. from businesses that hire out portable toilets).

The water must be at a temperature favourable to handwashing. This can be achieved in many ways, provided that at the point of use, the water is warm. The Food Standards Code allows for some exemptions in certain circumstances to the hand washing requirements for temporary food premises. Any exemption needs to be approved in advance by your council and explicitly stated in any conditions of registration.

Info: The water cannot be so hot that it scalds and not so cold that people don't want to use it. The water needs to be at a temperature that encourages handwashing.

Hand sanitisers

Hand sanitisers are not effective at killing some disease-causing viruses, and in most food handling situations cannot replace handwashing. Sanitisers and washing with soap and water perform different functions:

- Soap breaks down fat, grease, and dirt, allowing bacteria to be washed off. It also removes dirt, food particles etc.
- Hand sanitisers kill bacteria on the surface of hands but not under grease and dirt. Hands need to be clean before sanitiser is effective.

In some specific situations (e.g. handling of only pre-packaged foods) an EHO may approve the use of hand sanitiser instead of using soap and water at a hand wash basin.

Equipment washing and sanitising

A facility must be provided to wash and sanitise equipment separate to the hand washing facilities. To collect wastewater, you must have a suitably sized container. For basic equipment washing, a container large enough to effectively contain the largest piece of equipment is required. The facility must be supplied with warm water to allow adequate cleaning of all equipment. Food contact equipment (plates, bowls, cutlery etc) must also be sanitised. Equipment awaiting use must be clean and sanitary and stored in a way that protects them from contamination.

Alternatively, equipment may be taken off site and washed and sanitised in a suitably sized sink or dishwasher. There must be enough clean equipment available for the duration of operation of the mobile food business and the used or dirty equipment must not post a risk of contamination to food or food contact surfaces.

Waste Management

You will need an adequately sized refuse container with a fitted lid and bin liner for the disposal of waste. It must be stored in a location that does not allow contamination of food or food contact surfaces.

Waste oil must be stored in a container labelled 'Waste Oil Only' and disposed of at an approved waste transfer station, or approved collection service.

Events may have a specified waste disposal point or area, check this with the event organiser.

Wastewater

You must have a way to collect and dispose of wastewater. If you need to store the wastewater during an event, the container must be clearly labelled 'Wastewater Only'. For a small-scale event this may be as simple as an appropriately labelled bucket or lidded container. However, for events where large amounts of wastewater are generated, a holding tank or similar may be required.

These requirements for wastewater disposal may differ for different events and locations around Tasmania. Be sure to contact your council EHO for more information.

Multi-day Events and Remote Events

Some events run for multiple days or are held in remote locations and this introduces complexities that must be managed.

If you normally operate at smaller events or in less remote locations, your existing statewide registration may not cover you for the larger or more remote event. You should contact the council where the event is located prior to attending the event. Event specific conditions and requirements may apply.

Some additional things to consider are:

- how will you change your normal layout to allow for additional preparation and storage spaces (including refrigerated storage)? If your layout has changed, has it been approved by council?
- how will you ensure sufficient supply of consumables (e.g. crockery and utensils, paper towels for handwashing, sanitisers)? If supply shortages compromise food safety, how will you manage the closure of your business?
- how will you safely contain, and store waste produced by your operation? How will you transport the waste away at the end of the event? How can you minimise waste production?
- how will you manage pests if the set-up remains in place overnight?
- how will you conduct regular checks and start-up procedures to ensure food contact surfaces are clean and sanitary during operation and first thing in the morning?
- How will you ensure sufficient ingredients and food are available for your business – will this involve onsite storage, or will daily delivery runs be undertaken?



Operational Requirements

There are a range of operational requirements that all food businesses must meet. The below information highlights those parts that are relevant to mobile food businesses. It may not cover all applicable requirements.

Protection of food

Food must always be protected from contamination.

Use disposable gloves or clean utensils to serve ready-to-eat food. Ready-to-eat food must not be touched with bare hands. Provide clean tongs or spoons for salads and other ready-to-eat foods.

Provide single use eating/drinking utensils for customers and keep them adequately protected from contamination. Provide sauce, mustard and other condiments in squeeze-type dispensers or individual sealed packets.

If reusable eating and drinking utensils will be used the business (or event) must have a system in place that enables the utensils to be both cleaned and sanitised between uses.

It is good practice to separate duties for staff, such as ensuring one food handler handles money and another prepares food.

Note: Ready-to-eat (RTE) food is food that will be eaten without further processing, such as cooking.

Food samples

Food given away as samples must be:

- adequately supervised by a staff member
- covered with a protective barrier to minimise the likelihood of contamination
- labelled with signage to indicate 'no double dipping' or 'single serve only'.

Single-use sampling utensils, such as toothpicks or spoons, must be stored in a container that is separate from used sampling utensils. The container must be labelled to clearly indicate this to the customer.

Food displays

Food on display must be either:

- wrapped or packaged
- enclosed in a suitable display cabinet
- protected by a physical barrier such as a sneeze guard
- located so as not to be openly accessible to the public.

Food supply

The duration of the event, the practicality of restocking, and on-site storage capacity needs to be considered before set-up.

- Source foods from reputable suppliers.
- Purchase food as close to the event as possible to avoid need for storage and reduce transportation times.



Transporting food

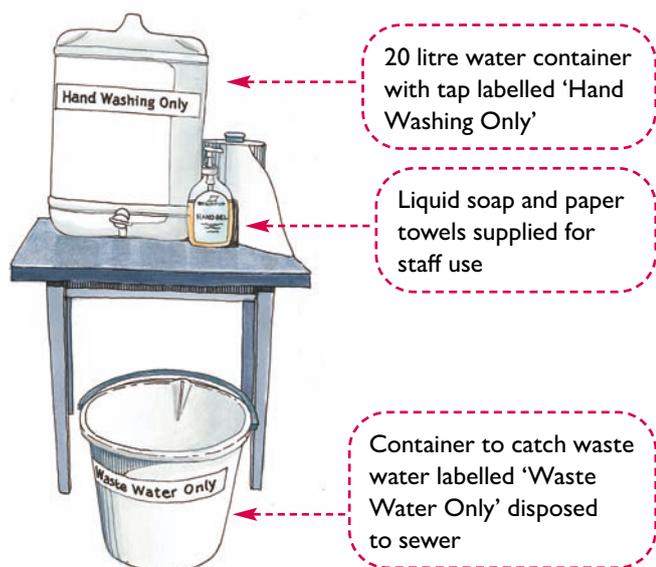
- All food must be transported so that it is protected from contamination.
- Potentially hazardous foods must be transported under temperature control. For example, in a car fridge, refrigerated van or a cooler box (esky) with sufficient ice to keep the food below 5°C.
- All containers, portable coolers and parts of vehicles used to transport food must be washed and sanitised before and after use.
- Transport raw meats in separate containers from ready-to-eat products such as salads and bread.

Food storage

- Food is not to be stored directly on the ground. It must be kept in enclosed containers or on shelves.
- All stored food must be covered or in sealed containers.
- Raw and ready-to-eat foods must be separated to prevent cross-contamination.
- If food needs to be kept refrigerated, ensure there is adequate cold storage space. For large events hiring a mobile cool room may be necessary.
- Refrigerators and freezers must reach storage temperatures before use.

Examples of Minimum Standards for the Operation of Mobile Food Business

Hand washing facilities



Food handlers



Food display, food protection, taste testing



Provide appropriate sneeze barrier



Signage must be provided to all taste testing stating 'No double dipping, single serve only'

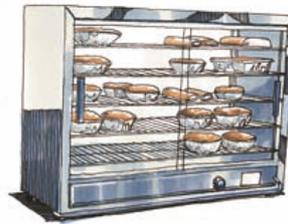


Temperature control of potentially hazardous food

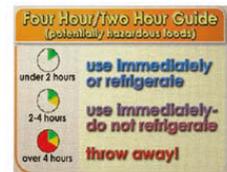
Cold Food – ensure 5°C or below



Hot Food – ensure 60°C or above



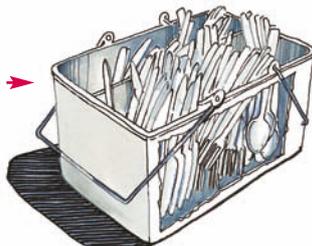
Thermometer in use



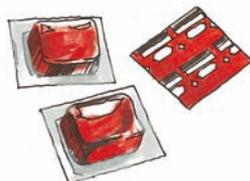
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Sauces, condiments and single serve utensils

Single serve utensils protected from contamination. Stored handle up



Sauces, condiments in squeeze type dispensers or sealed packs



Appendix 1 – Mobile Food Business Guidelines: Checklist

Things to consider when setting up a mobile food business. Not everything applies to all businesses.

Business Requirements	
Contact council to notify	
Registration complete (if required)	
Layout plan complete (if required)	
Ground cover: BYO or site already sealed	
Temporary Occupancy Permit (if required)	
Cleaning plan in place.	
Duration of event known	

Design, Construction, and fit out	
Walls and roof (if required)	

Water Supply	
Potable Water: available on-site or BYO	
Water – for equipment and utensils	
Water – for hand washing	

Waste Disposal	
Waste disposal – general waste	
Waste Disposal – waste water	
Waste Disposal – oil	
Disposal of Left-over or waste food	

Protection from Contamination	
Handwashing – Soap + hand towels	
Food display – cabinets, sneeze guards, etc)	
Disposable Gloves (if required)	
Separation of duties (e.g. money/food handling)	
Utensils for serving	
Single use items for patrons	
Condiments – single use or dispenser	

Food Storage and Transport	
Clean containers ready for use	
Storage of pre-prepared food	
Temperature control during transport	
Sufficient cooler boxes for transport	
Separation of raw and ready to eat foods	
On-site storage space	
On-site refrigeration or freezer	

Food Supply and Preparation	
All food prepared and cooked on-site?	
Pre-preparation of food prior to event?	
Food/ingredients purchased on way to event	
Sufficient food, ingredients for entire event	
Pre-packaged food labelled correctly	
Commercial, food-grade, air-drying sanitiser	

Temperature Control	
Probe thermometer on-site	
Cold food <5°C	
Hot food >60°C	
Limit time food sits outside temperature control	

Food Handlers	
Adequate skills and knowledge (food safety trained)	
Allergen aware (know the food they sell)	
Good health and hygiene (clean hands, clean clothes, not working when ill)	

If you are unsure about anything contact your local council. They can help you to make sure you get everything right.

More Information

For more information, contact a council EHO or go to:

Department of Health

www.health.tas.gov.au/publichealth/food_safety

Tasmanian Risk Classification System

www.health.tas.gov.au/___data/assets/word_doc/0003/376329/Food_Business_Food_Classification_System_v4.docx

Food Act 2003

www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2003-008

Food Safety Standards

www.foodstandards.gov.au

Safe Food Australia

www.foodstandards.gov.au/publications/pages/safefoodaustralia3rd16.aspx

Do Food Safely (free online food safety training)

www.health.tas.gov.au/publichealth/food_safety/free_online_food_safety_training

Consumer Building and Occupational Services (CBOS)

www.cbos.tas.gov.au



Public Health Services
Department of Health
www.health.tas.gov.au/publichealth/food_safety

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