

**THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW TO OBTAIN APPROVAL AND PERMIT
FOR OPERATING A MOBILE FOOD UNIT IN HENDERSON COUNTY
NC**

- A mobile food unit must be operated in conjunction with a permitted restaurant or food stand, therefore you must have a permitted restaurant or food stand of your own or enter into an agreement with a permitted restaurant or foodstand (from here on out referred to as the commissary). This agreement must be supplied in writing and signed by the owner of the commissary. The commissary does not have to be in the same county where you operate your mobile food unit, but bear in mind that the unit is **REQUIRED** to report to the commissary **EVERY** day that it is used and this should be a consideration in your choice of commissary location and operation location.
- The county where your commissary is located will issue the permit for your unit and you must go through the approval process with that county health department even if you will operate in another county.
- You must report to your commissary every day you use your unit for cleaning, supplies, and servicing. All of your food and supplies must be stored in the unit and in the commissary and all food preparation must take place in the unit and in the commissary. All potable water for each days operation must be obtained at the commissary and all wastewater must be disposed of at the commissary after each days operation. The unit must have a potable water tank and a separate wastewater tank that is at least 15 percent larger than the potable water tank. The inlet for the potable water tank must be above and a different size than the outlet for the wastewater tank.
- A mobile food unit may be something that moves under its own power such as a van or RV type vehicle or a trailer type unit that is meant to be pulled behind another vehicle.
- Do not purchase a unit, equipped or unequipped without first getting approval from the health department. Do not purchase any equipment for the unit without first getting approval from the health department.
- Plans and equipment specifications for the unit will need to be submitted to the health department for review and approval along with a menu, an application for a permit, and the current plan review fee. This applies to pre equipped units as well as a unit you plan on designing and equipping yourself. Again, **DO NOT** purchase anything until you have gained an approval for your plan or pre built unit from the health department.

- Hot and cold running water under pressure are required on a mobile food unit. Therefore an onboard water heater is required. In addition you will need a sink for handwashing and a SEPARATE sink for cleaning utensils. The utensil cleaning sink must have integral drainboards on each side and an integral backsplash (in other words, one piece construction, no bolts or welds). Depending on the amount of food prep taking place on the unit itself, another sink(s) may be required.
- The other equipment required will be determined by the menu but would normally include such things as: refrigerators, freezers, cooking equipment, hot holding equipment, hood, beverage machines, etc or any other types of equipment necessary to the safe and adequate operation of the unit.
- All equipment on the unit (except for microwaves, mixers, toasters, water heaters, and hoods) must meet ANSI sanitation standards. Basically this means that the equipment must be commercial grade restaurant equipment, not residential or home use type equipment. Again, gain approval for any equipment you wish to use for the unit prior to purchase. A list of all equipment proposed for the unit along with the equipment specification, or "cut" sheets, is required for proper plan review and approval.
- Once you have submitted all the required items for review, your proposal will be reviewed and you will be notified of any changes or additions needed. If no revisions are required (or once you make them if any are needed) then you will be given an approval to proceed. When you are finished with the unit and have it ready for use you will need to present it to the health department fully operational so that all equipment may be checked for proper operation and to see that it meets all of the requirements set forth for mobile food units in the rules. You should also at this time, if you have not already, give the health department a list of places and times of operation for your unit. If the unit meets all the requirements and you have demonstrated satisfactory performance of the unit then a permit to operate will be issued and you may begin using the unit.
- The health department will periodically do unannounced inspections of the unit in operation to ensure compliance with the rules and with the permit conditions. The health department will also periodically check with the commissary to ensure the unit is returning as required.
- A mobile food unit may be used at an organized festival provided the unit returns to its commissary each evening of the festival. If this is impractical and you wish to leave the unit set up at the festival location for its duration, then you must apply for and receive a Temporary Food Establishment permit for each festival you attend and pay the current fee for this permit in advance.