

Setting up a Mobile Food Business

The following information is a step – by – step guide to setting up a mobile food premises such as a food van or cart.

Step 1: The Application Process

1. Apply online via FoodTrader: <http://foodtrader.vic.gov.au>
2. A user guide to FoodTrader is available here: [Foodtrader-User-Guide-June-2023.pdf](#)

Step 2: Environmental Health Assessment

1. Following your application through FoodTrader, an Environmental Health Officer will be in touch to discuss the specifics of your business.

At this point you will be able to ask advice from your Environmental Health Officer on major internal fit-out and finishes required, (for example floors, walls, ceilings, mechanical exhaust etc.).

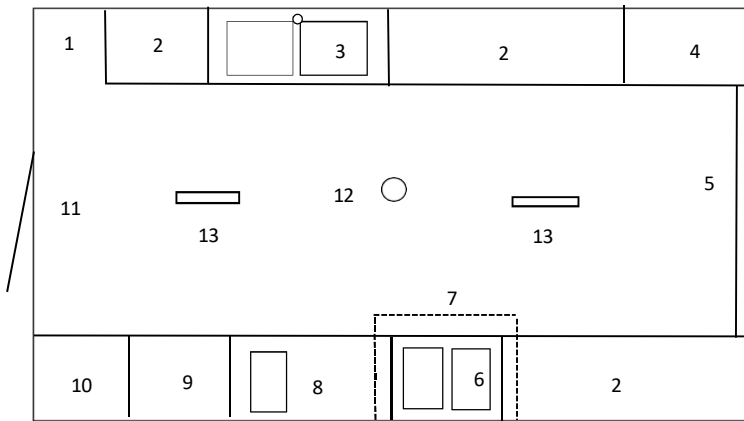
Ensure all other utilities (i.e. electricity, water, sewerage and gas) are adequately connected so that you comply with their particular standards / codes.

2. Please see details below for further information on structural requirements that will need to be addressed in consultation with the Environmental Health Officer. When all works are completed, you must make an appointment with an Environmental Health Officer for a final inspection. This inspection should be arranged at least one (1) week prior to the proposed opening date.
3. Upon successful completion of the final inspection and the approval of your *FoodTrader* application, the business can commence trading.

NOTE: If you intend to store or prepare food for sale at a location other than your mobile food premises e.g. your home, you will need to separately apply to register this premises under the Food Act 1984. This application is made directly to the Council, not through FoodTrader.

Approval of your *FoodTrader* application only provides registration to sell food, it does not provide permission to trade from a specific location. If you wish to trade from the roadside or a footpath, then you will need to apply for a permit. Contact Council's Community Laws Department on 9298 8000 for further information.

Sample Floor Plan



Hot jam doughnut van serving hot jam doughnuts and soft drinks/bottled water

Legend:

1. Broom/mop storage area
2. Bench
3. Double bowl sink with mixer tap (hot and cold water supplied).
Note: Storage for chemicals in cupboard under sink.
4. Drinks fridge.
5. Sliding service window.
6. Deep fryer.
7. Mechanical exhaust hood.
8. Hand washbasin with liquid soap and paper hand towel dispensers fixed to wall above.
9. Upright fridge.
10. Upright freezer.
11. Access door to van.
12. Floor waste connected to wastewater tank (located under van).
13. LED lights with diffuser.

Structural Guidelines

The following Structural Guidelines are designed to assist you in meeting the legislated requirements of the FSANZ Food Standards Code. Under each heading, the specific requirement of the FSANZ Food Standards Code is shaded.

Design and Construction of a Food Premises

General requirements

The design and construction of a food premises must:

- *Be appropriate for the activities for which the premises are used;*
- *Provide adequate space for the activities to be conducted on the food premises and for the fixtures, fittings and equipment used for those activities;*
- *Permit the food premises to be effectively cleaned and, if necessary, sanitised;*
- *To the extent that is practicable: exclude dirt, dust, fumes, smoke and other contaminants; not permit the entry of pests and not provide harbourage for pests.*

The mobile premises must be structurally sound and in a state of good repair. Food should flow in one direction through the premises from storage, to preparation to serving.

Provision needs to be made for the storage of various items including cleaning chemicals and equipment and items of a personal nature.

The premises should be designed so that fixtures, fittings and equipment can be adequately cleaned.

Consideration must also be given in relation to minimizing the likelihood of dirt, dust, fumes, smoke, other airborne contaminants and pests entering the premises.

Water Supply

- *Food premises must have an adequate supply of water if water is to be used at the food premises for any of the activities conducted on the food premises.*
- *A food business must use potable water for all activities that use water that are conducted on the food premises unless a food business demonstrates that the use of non-potable water for a purpose will not adversely affect the safety of the food handled by the food business, the food business may use non-potable water for that purpose.*

A water tank of sufficient storage capacity will need to be provided for the storage of water. You must also consider how the water tank is to be filled and maintained in good working order.

Sewage and wastewater disposal

Food premises must have a wastewater disposal system that:

- *Will effectively dispose of all wastewater; and*
- *Is constructed and located so that there is no likelihood of wastewater polluting the water supply or contaminating food.*

A wastewater storage tank of sufficient capacity in which to store wastewater generated by the operation of the business is required. The wastewater tank will need to be emptied into the sewerage system, it must not be discharged to storm water.

Storage of garbage and recyclable matter

Food premises must have facilities for the storage of garbage and recyclable matter that:

- *Adequately contain the volume and type of garbage and recyclable matter on the food premises;*
- *Enclose the garbage or recyclable matter, if this is necessary to keep pests and animals away from it; and*
- *Are designed and constructed so that they may be easily and effectively cleaned.*

The mobile food premises must have sufficient bins for the storage and disposal of garbage and recyclable waste.

Ventilation

Food premises must have sufficient natural or mechanical ventilation to effectively remove fumes, smoke, steam and vapours from the food premises.

The mobile food premises must have sufficient natural or mechanical ventilation to effectively remove fumes, smoke, steam and vapours. This helps to prevent the contamination of food through airborne particles and to minimise the build-up of fats and oils on surfaces throughout the premises.

A mechanical exhaust hood must be installed above all equipment that releases heat, oil vapours, water vapours etc. The exhaust hood must be designed, constructed and installed in accordance with the Australian Standard AS 1668.2 – 1991.

Lighting

Food premises must have a lighting system that provides sufficient natural or artificial light for the activities conducted on the food premises.

Light fittings in food preparation, storage and wash-up areas should be:

- Flush mounted or recessed into the ceiling; and
- Fitted with shatterproof diffusers (covers).

Floors, walls and ceilings

Floors

Floors must be designed and constructed in a way that is appropriate for the activities conducted on the food premises.

Floors must:

- *Be able to be effectively cleaned;*
- *Be unable to absorb grease, food particles or water;*
- *Be laid so that there is no ponding of water; and*

To the extent that is practicable, be unable to provide harbourage for pests.

NOTE: Exemptions to the above requirements apply under the following circumstances:

- *Floors of temporary food premises, including ground surfaces, that are unlikely to pose any risk of contamination of food handled at the food premises;*
- *Floors of food premises that are unlikely to pose any risk of contamination of food handled at the food premises provided the food business has obtained the approval in writing from Council's Health Services Department.*

The floor of a mobile food premises must be smooth, durable and impervious and be capable of being effectively cleaned.

Suitable floor finishes include ceramic tiles, polyvinyl sheeting with welded seams, or other similar impervious materials.

Floor coving should be installed at wall/floor junctions and at floor/plinth junctions.

Walls and ceilings

Walls and ceilings must be designed and constructed in a way that is appropriate for the activities conducted on the food premises.

All walls and ceilings must be able to be effectively cleaned and to the extent that is practicable, be unable to provide harbourage for pests.

Where walls and ceilings are necessary to protect food from contamination, they must be:

- *Sealed to prevent the entry of dirt, dust and pests;*
- *Unable to absorb grease, food particles or water; and*
- *Able to be easily and effectively cleaned.*

Walls and ceilings must be:

- Smooth, durable and impervious;
- Easily cleanable; and
- Unable to provide harbourage for pests.

Splash backs constructed of a durable and impervious material that can be effectively cleaned needs to be provided to walls: above and behind cooking equipment, food preparation benches, wet areas and other areas that may come into contact with food or other areas that require frequent cleaning. A minimum height of 1.8 metres above the floor is recommended.

Where benches are secured and sealed to a wall, a splash back may not be required below the bench. In such cases, a splash back should be provided to a minimum height of 450mm above the bench; or at least to the height where food or water is likely to splash.

Generally, walls and ceilings in other areas must be painted with a washable paint, preferably light in colour.

Ceilings above food preparation and food storage areas need to be smooth, durable, impervious, and

capable of being effectively cleaned.

Service openings need to be capable of being closed and secured when the mobile food premises is not in use or when the premises is being transported.

Fixtures, fittings and equipment

General requirements

Fixtures, fittings and equipment must be:

- *Adequate for the production of safe and suitable food; and*
- *Fit for their intended use.*

Fixtures and fittings must be designed, constructed, located and installed, and equipment must be designed, constructed, located and, if necessary, installed, so that:

- *There is no likelihood that they will cause food contamination;*
- *They are able to be easily and effectively cleaned;*
- *Adjacent floors, walls, ceilings and other surfaces are able to be easily and effectively cleaned; and*
- *To the extent that is practicable, they do not provide harbourage for pests.*

The food contact surfaces of fixtures, fittings and equipment must be:

- *Able to be easily and effectively cleaned and, if necessary, sanitised if there is a likelihood that they will cause food contamination;*
- *Unable to absorb grease, food particles and water if there is a likelihood that they will cause food contamination; and*
- *Made of material that will not contaminate food.*

Eating and drinking utensils must be able to be easily and effectively cleaned and sanitised.

All fixtures, fittings and equipment in food preparation and storage areas need to be constructed of materials that provide a smooth, durable and impervious surface. They must also:

- Be able to be thoroughly cleaned;
- Be constructed from non-corrosive and rust resistant material;
- Be well maintained (i.e. not worn or damaged);
- Not taint or contaminate food;
- Have minimal open joints or other rough surfaces that may trap dirt and grease;
- If necessary, be able to be dismantled for thorough cleaning;
- Be able to withstand the intended sanitising process such as hot water above 77°C or chemical sanitisers;
- Not provide harbourage for rodents or insects (as far as practical);

Sink Design and Layout

The minimum requirement for businesses handling food is a double bowl sink. One bowl is used for washing and the other bowl is used for sanitising. You need to ensure that the sink bowls are large enough to fully immerse the largest piece of equipment/fixture that you will be washing and sanitising.

If the business prepares fresh fruit and/or vegetables then an additional (food preparation) sink must be provided exclusively for the washing of those items.

A cleaner's (mop) sink may be required where another suitable disposal point for dirty cleaning water is not available.

Shelving

Shelving must be appropriate for its use. For example:

- Suitable shelving options in wet areas include stainless steel and high density plastic shelving.

- Suitable shelving options in dry storage areas include any suitable smooth, durable, impervious material. Timber shelving must be laminated or sealed on all surfaces.
- Shelving must not have any holes, cracks or crevices where food and other debris can lodge.

NOTE: Unsealed chipboard and other compressed timber/fibreboard products are not suitable.

Cooking and Refrigeration Equipment

When purchasing equipment for a commercial food business it is important to ensure that it is fit for purpose. Important points to consider are:

- Is the equipment intended for commercial use? If you purchase equipment that is intended for domestic use, using it in a commercial setting may void its warranty.
- If purchasing second hand commercial equipment, is it in good condition and functioning properly?
- What sort of equipment do you need for the types of food that you want to serve? For example, if you want to sell hot meat pies, you will need both an oven (to cook/reheat the pies) and a pie warmer (in which to store them hot for sale).
- How much refrigeration storage capacity do you require? Overstocking a refrigeration unit will impair the unit's ability to work effectively.
- The design of the unit: for example, a cold display unit with no doors (to keep the cool air in) or fan forced cooling (to circulate the cold air) will generally have difficulties in maintaining food below 5°C.

Utensils, cutlery, crockery, serviettes, packaging, drinking straws, etc

Sufficient, clean and dry storage must be provided for all utensils, cutlery, crockery, serviettes, packaging, drinking straws, etc.

You must not use any chipped, broken or cracked eating or drinking utensils for handling food.

Eating and drinking utensils that are going to be reused must be able to be easily and effectively cleaned and sanitised.

Protection of food from contamination

All exposed food must be protected from contamination. Protection measures include:

- Insect barriers (fly screen, fly strips, etc.).
- Properly washing hands.
- Sneeze guards or other similar methods to prevent customers from touching, coughing, sneezing, breathing, etc. on uncovered food.
- Preventing foreign matter from entering the food.

Cleaning and sanitising

Cleaning and sanitising are separate procedures, and sanitising is distinct from sterilising.

Cleaning in the food industry is a process that removes visible contamination such as food waste, dirt and grease from a surface. This process is usually achieved by the use of water and detergent.

During the cleaning process, microorganisms will be removed but the cleaning process is not designed to destroy microorganisms.

Sanitising is a process that destroys microorganisms, thereby reducing the numbers of microorganisms present on a surface. This is usually achieved by the use of both heat and water, or by chemicals.

Sterilising is a process designed to destroy all microorganisms including spores. Eating and drinking utensils and food contact surfaces do not need to be sterilised.

Cleaning and sanitising should usually be done as separate processes. A surface needs to be thoroughly cleaned before it is sanitised, as sanitisers are unlikely to be effective in the presence of food residues and detergents.

The six recommended steps for effective cleaning and sanitising are:

1. Pre-clean: scrape or wipe food scraps and other matter off surfaces and rinse with water.
2. Wash: use hot water and detergent to remove grease and food residue. (Soak if needed).
3. Rinse: rinse off detergent and any loosened residue.
4. Sanitise: use a sanitiser to destroy remaining microorganisms (refer to manufacturer's instructions).
5. Final rinse: wash off the sanitiser if necessary (refer to manufacturer's instructions).
6. Dry: allow to air dry or use single use towels.

Cleaning and sanitising would need to be done manually (e.g. using sinks) in a mobile food premises. Sanitising in mobile food premises can be achieved:

- By soaking in hot water at 77°C for at least 30 seconds (the water must remain at or above 77°C for the 30 second period for this method to be effective).
- Using a chemical sanitiser and following the manufacturer's instructions

NOTE:

1. Hot water at 77°C may burn exposed skin.
2. Domestic hot water systems are preset at lower temperatures and may require adjustment.

Connections for specific fixtures, fittings and equipment

Fixtures, fittings and equipment that use water for food handling or other activities and are designed to be connected to a water supply must be connected to an adequate supply of water.

Fixtures, fittings and equipment that are designed to be connected to a sewage and wastewater disposal system and discharge sewage or wastewater must be connected to a sewage and wastewater disposal system.

Automatic equipment that uses water to sanitise utensils or other equipment must only operate for the purpose of sanitation when the water is at a temperature that will sanitise the utensils or equipment.

Connections for specific fixtures, fittings and equipment must:

- Be connected to the wastewater collection system if they generate liquid waste. For example: a coffee machine.
- Be connected to potable water supply if their use requires water.

Hot water supply

The hot water supply must be large enough to deliver a continuous supply of hot water at all times. If the hot water supply is to be used for sanitising you will need to check that the hot water service is capable of a minimum temperature of 80°C and that there is sufficient water to fully immerse fixtures and equipment.

Hand washing facilities

Food premises must have hand-washing facilities that are located where they can be easily accessed by food handlers:

- *Within areas where food handlers work if their hands are likely to be a source of contamination of food and;*
- *If there are toilets on the food premises — immediately adjacent to the toilets or toilet cubicles.*

Hand washing facilities must be:

- *Permanent fixtures;*
- *Connected to, or otherwise provided with, a supply of warm running potable water;*
- *Of a size that allows easy and effective hand washing; and*
- *Clearly designated for the sole purpose of washing hands, arms and face.*

If a mobile food premises is handling open food, hand washing facilities must be provided. Hand washing facilities need to be:

- Free from obstruction and easily accessible;
- Used for the sole purpose of hand washing;
- Be installed at a suitable height e.g. bench height;
- Be supplied with clean, warm running water via a single outlet;
- Be provided with liquid soap and paper towel (via a dispenser) or other means of effectively drying hands. NOTE: Air dryers alone are not generally considered as effective as paper towel as air dryers can take much longer to achieve the same result and are less likely to be used effectively.

Miscellaneous

Storage facilities

Food premises must have adequate storage facilities for the storage of items that are likely to be the source of contamination of food, including chemicals, clothing and personal belongings.

Storage facilities must be located where there is no likelihood of stored items contaminating food or food contact surfaces.

Food Storage

Dry ingredients must be stored:

- In a dry environment;
- After opening, in food grade containers with tight fitting lids;
- On shelving at least 150mm off the floor.

Chemical and Personal Belongings Storage

Adequate facilities must be provided for the storage of chemicals and personal belongings separate to food.

References

Australian Standard AS 4674 – 2004 Design, construction and fit-out of food premises, 2004.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) 'Safe Food Australia Guide' 3rd Edition, November 2016.