



Mobile Food Establishments General Information

What is a Mobile Food Establishment?

- According to the Wisconsin Food Code: “A mobile food establishment is a restaurant or retail food establishment where food is served or sold from a movable vehicle, push cart, trailer or boat which periodically or continuously changes location and requires a service base to accommodate the unit for servicing, cleaning, inspection, and maintenance.”

Types of Mobile Food Establishments:

- Push Cart/Open Air Cart – Packaged Food and Drink
 - All prepackaged food or drinks
 - Packaged ice cream treats, self-serve drinks with packaged ice
 - No Handwash required
- Push Cart/Open Air Cart – Unpackaged, Some Assembly Required
 - Very limited food assembly
 - Hot dogs, scooping ice for drinks, scooping ice cream
 - Handwash required
- Mobile Food Cart Limited
 - No cooking on cart
 - All food is prepared at base
 - Handwash sink required on cart
 - All equipment enclosed on cart
- Mobile Food Cart Full Service
 - Cart is a full service restaurant, vent hood may be required
 - Base is used for dry storage, water, and wastewater
 - All equipment enclosed on cart
 - Handwash, utensil wash, and food prep sinks are required on cart

Average Start Up Costs:

- \$5,000 - \$10,000 and up for the purchase of a mobile food establishment, commercial equipment, insurance, and license fee, etc.

New Mobile food Establishments Require:

- Health Department Plan Review and Pre-inspection
- Licensing from the Health Department and the City of Eau Claire (if operating in the city limits)
- Fire department inspection if operating in the City of Eau Claire

Licensing Requirements:

- All mobile food establishments must obtain proper licensing before operating in Eau Claire County
- Two Licenses are required:
 - Mobile Food Establishment License
 - Service Base License

What is a Service Base?

- According to the Wisconsin Food Code: “A service base is an operating base location to which a mobile food establishment or transportation vehicle returns regularly for such things as vehicle and equipment cleaning, discharging liquid or solid wastes, refilling water tanks and ice bins, and boarding food.”

Service Base Requirements:

- All mobile food establishments are required to have a service base
- Service bases are used for: food preparation and storage, dish washing, utensil and single use item storage, fresh water source, waste water disposal
- Service base locations:
 - Licensed restaurant or retail establishment
 - Your own warehouse or commercial space
 - Private residence may not be approved

Wisconsin Food Code Requirements:

- Mobile food establishments must comply with the Wisconsin Food Code requirements for Restaurants or Retail Food Establishments
- For Wisconsin Food Code refer to: <http://www.eauclairewi.gov/departments/health-department/environmental-health/food-protection>

Wisconsin Certified Food Manager Certificate:

- The Wisconsin Food Code requires all mobile food establishments that prepare, handle, or serve unpackaged meals to have a certified food managers license
- For more information visit: <http://www.eauclairewi.gov/departments/health-department/environmental-health/food-protection/food-manager-certification>

Operating Areas:

- Eau Claire County Only
 - If you plan to operate only in Eau Claire County and not inside the city limits you are only required to get licenses from the Health Department for your mobile cart and base
 - Check local municipality for other requirements
- City of Eau Claire
 - If you plan to operate inside the City of Eau Claire you will need licenses from the Health Department and the City for your mobile cart and base
 - If you plan on operating in the city parks and on streets you will be required to get a permit from the city



- An inspection with the fire department may be required
- State Wide
 - If you plan on operating throughout the state of Wisconsin you should obtain a mobile cart license from the state
 - If your base is located in Eau Claire County it will be licensed by the Eau Claire City-County Health Department
 - If you plan to operate your mobile food cart in the City of Eau Claire you will need a city restaurant license
 - For more information on a state license visit:
 - https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/MobileTempRestaurants.aspx

Contact Information:

Eau Claire City-County Health Department: 715-839-4718

City of Eau Claire Licensing Specialist: 715-839-4923

Wisconsin Department of Trade and Consumer Protections: 608-224-4923