



## Informational Bulletin From the Office of the Fire Marshal

# Mobile Food Vending (Food Truck Safety)



Mobile food vendors have all of the potential ingredients for a fire that can flame out of control causing serious damage, injury and even death: Open flames, hot equipment, electrical connections, cooking oils, cleaning chemicals, propane, engine oil and paper products.

A fire can be devastating, but there are fire safety basics you can take to prevent fires and minimize the damage.

### Location

**Do not obstruct.** Do not place mobile food vending vehicles, trucks, trailers, carts or the like in a manner that obstructs or interferes with fire lanes, fire department connections, fire hydrants or egress from any building.

### Fire Safety Basics / Fire Protection

• **Automatic fire-suppression system in the truck.** These systems automatically dispense chemicals to suppress the flames and also have a manual switch. Activating the system automatically shuts down the fuel or electric supply to nearby cooking equipment. Your fire-suppression system must be professionally inspected semiannually. (\* Previously licensed food carts are exempt if no deep fat fryers or woks are used.)

• **Keep portable fire extinguishers as a backup.** 2-A:10-B:C fire extinguishers are required to be present for all mobile food vendors. Where cooking utilizes deep fat fryers, a Class K fire extinguisher is also required.

• **Schedule regular maintenance on electrical equipment,** and watch for hazards like frayed cords or wiring, cracked or broken switch plates and combustible items near power sources

• **LPG (Propane).** If you utilize propane, ensure that the vessels are secured to the food service platform that provides a reasonable expectation of security while parked or in transit. Ensure that the vessels are in compliance with DOT regulations (see last page).

• **Portable Generators.** Never refuel a generator while it is operating! Locate generators at least 20' away from your mobile food vending unless the generator is 6,500 watts or smaller and not readily accessible to the public.

### Train Your Food Truck Staff On These Fire Safety Basics:

• **Find and use a fire extinguisher appropriately.** An acronym you may find helpful is PASS – pull out the pin, aim at the base, squeeze, and make a back and forth sweeping motion.



• **Clean up the grease.** Cleaning exhaust hoods is especially important, since grease buildup can restrict air flow. Be sure to also clean walls and work surfaces; ranges, fryers, broilers, grills and convection ovens; vents and filters.



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- **Use caution with cloth towels that come in contact with oil.** Launder and store towels carefully. Towels with oily residue (such as those rinsed in only cold water) can not only spontaneously combust in clothes dryer, but can also ignite after they are removed from the dryer (whether left in a pile or folded for storage).

- **Never throw water on a grease fire.** Water tossed into grease will cause grease to splatter, spread and likely erupt into a larger fire.

- **Remove ashes** from wood and charcoal – burning ovens at least once a day.

- **Store flammable liquids properly.** Keep them in their original containers or puncture-resistant, tightly sealed containers. Although a food truck kitchen is very small, you should attempt to store containers in well-ventilated areas away from combustible supplies, food, food preparation areas or any source of flames.

- **Tidy up to avoid fire hazards.** Store paper products, linens, boxes and food away from heat and cooking sources. Properly dispose of soiled rags, trash, cardboard boxes and wooden pallets at least once a day.

- **Use chemical solutions properly.** Use chemicals in well-ventilated areas, and never mix chemicals unless directions call for mixing. Immediately clean up chemical spills.

- **Separation Distance.** Maintain 10' of separation between food carts and from buildings.

### Prepare an Emergency Plan

If a fire breaks out in your food truck, your staff must take control of the situation and all employees must safely exit the vehicle and lead customers to a point safely away from the truck.

- **Be prepared to power down.** Train at least one worker per shift how to shut off propane and electrical power in case of emergency.

- **Have an evacuation plan.** Designate one staff member per shift to be evacuation manager. That person should be in charge of calling 911, determining when an evacuation is necessary and ensuring that everyone exits the food truck safely. Ensure your staff knows where all of the exits are.



- **Offer emergency training.** Teach new employees about evacuation procedures and the usage of fire-safety equipment. Give veteran staff members a refresher-course at least annually.

For further information, please see:

[Fire Equipment Manufacturers' Association Food Truck Safety](#)

[NFPA Food Truck Safety Fact Sheet](#)