



GRAHAM COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Health (928) 428-1962

826 West Main Street, Safford, Arizona 85546

FAX (928) 428-8074

Mobile Food Units - Frequently Asked Questions

What is a commissary?

A commissary is a permitted, commercial kitchen used as a base of operations by a mobile food unit for cooking, cooling, reheating, food and supply storage, obtaining potable water, wastewater disposal, etc. Because Graham County does not have a facility that operates solely as a commissary, some mobile units opt to rent space in an existing, permitted kitchen. This is acceptable if the restaurant or commercial kitchen is receiving a "satisfactory" or better on inspections, and if the operations of the mobile unit won't negatively impact the normal kitchen operations. The choice of commissary must be approved by the department.

Will I need to have a commissary?

It depends. A complex menu makes a commissary necessary. A mobile unit is not simply a small restaurant. They lack the space and equipment to safely perform all the operations of a full-scale restaurant. Keeping the menu small and simple, and in line with what the mobile unit is equipped to handle, will make it less likely that a commissary will be required.

My mobile unit has everything a restaurant contains, so why do I need a commissary?

Unlike restaurants, mobile units are not equipped to handle day-to-day operations when it comes to water usage, cleaning (a food establishment is required to have a mop sink), wastewater disposal, electrical reliability, cold or dry storage, adequate work space, etc.

As a mobile food unit, can we offer any type of menu we like?

Not necessarily. To protect public health, the department will limit the menu to what is compatible with the mobile unit in terms of space and equipment. To operate safely, a mobile unit should focus on a limited menu with limited preparation steps.

Do I need to use commercial equipment in a mobile food unit?

Yes. To meet the Arizona Food Code requirements, mobile food units are required to install commercial-grade (ANSI/NSF-approved) equipment for all cooking, hot holding, cold holding, slicing, washing, etc.

(Over)

I want to buy a used mobile food unit, but I don't know if it meets code. Will you look at it and let me know?

Yes. We are happy to do a preliminary inspection *before* you buy the mobile food unit to let you know if it appears to meet code. Many older units need repairs and/or upgrades to bring them into compliance with the current code. If it doesn't meet code, we can give you an idea of what would be need to be done. This is an informal inspection only, and doesn't guarantee the mobile unit won't have other problems that may become apparent during the plan review process and later inspections.

Once I've completed the plan review process, where will the preoperational inspection be done?

Once your plans have been approved, call to schedule a preoperational inspection. The inspection will take place at the Health Department. You will be required to set up the mobile food unit and have all equipment operating and be fully stocked with necessary supplies (i.e., sanitizer, test strips, soap, paper towels, gloves, thermometers, etc., depending on the type of operation). Electricity is not provided, so please bring a generator.

What other information do I need?

Please read the following for additional information: (Some of this is in your application packet.)

- Mobile Food Unit Guidelines
- FAQs for the Food Permit Application Process
- [Arizona Food Code](#)
- [FDA Plan Review Guide](#)
- [NSF](#) publishes guides for commercial food equipment.