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Chesapeake Health Department

MOBILE FOOD UNIT OPERATION GUIDE Guidelines for Food Service



Chesapeake Health Department
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A summary of the Food Sanitation Rules relating to mobile food units

The Mobile Food Unit Operational Guide is intended to help you set up and operate your mobile food unit in a sanitary and safe manner. By focusing on critical food safety practices, you will reduce the possibility of foodborne illness. **While this guide provides some detailed information about operating a mobile food unit, it does not contain all the requirements for your unit.** The *Rules Governing the Sanitation of Restaurants and Other Food handling Establishments* is the Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Health Food Regulations 12 VAC 5-421 available at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov> or can be purchased at the Chesapeake Health Department.

Definitions

Approved water supply: A waterworks which has a valid waterworks operation permit from the department or a nonpublic water supply which is evaluated, tested, and if found in reasonable compliance with the construction standards of the Private Well Regulations (12 VAC 5-630) and the bacteriological water quality standards of the Virginia Waterworks Regulation (12 VAC 5-590), accepted and approved by the director or the director's designee.

Bottled Drinking Water: Water that is sealed in bottles, packages, or other containers and offered for sale for human consumption.

Commissary/ Service Area: Is a catering establishment, restaurant, or health permitted facility to which a mobile food unit returns daily for such things as vehicle and equipment cleaning, discharging liquid or solid wastes, refilling water tanks and ice bins, and where food is kept, handled, prepared, packaged, or stored.

Consumer: A person who is a member of the public, takes possession of food, is not functioning in the capacity of an operator of a food establishment or food processing plant, and does not offer the food for resale.

Corrosion-resistant Materials: A material that maintains acceptable surface cleanability characteristics under prolonged influence of the food to be contacted, the normal use of cleaning compounds and sanitizing solutions, and other conditions of the environment.

Easily Cleanable: A non-absorbent surface that allows effective removal of soil by normal cleaning methods.

Equipment: An article that is used in the operation of a food establishment. Includes, but is not limited to, items such as a freezer, grinder, hood, icemaker, meat block, mixer, oven, cooler, scale, sink, slicer, stove, table, thermometer, and vending machine.

Food-Contact Surface: A surface of equipment or a utensil with which food normally comes into contact with and from which may drain, drip, or splash into a food, or onto a surface normally in contact with food.

Hazard: A biological (microorganism), chemical (cleansers, pesticides), or physical (fingernail, plastic) property that may cause an unacceptable consumer health risk.

Mobile Food Unit: A vehicle-mounted food service establishment designed to be readily movable.

Packaged: Means bottled, canned, cartoned, securely bagged, or securely wrapped, whether packaged in a food establishment or a food processing plant.

Permit: License issued by regulatory authority that authorizes a person to operate a food establishment.

Plan Review: Conducted by the Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) by reviewing the menu, equipment list, and layout of the unit for several reasons; 1) To make sure the unit will be in compliance with the regulations, 2) to prevent any misunderstandings by the applicant/owner, and 3) allows the EHS to become familiar with the operation, the owner, and potential for future problems before the unit is permitted.

Pre-packaged Food: Means packaged or made up in advance in a container or wrapped and ready for offer to the consumer.

Pushcart: A non-self propelled vehicle or stand that is limited to serving non-potentially hazardous food, commissary covered food maintained at proper temperatures, or limited to the preparation and serving of plated, wrapped, or packaged frankfurter-like foods.

Ready-To-Eat Food: Food that is in a form that is edible without washing, cooking, or additional preparation. Examples are sandwiches, foods on a buffet, and sushi.

Sanitation: Reducing the number of bacteria to a safe level.

Self contained mobile food unit: A vehicle that meets the same requirements as a permanent facility where all the food preparation is done on the unit. As a minimum, the unit must have mechanical holding units, gas or electric cooking equipment, water tanks,

hand sinks, three compartment sinks, storage for all food, single service items, and cleaning supplies.

Temporary food establishment: Means a food establishment that operates for a period of no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration.



Time/Temperature Controlled for Safety Food (TCS): A food that requires temperature control because it is capable of supporting the rapid growth of infectious or toxic microorganisms that can make people sick.

Utensil: A food-contact tool or container used in the storage, preparation, transportation, dispensing, sale, or service of food. Examples are tongs, ladles, gloves, thermometers, and deli paper.



Service Area Requirements

Mobile food units must operate from a commissary. A commissary is a licensed (permitted) restaurant or warehouse. A warehouse may be accepted if only prepackaged foods are sold and the facility is inspected by a regulatory agency.

The district in which the commissary is located will issue the permit to operate.

You shall report at least daily while your mobile unit is in use to your commissary for supplies, cleaning, and servicing to include collection of fresh water and disposal of wastewater.

A written agreement must be signed between the commissary operator and the mobile food unit operator with a copy provided to the Health Department. This agreement will give access to the service area to adequately meet all requirements in the regulations.

You may use your own permitted restaurant or facility as your commissary.

What is a Mobile Food Unit?

Mobile food units are a type of restaurant and can operate year-round (kitchen on wheels). They vary in equipment and design, depending upon the type of food and service intended by the operator. The unit is a vehicle that is self-propelled, or can be pulled or pushed down a sidewalk, street, highway or waterway. Food may be prepared or processed on the vehicle that is used to sell and dispense food to the consumer. There is no size limit to mobile food units, but they must meet the following basic requirements:

1. A non-mobile unit or structure cannot be designated as a mobile unit. The intention is to be mobile and not a permanent fixture.

2. A mobile food unit can serve at a temporary event without the issuance of a separate permit.

3. All food, equipment and supplies must be stored on the unit and at least 6 inches off the ground and must have overhead protection such as truck ceiling, umbrella, canopy, awning etc.

4. Additional coolers (igloos) may **ONLY** be used to store bottled drinks and ice.

5. Cleaning supplies and soiled utensils may be stored in additional tubs or containers that are non-absorbent, covered and stored in a manner as to prevent contamination or infestation.

6. A smooth and easily cleanable table may be assembled next to the unit **ONLY** for serving condiments, napkins, and straws.

7. Mobile units **must** be positioned to keep the general public away from the food preparation and cooking areas of the unit.

8. Mobile units **do not** include automobiles, trucks, or vans not designed for food preparation (this includes the trunk of your car). No food products may be stored in your vehicle such as extra supplies of breads, packaged hotdogs in a cooler, or prepared foods stored in insulated units. You may be required to return to your commissary several times a day.

9. No crock-pots or sterno type-heating units may be used unless they fit on your unit.

10. All grills, burners, and cooking equipment must be installed on or to your unit. No freestanding BBQ grills are allowed to be used in addition to your unit. All cooking surfaces must have a lid or cover.



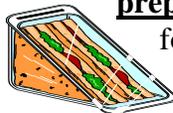
How is a Mobile Food Unit Classified?

There are four types of mobile food units. The mobile food unit classifications are based on the menu. A mobile unit can serve menu items within its classification number or below. For example, a Class III unit may also sell items allowed in a Class II and Class I. Training and equipment requirements are located in table 1.

Class I These units serve **only non-potentially hazardous prepackaged foods**. No preparation or assembly is required and only bottled or canned drinks may be served. Examples include chips, crackers, cookies, soda, and sweets. These units **DO NOT** require a permit to operate.



Class II These units serve **potentially and non-potentially hazardous prepackaged foods**. No preparation or assembly on the unit is required. The food items may be prepared commercially or in a permitted restaurant. Examples: sandwiches, tossed salads, individually wrapped and cooked hot dogs/sausages.



Note: Units serving only Shaved Ice or Snow Cones included.

Class III These units serve **potentially and non-potentially hazardous unpackaged preassembled foods**. Self-service by customers of unpackaged food is not allowed. Preparation, assembly or cooking of raw foods is not allowed on this unit. Commercial prepared foods may be *reheated*. Examples: potato & macaroni salads, cole slaw, crabs, soups, hot dogs, chili, sauerkraut, cooked onions and peppers, and BBQ pork.



Class IV These units serve **potentially and non-potentially hazardous foods that are prepared, cooked/reheated, and assembled on the unit** using precooked and/or raw products. The menu is unlimited. Examples: All meats, fish, poultry, plant foods, and dairy products.



Table 1: Mobile Food Unit General Requirements and Limitations

Requirements	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Plan Review	NO	YES	YES	YES
Commissary	NO	YES	YES	YES
CFM	NO	YES	YES	YES
FHC	NO	YES	YES/NO	YES/NO
Assembly or preparation allowed	NO	NO	NO	YES
Cooking allowed	NO	NO	NO (Reheating ONLY)	YES
Barbecue operation allowed	NO	NO	NO	YES
Cold holding facilities	NO	YES	YES	YES
Hot holding facilities	NO	YES	YES	YES
Water supply required hot & cold	NO	NO*	YES	YES
Waste water tank	NO	NO	YES	YES
Handwashing sink required	NO	NO	**YES	**YES
Dish washing sinks required	NO	NO	YES	YES
Stove hood or vent fan	NO	NO	YES	YES
Examples	Prepackaged Snacks, sodas, cookies, chips, crackers	RTE's Prepackaged salads, hot dogs, sandwiches	Unpackaged hot dogs, chili, salads, corn on stick, soups	No Menu Limitations

*Hand sanitizer and/or towelettes required

**The hand-washing sink must provide hot and cold running water.

Class 1: No permit required

Class II: Inspected once per year

Class III: Inspected every 6 months

Class IV: Inspected every 3 months

Administrative Requirements

Licensing Your Mobile Food Unit

A Health Permit Sticker is required for Class II, III, and IV units. Before a Mobile Food Unit is licensed to operate, it must go through a plan review (menu and floor plan are required) with the local Environmental Health Department in the jurisdiction where the commissary is located. There may be other agencies from which you will be required to obtain approval. These include, but are not limited to planning (zoning), building codes, Fire Marshall, and other City authorities. Permit Stickers are valid for one year and must be posted on the body of the truck unit in public view during all hours of operation. If a unit does not comply with the provisions of the regulations, such as returning to the service area on each day of operation, the permit for the unit may be suspended. **Permit Stickers are non-transferable.**

Note: Avoid placement on tongue or any other part they may be moved to another unit
For Fee Information, Please Call: (757) 382-8672

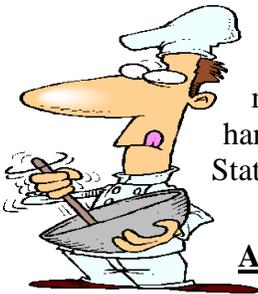
Certified Food Safety Manager (CFSM)

A Certified Food Safety Manager (CFSM) is required for Class II thru IV mobile food units. Certification is good for five (5) years. The Chesapeake Health Department offers the certification training courses online via StateFoodSafety.com; see below for details. Article V, section 38-181 of the Chesapeake City Code and 12 VAC 5-421-50 to 12 VAC 5-421-70.



Food Safety Handlers Course (FSH)

For Class II thru IV, training of food service personnel is the responsibility of the CFSM. Written documentation must be maintained and kept on site for review by the specialist. Food safety training must be ongoing and as a minimum include areas pertaining to good personal hygiene, safe food handling, and general sanitation. The FSH course is offered online via StateFoodSafety.com. Article V of the Chesapeake City Code.



Allergen Awareness Training

For Training Information, Refer to
<https://chesapeake.statefoodsafety.com/>
Help-line: (801) 494-1416

All personnel working in or with Class II, III, or IV units are required to obtain training on the subject of Allergen Awareness. This course is also offered online by StateFoodSafety.com and is recommended on an annual basis; written documentation must be maintained and kept on site for review by the specialist.

Personal Hygiene Requirements

Employee Health Policy

The applicant/owner is required to have an employee health policy. Employees ill with diarrhea, fever, vomiting, jaundice, sore throat with fever, and/or discharges from the eyes, nose or mouth may not work with exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens or unwrapped single service items.

Hand-washing Facilities (when required)

Hand-washing is very important when working with food and drinks. Twenty (20) seconds of proper hand-washing removes microorganisms that are known to cause illness.



Hand sinks must have warm running water (100°F), dispensed soap, paper towels, a hand washing sign, and wastebasket.

A Class II mobile unit may utilize hand sanitizer or wipes. A Class III and IV mobile unit must be plumbed to provide hot and cold running water.

No jewelry on the arms or hands should be worn with the exception of a plain wedding band.

Clothing

Hair restraints and clean clothing are required when preparing food. An apron may be worn over daily clothing.

Cuts and sores

Cuts must be kept covered with an impermeable clean cover such as a finger cot or bandage and a single-use glove over the impermeable cover.



Gloves



Gloves are required to be worn when handling ready-to-eat foods. It is always best to use deli sheets or utensils to handle all foods. Single used gloves shall be used for only one task such as working with ready-to-eat food or raw animal food, used for no other purpose, and discarded when damaged or soiled, or when interruptions occur during the operation.

Food Sanitation Requirements

Food Source



All food products must be wholesome and free of spoilage, microorganisms, toxic chemicals, and other harmful substances that can make people sick. All food products must be prepared, stored, handled, or displayed so that it is safe for people to eat. Home canned or home processed foods are not allowed to be served to the public.

Food Safety Handouts and training are available at the Chesapeake Health Department for additional information on proper food safety handling.

Water source



All water used in the mobile food unit must be from an approved public water system. A mobile food unit may also use commercially bottled water.

The materials that are used in the construction of a mobile food unit water tank and accessories shall be safe, durable, corrosion resistant, nonabsorbent, and finished to have a smooth and easily cleanable surface.

Hoses used to fill potable water tanks should be dedicated for that one task and should be identified for that use to prevent contaminating the water. The hoses are usually white with a blue stripe or labeled by the manufacturer as “food grade”.



Wastewater

A wastewater holding tank in a mobile food establishment shall be sized 15% larger in capacity than the water supply tank and sloped to a drain that is 1 inch in diameter or greater and equipped with a shut off valve.

Refer to 12 VAC 5-421-2360 through 12 VAC 5-421-2500 for additional regulation information in regards to water and wastewater tanks, back flow prevention, and grease trap requirements.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Requirements

Dishwashing

A three-compartment sink with drain boards is required for Class III and IV mobile food units.



Sanitizing

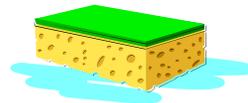
All food contact surfaces shall be cleaned and sanitized at least every four (4) hours.

The approved chemical sanitizers are Chlorine, Quaternary Ammonium Compounds (Quats), and Iodine. Surfaces may be sanitized using a labeled spray bottle of sanitizer or clean wiping cloths stored in a sanitizing bucket.

Use test strips that are made for the sanitizer that you are using. The test strips will ensure that the sanitizer has been mixed according to the manufacturer's directions.



Do not use sponges to clean a food contact surface.





General Food Protection

No food products are to be prepared or stored in private homes.

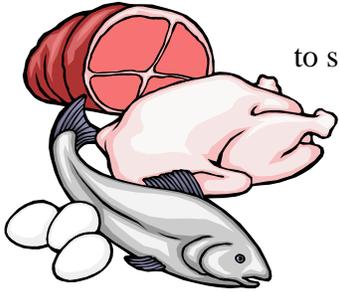
- Store food and utensils at least six inches off the ground/floor.
- Store food only in food grade containers.
- Keep ready-to-eat foods away from raw food products.
- All mobile food units must have overhead protection (truck roof, umbrella, canvas, canopy)
- Store chemicals such as detergents and sanitizers below and separate from the food and utensils.
- Properly label all chemical containers.
- Keep all garbage in a watertight container with lid.
- Dispose of wastewater properly into a plumbed sewer at the Commissary location.
- Protect food and equipment from insects, rodents, and other environmental contamination.
- The food products storage and preparation areas of the mobile unit must be protected from public access.
- Condiments shall be dispensed in individual packets, squeeze bottles, or served by the employee.



Questions:

Please contact the Chesapeake Environmental Health Department office at (757) 382-8672 between the hours of 8:15am and 5:00pm Monday through Friday if you have any questions on these requirements.

Potentially Hazardous Food (Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food):

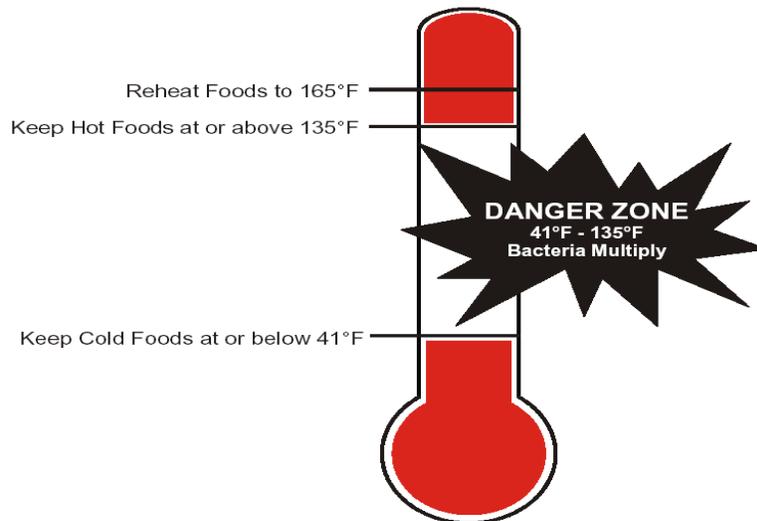


Potentially Hazardous Foods require FATTOM in order to survive and multiply. Food borne illnesses can be prevented by removing one of these elements and monitoring time and temperature. FATTOM stands for:

- F food** (nutrients)
- A acidity** (pH \geq 4.6)
- T time** (10-20 minutes)
- T temperature** (food in TDZ, 4 hour rule)
- O oxygen** (aerobic, anaerobic, facultative)
- M moisture** ($A_w \geq .85$)

The following foods are identified by the FDA Model Food Code as Time and Temperature Controlled for Safety (TCS)		
Milk and Milk Products	Shell eggs-except those heat treated to eliminate salmonella app.	Meats-Beef, Pork, and Lamb
Poultry	Fish	Shellfish and Crustacea
Tofu	Garlic in oil Mixtures	Sliced Melon
Baked or Boiled Potatoes	Raw Sprouts and Seeds	Soy-Protein Foods
Cooked Rice and Cooked Beans	Sliced Tomatoes	Other Heat-Treated Plant Foods
Cut Leafy Greens; i.e. Lettuce, Kale, Cabbage etc		

TEMPERATURE DANGER ZONE



WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

Food Temperatures

Hot and Cold Holding



Potentially hazardous foods must be kept cold at 41°F or colder or kept hot at 135°F or hotter. Temperatures between 41°F and 135°F allow for the rapid growth of bacteria that can make people sick. Use equipment capable of holding foods hot (135°F or hotter).



Open flames and sternos often fail and blow out. Be sure equipment will work and can hold food hot at all times.

Use refrigerators or ice to store food cold (41°F). The ice must be from an approved source. All containers used must allow water to drain away as the ice melts (like an insulated cooler with a drain plug). Keep enough ice available to keep food surrounded by ice for the duration of the operation.

Date Marking

Date label ready-to-eat potentially hazardous foods that will be kept longer than 24 hours at 41°F or lower with a date of preparation or expiration to be discarded at 7 days from the day of preparation.

Thawing Foods

Foods may be thawed under refrigeration, under cool running water, or in a microwave if it will be cooked immediately. Reduced Oxygen Packaged (ROP) frozen fish must be removed from its packaging prior to thawing under refrigeration, or prior to or immediately after the completion of an approved thawing method.

Cooling Foods

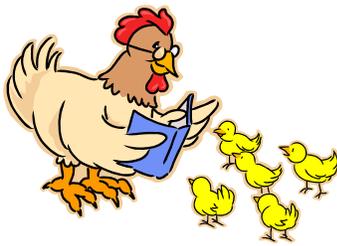


The best way to keep food safe is to make it fresh each day just before you serve it. If you have food that has been held hot and is leftover or cooked in advance, you must cool it from 135°F to 70°F within two hours. Then the food must cool from 70°F to 41°F within the next four hours. If the food does not reach 70°F within two hours, you must reheat the food to 165°F and start the cooling process again or you may serve it immediately or hot hold the food until served. If the food takes longer than two hours to reheat to 165°F or takes longer than four hours to drop from 70°F to 41°F, it must be discarded.

What's Cookin'?

Cooking

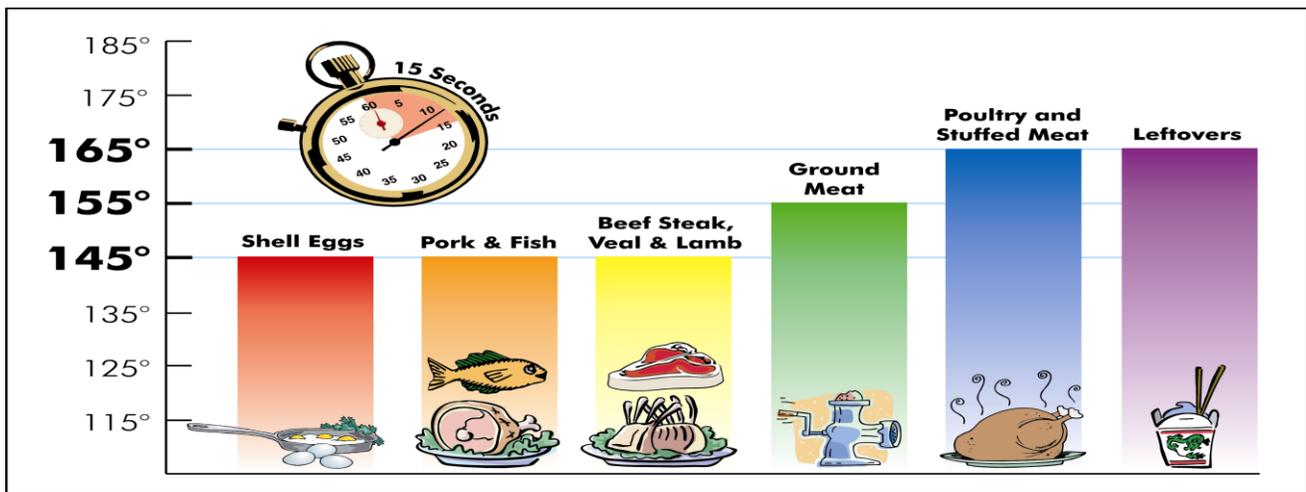
Cook raw animal products to the following internal temperatures:



Poultry, ground poultry, stuffed meats, stuffed fish, stuffed pasta
165°F (74°C) for 15 seconds

Ground beef and other ground meats
155°F (68°C) for 15 seconds

Beef steak, veal, lamb, pork, fish, shell eggs
145°F (63°C) for 15 seconds

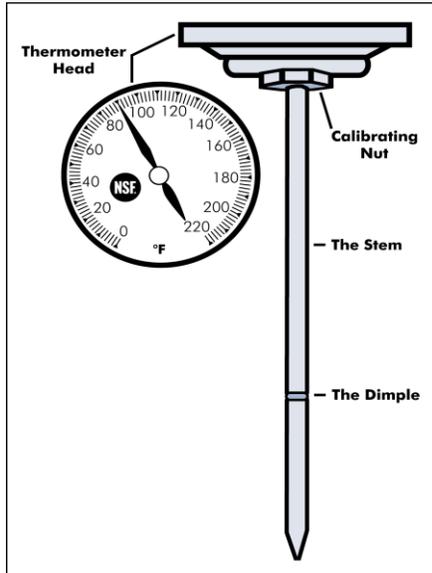


Reheating

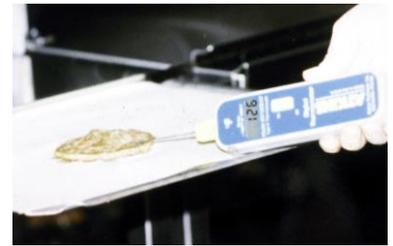
All potentially hazardous foods that have been cooked and cooled must be reheated to at least 165°F within two hours before being placed in hot holding. Commercial made products (precooked and canned items) reheated for hot holding must be reheated to at least 135°F.



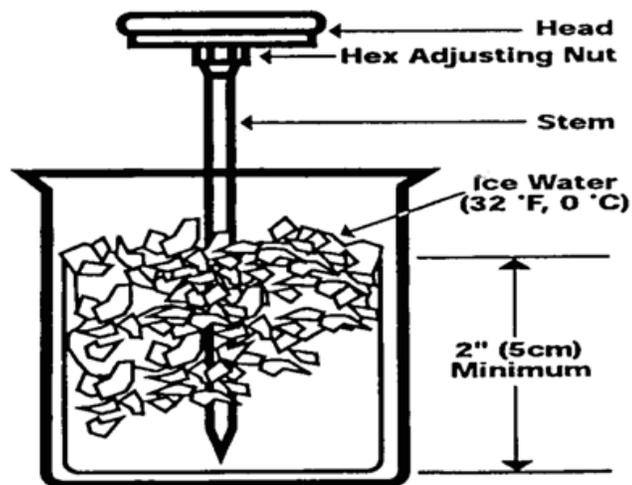
Thermometers



Metal-stem probe food thermometers with a temperature range of 0°F to 220°F are required to test food temperatures when holding foods hot, cold, or when cooking raw animal products. Clean and sanitize your thermometer using alcohol or sanitizing wipes before and after each use.



It is important to ensure that your thermometer is working properly. An easy way to check the calibration is to use ice water. Place ice (crushed ice preferred) into a container and add enough water to make it slushy. Put the thermometer into the slush and wait about 30 seconds until the dial stops moving. The dial should read 32°F. If it has a different reading, adjust the hex nut keeping the probe in the slush until it reads 32°F. For digital thermometers, follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to calibrate.



Regulations



Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Health Food Regulations 12 VAC 5-421 available for review and downloading at www.vdh.virginia.gov and Local ordinance Chesapeake City Code Article V

Virginia Food Regulations Mobile Food Establishment Matrix

Food Regulations	Potentially Hazardous Menu		Not Potentially Hazardous Menu
<i>Areas/Part</i>	<i>Food Preparation</i>	<i>Prepackaged</i>	<i>Food Preparation</i>
Personnel	Applicable Sections of sections 80-250 2230 (B)	Applicable Sections of sections 80-250 2230 (B)	Applicable Sections of sections 80-250 2230 (B)
Food	260 270-320	260 270-320 530 (A) 610; 620 (Applicable to Service Area or Commissary)	260 280 390 Applicable Sections of sections 450-690
Temperature Requirements	390; Applicable Sections of sections 450-690 820 840 (A) & (C)	340 820	NONE
Equipment Requirements	Applicable Sections of Part IV and sections 2590-2780	Applicable Sections of sections 960-1440; 770-1870 2590-2780	Applicable Sections of sections 960-1440; 1570-1870 2590-2780
Water & Sewage	2160 2230 (A) & (B) Sections 2360-2490 2500 2540-2560	2230 (B)	2160 2230 (A) & (B) Sections 2360-2490 2500 2540-2560
Physical Facility	2790; 2810 2800 (A) & (B) 2930; 3170 3180; 3270	2790 2800 (A) & (B) 2930 3270	2790; 2810 2800 (A) & (B) 2930; 3170 3180; 3270
Toxic Materials	Applicable Sections of Part VII	Applicable Sections of Part VII	Applicable Sections of Part VII
Servicing	2960/ As necessary to comply with the Food Regulations	2960/ As necessary to comply with the Food Regulations	2960/ As necessary to comply with the Food Regulations
Compliance & Enforcement	Applicable Sections of Part VIII	Applicable Sections of Part VIII	Applicable Sections of Part VIII

Employee Health Policy

The CFMS must inform employees to notify the manager when experiencing fever, sore throat, or gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, and nausea. Any person, who is infected with a communicable disease, has vomiting, abdominal cramps or diarrhea must NOT work in food service until the person is completely free from symptoms. Sores or cuts on employee hands must have a watertight cover such as a finger cot that protects the lesion and a single use glove is worn. 12 VAC 5-421-80 to 12 VAC-421-120.



FOODSERVICE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING EMPLOYEE HEALTH

<p><u>Report</u> Train your employees to report to you:</p>	<p><u>Restrict</u> Act to restrict or exclude them from food handling</p>	<p><u>Release</u> Release the restriction or exclusion from food handling.</p>
<p>When they experience the following symptoms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Diarrhea ✓ Fever ✓ Vomiting ✓ Jaundice ✓ Sore throat with fever ✓ Discharges from eyes, nose or mouth 	<p>Restrict the Food Handler</p> <p>-They may not work with exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens or unwrapped single service articles.</p>	<p>Remove the Restriction when:</p> <p>-They are free of the symptoms that caused the restriction and no foodborne illnesses have occurred; -They present a written medical release stating that their condition is not infectious.</p>
<p>When they, or a family member, are diagnosed with the following diseases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Shigellosis ✓ E. Coli 0157 ✓ Salmonella typhi ✓ Norovirus ✓ Hepatitis A ✓ Salmonella non-typhi 	<p>Exclude the Food Handler</p> <p>-They may not be present in the food establishment; -Report it to the Health Department</p>	<p>Remove the Exclusion when:</p> <p>-They present a written medical release stating that their condition is no longer infectious.</p>