



# NIH Division of the Fire Marshal

## Administrative Interpretation 20-2

### Mobile and Temporary Food Service

**Code references:** NFPA 1 (2018) Sections 10.10.6 (Cooking Equipment), 10.10.9 (Open Flame Devices), 11.7.2 (Portable Generators), and 50.7 (Mobile and Temporary Cooking Operations), and 69.3.14 (LP Gas Systems on Vehicles).

**Background:** The code references above apply to mobile and temporary food service. This interpretation summarizes the NIH program of fire prevention and protection for these operations at special and recurring events on the Bethesda Campus. Built-in cooking equipment in buildings is covered by the NIH Manual Chapter 1370 building permit process.

#### Interpretation:

1. Mobile and temporary food service operations covered by this interpretation:
  - a. Mobile food units (trucks, trailers, and carts) in which cooking is performed.
  - b. Mobile food units with generators or LP gas systems (either mounted or portable).
  - c. Temporary barbecues, cooking operations, and open flame food warming except those at 15 group residences and the Children's Inn grill station.
2. Advance permit process for mobile food units only:
  - a. Mobile food units must obtain an advance permit to operate on the NIH campus.
  - b. Permit inspections will be conducted jointly by the Division of the Fire Marshal (DFM) and the Division of Occupational Health and Safety (DOHS) for fire code and food safety requirements, respectively.
  - c. Advance inspections will occur on Thursdays between 9:00 AM and 11:30 AM at the NIH Commercial Vehicle Inspection Facility (CVIF), which is accessible from Rockville Pike just south of Cedar lane. Vehicles shall report to one of the parking spaces prior to the CVIF vehicle inspection lanes.
  - d. Operator must call DFM at 301-496-0487 to schedule the date and time. Provide sponsor or operator name, phone number, mobile unit name and tag number, and DOHS application approval number.
  - e. Advance DFM inspections will cover items 7 through 12 on the attached list.
  - f. When future events are known, DFM will provide the results of the inspection to the event sponsor.

- g. Disapproved units may request a re-inspection after corrections are made.
3. Event permit process:
- a. An inspection and permit are required for each event.
  - b. Mobile food units: Bring your copy of the advance permit. The event permit inspection will include all items on the attached requirements list; spot-checks will be conducted of advance inspection items 7 through 12.
  - c. Event sponsor must notify the DFM in advance of pre-arranged events by emailing event information to the Fire Prevention global email address.
  - d. Event sponsor must request an inspection and permit on the day of the event by calling the DFM hot work line 301-496-0414.
  - e. Event sponsor must provide name, organization, phone number, event location, and type of food service. For mobile food units, also provide the vehicle tag number and unit name.
  - f. DFM must inspect the site on the event day. Allow enough time for inspection prior to the start of cooking or serving. Mobile food units should plan for at least one-half hour for each unit.
  - g. DFM inspections are conducted only from 6:00 AM to 3:00 PM Mondays through Fridays except Federal holidays.
  - h. Event sponsor must be present during the DFM inspection.
  - i. Each permit will be effective for the duration and location of a single event only.
4. Requirements to be followed during an event by mobile food unit operator or event sponsor:
- a. The issued cooking permit must be posted at the site in plain view.
  - b. The operation must meet the requirements of the codes referenced above and the issued permit.
  - c. Report any fires, hazardous materials spills, or other emergencies to the NIH Emergency Communications Center (911 from land line or 301-496-9911 from cell) even if the fire appears to be out or the emergency mitigated.
  - d. If an NIH fire extinguisher is discharged, contact the NIH Fire Department at 301 496-2372.

**Supersedes:** Food truck & cooking aspects of Administrative Interpretation 19-1, Hazardous Work Program, dated 6/12/19.

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# Mobile & Temporary Food Unit Requirements

The following summary list covers routine items that will be checked by the DFM representative. References are all to the 2018 edition of NFPA 1, unless noted otherwise. **See the code references for full detailed requirements.** Numbers align with DFM Mobile and Temporary Food Service Permit Form.

1. Location:
  - a. 10 ft. min. separation to other vehicles, buildings, combustibles. For food trucks, measurement is to the outermost attachment [50.7.1.5 for food trucks, 10.10.6.1 for barbecue grills]
  - b. Access for fire apparatus, hydrant, fire equipment [50.7.1.7]
2. Fire extinguishers must be charged, tagged, mounted, unobstructed, near an exit, and proper types [50.7.1.4]:
  - a. Class K for cooking equipment
  - b. Class 2A:10BC for generators and fuel-fired equipment
  - c. Class 2A for wood or charcoal
3. Phone is accessible to all employees [50.7.1.8]
4. Wheel chocks [50.7.1.3] are provided that are:
  - a. Capable of handling the vehicle weight
  - b. Placed to prevent the vehicle from moving
5. Portable generators are:
  - a. Fueled before use or when cold [11.7.2.1.2]
  - b. Placed so that exhaust is at least 5 ft. from openings, air intakes, means of egress, or from any building, structure, or vehicle [50.7.1.10.2]
6. Flammable liquids are not stored inside mobile cooking vehicles or in temporary cooking areas unless NFPA 30 is met [50.7.1.12]
7. Staff training within 1 year is documented [50.7.1.9] and covers:
  - a. Proper use of portable extinguishers and extinguishing systems.
  - b. Proper method of shutting off fuel sources
  - c. Proper procedures for notifying the NIH Fire Department
  - d. Proper refueling
  - e. How to perform leak detection
  - f. Fuel properties
8. Cooking equipment [50.7.3 and NFPA 96]:
  - a. Protected by listed hood, filters, and exhaust
  - b. Suppression system provided for deep-fat fryers, ranges, griddles, broilers, braising pans, and other equipment that produces grease-laden vapors.
  - c. Grease buildup inspection documentation:
    - i. Monthly for solid fuel
    - ii. Quarterly for wok cooking or charbroiling
    - iii. Semi-annually for other cooking
  - d. Windows are open and/or ventilation is on before cooking
9. Cooking equipment suppression system:
  - a. Charged and tagged [50.7.3.3]

- b. Semi-annual service by a MD State Fire Marshal approved company [50.7.3.1 and NFPA 96]. This web sites lists companies licensed to service non-water based suppression systems:

<https://mdsp.maryland.gov/firemarshal/Pages/NonWaterBasedExtinguishingSystems.aspx>

10. Propane & CNG [50.7 and 69.3.14]:

- a. Leak tested by operator before event [50.7.2.3.1]
- b. Valves are accessible and identified. Identification signs must be reflective with minimum 2" high lettering [50.7.2.2.3]
- c. Signed statement from Maryland certified gas fitter [50.7.2.3.4]. These state web sites will be helpful:
  - i. <https://www.dllr.state.md.us/license/pl/plreq.shtml>
  - ii. [https://www.dllr.state.md.us/cgi-bin/ElectronicLicensing/OP\\_search/OP\\_search.cgi?calling\\_app=PLM::PLM\\_qselect](https://www.dllr.state.md.us/cgi-bin/ElectronicLicensing/OP_search/OP_search.cgi?calling_app=PLM::PLM_qselect)
- d. LP tanks do not exceed 200 gallon capacity [50.7.2.4.3.1.2]
- e. Tanks are mounted securely [50.7.2.4.3.4]
- f. Tanks meet one of these mounting options [50.7.2.4.3.3]:
  - i. Outside & weather-protected
  - ii. In recessed or exterior cabinet, vapor tight to vehicle, top & bottom vents that are 3 ft. away from any lower openings to vehicle
- g. Tank regulators and pressure relief vents are installed properly [50.7.2.4.4]
- h. Piping is installed, supported, and secured properly [50.7.2.4.5]
- i. Appliances (such as cargo area or water heaters) are installed properly and located away from egress [50.7.2.4.7]

11. Electric wiring, fixtures, & cords free of damage and no open boxes [50.7.1.10.3]

12. Solid fuel storage:

- a. CO detector required [50.7.1.11.2]
- b. Section 14.9 of NFPA 96 is met [50.7.1.11.1]