



Food Unit, Seasonal Temporary Food Stand, and Seasonal Permanent Food Stand Construction Guide

OLMSTED COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

June 2026

MOBILE FOOD UNIT, SEASONAL TEMPORARY FOOD STAND, AND SEASONAL
PERMANENT FOOD STAND CONSTRUCTION GUIDE

**Mobile Food Unit, Seasonal Temporary Food Stand, and
Seasonal Permanent Food Stand Construction Guide**

June 2026

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To obtain this information in a different format, call: 507-328-7500. Printed on recycled paper.

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Purpose

This guide can help individuals or groups submit mobile food unit (MFU), seasonal temporary food (STF) stand, and seasonal permanent food (SPF) stand plans to the Olmsted County Public Health Services (OCPHS). Construction, equipment, and physical facility standards outlined in this guide are Minnesota Food Code minimum requirements.

In Minnesota, different agencies license MFU, STF, and SPFs. The menu and location of operation determine which agency is responsible for plan review, licensing and inspection. Please contact us at 507-328-7500 to determine whether your license will be issued by OCPHS or the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA).

Definitions

Mobile food unit

"Mobile food unit" means a food and beverage service establishment that is a vehicle mounted unit, either:

(1) motorized or trailered, operating no more than 21 days annually at any one place, or operating more than 21 days annually at any one place with the approval of the regulatory authority as defined in Minnesota Rules, part 4626.0020, subpart 70; or

(2) operated in conjunction with a permanent business licensed under chapter 157 or chapter 28A at the site of the permanent business by the same individual or company, and readily movable, without disassembling, for transport to another location. – Minnesota Statutes, section 157.15, subdivision 9

Seasonal temporary food stand

"Seasonal temporary food stand" means a food and beverage service establishment that is a food stand which is disassembled and moved from location to location, but which operates for no more than 21 days annually at any one location, except as provided in paragraph (b).

(b) A seasonal temporary food stand may operate for more than 21 days annually at any one place with the approval of the regulatory authority, as defined in Minnesota Rules, part 4626.0020, subpart 70, that has jurisdiction over the seasonal temporary food stand. – Minnesota Statutes, section 157.15, subdivision 13

Seasonal permanent food stand

“Seasonal permanent food stand” means a food and beverage service establishment which is a permanent food service stand or building, but which operates no more than 21 days annually. – Minnesota Statutes, section 157.15, subdivision 12a.

Restrictions

Approved Source

MFU, STF, and SPF must not use or serve food that was stored or prepared in a private home. All food storage and preparation must occur in the MFU, STF, SPF, or in a licensed food establishment. All food must come from Approved Sources for Food Products

www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/docs/fs/apprvdsrcefs.pdf.

Catering

Preparing, storing, transporting, and serving large volumes of food at catered events presents increased food safety risks. Catering operations cannot be conducted from MFU, STF or SPF unless approved by the regulatory authority and adequate provision is made for safe storage and handling of the large volume of foods associated with catered events.

Plan Submittal and Review

Plans must be submitted to OCPHS at least 30 days before beginning construction, remodeling or conversion of an existing structure to a MFU, STF or SPF. If you begin work before plans are approved, OCPHS may order work to stop when it determines work may lead to noncompliance.

Please contact OCPHS at 507-328-7500 if you have questions about whether a plan review is needed for your MFU, STF or SPF.

Plan review process

1. Pre-planning and consultation on construction, equipment, and food safety.
 - Submitting and discussing preliminary plans is highly recommended.
 - Onsite assessment of existing facilities is highly recommended.
2. For a current plan review application, please send a request to planreview@olmstedcounty.gov
3. Submit your completed plan review application, required information, and fee electronically or in-person.

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- Electronically (preferred) to planreview@olmstedcounty.gov
Fees can be processed over the phone at **507-328-7447** OR **507-328-7500**
- In-person at
Olmsted County Public Health Services
Environmental Health Services
2100 Campus Drive SE, Suite 100
Rochester, MN 55904-4718

Please contact OCPHS at 507-328-7500 if you have questions about filling out the application.

4. Plan review applications are reviewed in the order they are received. Submit all required information listed in the Required Plan Contents section of this guide. If your application is incomplete, the review process may take longer.
5. Your plan reviewer will notify you when review starts and will contact you to request any missing or additional information.
 - If changes are proposed after plans have been reviewed, submit the revised plan or information
6. When review is complete, you will receive a letter reporting the findings of the review with requests for additional information and plan changes needed for code compliance.
7. Wait to begin your project until after plans are approved.

In some circumstances, OCPHS can issue a license without a plan submittal and review for MFU, STF or SPF if the establishment has previously been licensed by MDA, MDH or a MDH- or MDA-delegated agency. However, an inspection is required to determine if the MFU, STF or SPF is in compliance with Minnesota statutes and rules, and other applicable regulations.

Please contact OCPHS at 507-328-7500 if you have questions about whether a plan review is needed for your MFU, STF or SPF.

Required plan contents

Make sure to include all the following when you submit your completed plan review application and the required fees.

- The intended menu.
- A description of the proposed project including the anticipated volume of food to be stored, prepared, sold or served.
- Easily readable layout drawn to scale indicating the location of all equipment (e.g., cooking equipment, ventilation hood, refrigerators, food prep counters, handwashing sink(s), three-compartment sink, and food prep sink).
- Finish materials for floors, base coves, walls, and ceilings.

- Proposed equipment list that includes types, manufacturers and model numbers.
- Manufacturer's specification sheets for new equipment.
- Counters and cabinetry shop drawings, indicating cabinet construction, and countertop finish.
- Size of water heater, and fresh water and wastewater holding tanks.
- The source of water (private or public) for your MFU, STF or SPF. Include unique well number for private systems.
- The method of sewage disposal (public or private) for your MFU, STF or SPF. SPF include individual sewage treatment system certificate of compliance for individual sewage disposal systems.
- A copy of the zoning approval and building permit from the local unit of government for your MFU, STF, or SPF. Contact OCPHS staff about requirements for operating for more than 21 days in any given location.
- Commissary agreement, if required.
- List of intended, scheduled events or areas of operation if known.

In addition to the items listed above, other information may be requested during the plan review process.

For further information and an application, contact OCPHS at 507-328-7500.

Licensing and preoperational inspections

Once your project is near completion, follow these steps:

1. Have your MFU, STF or SPF inspected.

Contact OCPHS at least 14 days before the first event to schedule a final construction and preoperational inspection. Bring the MFU or STF to an agreed public location for the preoperational inspection. Have all equipment present, correctly installed and operational. Completely set up a STF or SPF. Do not bring food into the unit or stand until OCPHS approves it for operation.

2. Apply for license.

Contact OCPHS staff listed on your plan review approval letter to request a license application. Submit the completed license application and required license fee. **The license fee is separate from the plan review fee.**

3. Post the license in the MFU, STF or SPF.

After a successful preoperational inspection, OCPHS will issue a license. Prominently post the original license in the MFU, STF or SPF at all times.

4. If operating within the city of Rochester-

Contact the city clerk at 507-328-2900 for specific city licensing requirements. This may include additional application submission and inspection by the Rochester Fire Department.

General Equipment Information

Include specifications, proposed locations and intended use for all new and used equipment in submitted plan. Menu and food processes determine the type of equipment required. Complex food processes may require additional or specialized equipment.

Equipment design and construction

Some equipment must be certified or classified for sanitation by an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited certification program for food service equipment and includes:

- Manual warewashing sinks
- Mechanical warewashing equipment
- Mechanical refrigeration units except for reach-in or chest freezers
- Walk-in freezers
- Food hot-holding equipment
- Cooking equipment, except for microwave ovens and toasters
- Ice machines
- Mechanical slicers
- Mechanical tenderizers and grinders
- Food preparation surfaces including sinks used for food preparation

If there is no certification or classification for sanitation by an ANSI accredited certification program for a piece of equipment, the equipment must:

- Be designed for commercial use.
- Be durable, smooth, and easily cleanable.
- Be readily accessible for cleaning.
- Have food-contact surfaces that are not toxic.

Most common ANSI accredited certification programs

Certifying Group	Mark
NSF International (NSF)	
Intertek Marked "ETL Sanitation."	
Underwriters Laboratory (UL) Marked "Classified UL EPH."	
Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Marked "CSA Sanitation to NSF/ANSI."	
Baking Industry Sanitation Standards Committee (BISSC) Marked "Certified BISSC."	

Equipment numbers and capacities

Provide mechanical equipment that meets the cooking, cooling, re-heating, ventilation, and hot and cold holding needs of the MFU, STF and SPF. Install and use equipment as intended by the manufacturer.

Some common circumstances with special equipment requirements include:

- Picnic coolers may not be used for food storage except for bottled and canned beverages that are not time/temperature control for safety (TCS) food.
- Food guards, display cases or other effective means must be provided to protect unpackaged food from contamination while on display.

Equipment locations and installation

Locate or install equipment so that food and food-contact surfaces are not exposed to contamination and the areas around and beneath the equipment are accessible for cleaning.

If equipment is not easily moveable, seal it to the surface or mount it on legs. Four-inch legs are required for table-mounted equipment; six-inch legs are required for floor-mounted equipment.

Unapproved equipment

Examples of equipment that are frequently submitted but **not approved** include:

- Unfinished wood
- Household roasters/crock pots
- Galvanized food storage containers
- Enamelware
- Paintbrushes
- Wooden spoons
- Plastic tables
- Drills
- Non-food grade plastic containers
- Tubing or beverage cold plates in contact with stored ice

Sinks

Include specifications, proposed locations and intended use for all sinks.

Handwashing sinks

Provide at least one handwashing sink, either free standing or installed into an approved counter. Locate handwashing sinks to provide easy access for all employees who are:

- Preparing or dispensing food and beverages
- Conducting warewashing
- Using the toilet room

Each handwashing sink must be equipped to provide water under pressure at a temperature to allow handwashing for at least 15 seconds through a mixing valve or combination faucet. A self-closing, slow-closing, or metering faucet must provide a flow of water for at least 15 seconds without the need to reactivate the faucet.

Handwashing sinks in MFU and SPF must be permanently installed. Handwashing sinks in STF may be portable with water delivered under pressure or by gravity with a faucet or spigot that provides hands-free flow of water.

OCPHS may require splashguards on handwashing sinks to limit contamination of food, clean equipment and utensils, and single-service and single-use articles.

Manual warewashing sink

Provide a sink with at least three compartments. All compartments must be part of the same piece of equipment. Warewashing sinks in MFU may be either free standing or installed into an approved counter. Warewashing sinks in MFU and SPF must be permanently installed. Portable warewashing sinks are allowed in STF.

Warewashing sinks in SPF must include at least three compartments and drainboards on each end. All compartments and the drainboards must be part of the same piece of

equipment. You cannot attach drainboards to meet this requirement. Utensil racks or tables may be required for storing all dirty and clean equipment and utensils.

Sink compartments must be large enough to allow immersion of the largest piece of equipment and utensils. If equipment or utensils are too large for the warewashing sink, alternative manual warewashing equipment must be used.

Manual warewashing sinks must be certified or classified for sanitation by an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited certification program.

Food preparation sink

Provide a designated food preparation sink if the proposed menu includes a food product that requires washing or thawing in a sink.

Food preparation sinks must be certified or classified for sanitation by an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited certification program.

Summary of sink requirements

The following table summarizes the sink requirements for MFU, STF, and SPFs. Handwashing and warewashing sinks are **always required**. Food preparation sinks may or may not be required.

Type of Sink	Mobile Food Unit (Water must be under pressure)	Seasonal Temporary Food Stand	Seasonal Permanent Food Stand (Water must be under pressure)
Handwashing Sink(s)	Permanently installed	May be portable (water under pressure or by gravity)	Permanently installed
Warewashing Sink	Permanently installed (free standing or installed in counter)	May be portable	Permanently installed (must include integrally attached drainboards at each end)
Food Preparation Sink	Permanently installed	May be portable	Permanently installed

Ventilation Systems

Include specifications and proposed locations for ventilation hoods in submitted plans. Design and install ventilation systems according to Minnesota Rules, chapter 1346 (www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/1346/), Minnesota mechanical and fuel gas code. Minnesota Rules, part 1346.0507 (www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/1346.0507/) provides commercial kitchen hood requirements for some equipment.

Ventilation hood systems and devices must be sufficient in number and capacity to prevent grease or condensation from collecting on walls and ceilings. Adequate ventilation and make-up air is required for equipment that produces excessive steam, condensation, vapors, obnoxious or disagreeable odors, smoke and fumes.

Design ventilation systems to prevent grease or condensation from draining or dripping onto food, equipment, utensils, walls, ceiling, linens and single-service articles. Grease filters used in an exhaust ventilation hood or other grease extracting equipment must be designed to be readily removable for cleaning and/or replacing if not designed to be cleaned in place. The 2020 Minnesota State Fire Code **requires** cooking equipment in MFUs to be protected by automatic fire extinguishing systems and to provide adequate portable fire extinguishers.

Counters, Cabinetry and Tables

Include specifications, proposed locations and intended uses for all tables, counters, cabinetry and customer self-service areas in submitted plans.

Food-contact surfaces

A food-contact surface is a surface of equipment or utensil that directly contacts food. Food-contact surface also includes a surface of equipment or utensil from which food may drain, drip or splash, such as an interior of a reach-in cooler.

Plastic laminate surfaces or plastic tables are not acceptable as food preparation surfaces.

Food-contact surfaces must be certified or classified for sanitation by an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) accredited certification program.

Food-contact surfaces must be:

- Safe
- Durable, corrosion-resistant and nonabsorbent
- Sufficient in weight and thickness to withstand repeated warewashing
- Finished to have smooth, easily cleanable surface
- Resistant to pitting, chipping, crazing, scratching, scoring, distortion, and decomposition

Examples of activities requiring approved food-contact surfaces include:

- Chopping, cutting or mixing raw foods
- Cooking foods using equipment such as grills, deep fryers, flat tops, or ovens
- Assembling foods such as sandwiches or salads

Non-food-contact surfaces

A non-food contact surface is a surface of equipment that does not directly contact food, such as surfaces of millwork and cabinetry. Non-food-contact surfaces of equipment

that are exposed to splash, spillage, other food soiling or that require frequent cleaning must be constructed of a corrosion-resistant, nonabsorbent, and smooth material.

Non-food-contact surfaces must be free of unnecessary ledges, projections, and crevices, and designed and constructed to allow easy cleaning and maintenance.

Non-food-contact counters and cabinets can be plastic laminate or other nonabsorbent material. Unfinished wood is not allowed. All cutouts must be sealed by the manufacturer or countertop installer because it prevents water damage to the interior of the counter or cabinet. Cabinets with enclosed hollow bases are prohibited.

Stainless steel, laminated top, or other equivalent nonabsorbent surfaces are allowed for some types of equipment.

Examples of areas with non-food contact surfaces include:

- Beverage service areas for beverage dispensers such as espresso or coffee machines, or pop dispensers
- Customer self-service areas such as condiment display stations
- Cashier or ordering areas at bar or wait stations

Floors, Walls and Ceilings

Include proposed finish materials for all floor, wall and ceiling surfaces in submitted plans. Provide smooth, nonabsorbent, durable and easily cleanable floors, walls and ceilings.

Prior to selecting floor, wall and ceiling surfaces, owners, design professionals, and others involved in preparing the plans should consider the following factors:

- Type and amount of use
- Type of soil and cleaning methods
- Life span of the surface

Floors

Select and install flooring surfaces that meet the needs of your MFU, STF or SPF. Follow all manufacturer's recommendations.

When operating STF and SPF on machine-laid asphalt or concrete that is sloped to drain an additional flooring surface is not required.

When operating STF and SPF on grass, dirt or gravel, provide a surface such as mats, removable platforms, duckboards or other suitable approved materials that control dust and mud. Mats and duckboards must be designed to be removable and easily cleanable.

Walls and ceilings

Select and install wall and ceiling surfaces that meet the needs of your MFU, STF or SPF. Wall and ceiling surfaces must be smooth, durable, nonabsorbent, and easily cleanable.

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Provide wall and ceiling surfaces for STF and SPF that protect the interior of the stand from the weather and windblown dust and debris.

Utilities

Include specific information for water supply, water heaters, sewage disposal system, and other utilities in submitted plans. Provide utilities to meet the needs of your MFU, STF and SPF.

Water supply

Identify the source of the water for your MFU, STF and SPF in submitted plans.

A safe and adequate supply of water must be provided to meet the needs of your food establishment. Water for your establishment must be obtained from a municipal water supply or a water supply that meets the requirements of Minnesota Rules, chapter 4720 (www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4720/), Public Water Supplies; and chapter 4725 (www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/4725/), Wells and Borings.

A representative from the Minnesota Department of Health may conduct an onsite evaluation of your water supply prior to licensing your establishment.

The water inlet must be protected from contamination and be designed to prevent attachment of a non-potable service connection. Hoses used to obtain water must be of food grade quality and be provided with an approved backflow preventer. Garden hoses are not allowed.

Drinking water and wastewater holding tanks, and water heaters

Drinking water tanks must be designed for holding potable water, be easily cleanable, of sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the operation and constructed of an approved food grade non-toxic material.

A wastewater, or grey water, holding tank must be provided which is sized 15 percent larger in capacity than the water supply tank. MFU must have wastewater and fresh water tanks permanently installed on the unit.

A water heater must be adequately sized to meet the demands of the foodservice facility.

Sewage disposal

Identify the method of sewage disposal (public or private) for your MFU, STF or SPF in submitted plans. Provide a sewage disposal system that meets the peak sewage needs of your food establishment.

Wastewater must be removed in such a manner that a public health hazard or nuisance is not created. Wastewater must be discharged into a sanitary sewage system. Dumping any wastewater onto the ground or storm sewer is prohibited.

Utility service lines

Exposed utility service lines and pipes must be installed so they do not obstruct or prevent cleaning of the floors, walls and ceilings. Electrical service must comply with Minnesota Rules, chapter 1315 (www.revisor.mn.gov/rules/1315/). Use the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Electrical Inspector Directories (www.dli.mn.gov/business/electrical-contractors/electrical-inspector-directories) for more information about electrical requirements or call 651-284-5026.