



# MOBILE CATERING UNITS

Thinking of operating a mobile catering unit? This leaflet provides information about setting up such a business and includes guidance on how to comply with the law for both food and health and safety matters.

Prior to opening a business you must do the following:

- 1 *Contact Regulatory Services to arrange for the unit to be inspected.*
- 2 *Register your business by completing a Food Premises Registration Form.*

Once open, the unit will be regularly inspected by Food Safety Officers of High Peak Borough Council. If you trade outside the High Peak, your unit could be inspected by officers from other Environmental Health Departments.

For further information or assistance with any items in this booklet, please contact:

**Regulatory Services,  
High Peak Borough Council,  
Town Hall,  
Market Place,  
Buxton,  
SK17 6EL**

**Tel: 0845 129 77777**

**Fax: (01298) 27639**

**e-mail: [borough-council@highpeak.gov.uk](mailto:borough-council@highpeak.gov.uk)**

**online: [www.highpeak.gov.uk](http://www.highpeak.gov.uk)**

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## INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been produced as guidance to help you, the operator of a mobile food vehicle to ensure that your vehicle is safe and that any food sold does not cause food poisoning.

The booklet has been produced by the Derbyshire Chief Environmental Health Officers Food Liaison and Health and Safety Liaison Groups for use by all Environmental Health Departments throughout the County to help you comply with all relevant Food Hygiene as well as Health and Safety legislation.

This booklet not only sets out the legal requirements that you must comply with, but also details advice and good practice measures from relevant Industry Codes of Practice, relevant British Standards etc. By following the advice it will help you ensure that your vehicle complies with the law.

To help tell the difference between the two, all legal requirements are shown in **bold** type.

There is a checklist provided at the front of the booklet. By filling it in it will help you find out whether you and your vehicle meet the relevant standards.

## BEFORE YOU START TO OPERATE

**Before you can begin to operate a mobile catering unit, you must register your vehicle with the Local Authority where it is based at least 28 days before you intend to open.**

This is done by completing a "Food Registration Form" which can be obtained from the Environmental Health Department.

Certain streets, laybys and land may be either prohibited or restricted for trading purposes. Information on this is available from the Environmental Health department. You will also need to check with the Land Owner (often Derbyshire County Council) before you operate from a highway or layby.

Planning permission may be required in certain circumstances to trade from private land. Both yourself and the site owner should therefore consult the Borough Council's Planning Department on 0845 129 7777 for further information on this matter.

**Having decided to operate a mobile food vehicle you must ensure that your business meets the requirements set out in the following sections.**

# CHECK SHEET

This sheet will help you ensure your vehicle complies with the relevant legislation. If you answer 'No' to any of these questions, then you should refer to the relevant page in the guide.

## Registration Yes No Page no

Have you registered your vehicle with your local Environmental Services Department?   1

## Safe Catering Yes No Page no

Have you looked at how you operate your food business to ensure the food you sell is safe?   4

Are you checking the core temperature of cooked/reheated food to ensure it achieves 75°C or higher with an accurate probe thermometer?   4

Are you checking the temperature of the refrigerators to ensure they operate at 8°C or colder with an accurate probe thermometer?   4

Are you taking steps to avoid cross contamination?   5

Have you taken steps to avoid physical or chemical contamination of food?   5

Do you and your staff have washable clean overalls etc?   8

Do you or your staff have the "Foundation Food Hygiene Certificate"?   8

## Condition of the Vehicle

To ensure food safety, does your vehicle meet the following structural standards?

	Yes	No	Page no
Walls, floors, work surfaces etc capable of being easily cleaned?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8-9
Adequate ventilation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9
Adequate lighting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9
Adequate supplies of clean water?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9
A wash hand basin for personal hygiene?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9
Soap and hand-drying facilities at the wash hand basin?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9
A separate sink for food/utensil washing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9
Adequate facilities for waste water, food and refuse disposal?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10

## Health and Safety Yes No Page no

Have you carried out a risk assessment?   10

Identified the hazards?   10

Taken steps to control the risks?   10

## LPG

Does your vehicle meet the following safety standards for LPG  
Storage Compartment Yes No Page no

Large enough to house all LPG cylinders?   11  
Ventilation at high and low levels?   11  
Lockable?   11  
Built of materials having half hour fire resistance?   11

### Vehicle

Permanent ventilation at high and low levels?   11  
Pipework made of a suitable metal i.e. copper?   12  
Flexible hoses conforming to BS3212?   12  
Flame failure to all appliances?   12  
A shut off valve before each appliance?   12  
Do you have a gas test certificate for the vehicle issued by a CORGI registered gas fitter?   13  
Do you carry out regular checks of the pipework for leaks?   13  
Are staff trained in the safe use of LPG i.e. how to change cylinders?   13  
Are staff trained on what to do in the event of a fire?   13

### Chemical Safety

Have you carried out an assessment of the chemicals you use?   14  
Have staff been trained in their use?   14  
Do you have the appropriate protective equipment?   14

### First Aid

Do you have a first aid kit?   14  
Do you have an accident book?   14  
Are you aware of the need to report certain injuries?   14

### Emergency Contacts

Do you provide staff with a mobile phone?   14

### Manual Handling

Have you carried out an assessment of manual handling?   15

# FOOD SAFETY

## 1.0 FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006 new Food Hygiene Regulations were implemented which require food businesses to have a documented Food Hygiene Management System in place.

Food businesses were already required to produce food that is safe to eat, but the new regulations mean that you must be able to show what you do to make food safely and have this written down.

To help you to do this, a free pack called 'Safer food better business' is available from the Food Standards Agency (FSA). To order a copy of the pack, contact the FSA on telephone number 0845 606 0667, fax number 020 8867 3225 or by email to [foodstandards@ecgroup.uk.com](mailto:foodstandards@ecgroup.uk.com)

Using the pack in your business will help you to:

- Comply with the new regulations
- Show what you do to make food safely
- Train staff
- Protect your business's reputation
- Improve your business e.g. by wasting less food.

Food can be contaminated in three main ways:

1. *Bacterial* e.g. under cooking of food allowing food poisoning bacteria to survive
2. *Physical* e.g. dirt, glass, insects
3. *Chemical* e.g. spillage of cleaning materials

**You must therefore, take steps to ensure contamination does not occur.**

### **1.1 Bacterial Contamination**

The main causes of bacterial contamination resulting in food poisoning, are:

- Insufficient cooking of food
- Poor storage temperatures
- Cross contamination

### **1.2 Cooking and Reheating of Food**

To kill food poisoning bacteria such as E. coli, Salmonella etc, food must be thoroughly cooked. This means ensuring you achieve a minimum temperature at the centre of the food of 75°C for at least 30 seconds.

To reheat food safely, it must be done quickly and also achieve a minimum temperature of 75°C for 30 seconds in the centre. In addition food must never be reheated more than once.

**You must, therefore, regularly check foods after cooking or reheating with an accurate probe thermometer to ensure you achieve this temperature.**

**Before probing food, you must ensure the probe is cleaned first using bactericidal probe wipes.**

### **1.3 Poor Storage Temperatures**

**To prevent the growth of food poisoning bacteria, high risk foods must be kept at the correct temperature.**

**Food must be kept at 8°C or below.** It is a recommendation that freezers should operate at -18°C or below.

The use of ice packs and insulated containers is only acceptable to keep chilled foods cool for very short periods of time.

**Once food has been cooked, it must be kept hot at or above 63°C.**

**All of these temperatures must be regularly checked using an accurate thermometer.** Thermometers must be calibrated in accordance with manufacturers instructions.

### **1.4 Cross Contamination**

**To prevent the spread of food poisoning bacteria, raw and cooked or ready to eat food must always be kept separate.** This should include the following:

- Ensuring cooked food is stored above raw food in the refrigerator.
- Using separate tongs, knives, chopping boards and cleaning cloths for raw and cooked foods.
- Always cleaning down work surfaces after preparing raw foods, using a suitable detergent and non-taint disinfectant.
- Always washing your hands after handling raw foods.
- Using either disposable wiping cloths or ensuring that dish cloths are changed at least twice per day and are boil washed after use.

### **1.5 Physical Contamination**

**To prevent physical contamination of food, you must ensure that the vehicle is kept clean, tidy and well maintained at all times.**

Other steps that should be taken include:

- Keeping open food on display covered or wrapped.
- Ensure that no animals are allowed on the unit.
- Ensure the vehicle is situated away from refuse stores, bonfires etc.

- Ensure likely physical contaminants such as staples, paper clips etc are kept out of the unit.

### **1.6 Chemical Contamination**

**All cleaning chemicals must be stored away from food when not in use and used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.**

## **2.0 PERSONAL HYGIENE AND TRAINING**

**All food handlers must maintain good personal hygiene at all times through the regular and thorough washing of hands, particularly after going to the toilet or handling raw food.**

**In addition, food handlers must observe the following practices.**

- No smoking or spitting
- No eating or drinking while handling food
- Do not wear jewellery, false nails or nail varnish.
- Cover wounds on the hands or other exposed parts of the body with waterproof dressings.

**Staff must wear clean washable overclothing including adequate hair covering in the unit. Outdoor clothing must not be kept in areas where food is prepared or stored.**

### **2.1 Reporting Of Sickness**

**Any person suffering from diarrhoea or vomiting must cease immediately from handling and preparing food and must not return to work until at least 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped.**

Further advice and guidance can be obtained from either your local Environmental Services Department or from the Department of Health Guidance, "Food Handlers, Fitness to Work".

**Staff must be made aware of the need to report any such symptoms to the Manager/Proprietor so that a decision can be made as to whether it is safe for them to continue to handle food.**

**The following conditions must be notified:**

- Infected cuts or wounds
- Skin infections
- Sores
- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Food poisoning
- Eye, ear and mouth infections

To help prevent food poisoning, it is very important that if either yourself or your staff become ill with food poisoning symptoms they or yourself do not handle or prepare food.

## **2.2 Training**

**Food handlers must receive appropriate instruction and/or training in food hygiene.** The level of training required will depend upon the food handling activities carried out but for people who handle open food, the minimum level of training required is the CIEH Foundation Food Hygiene Certificate Course or equivalent.

## **3.0 DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF UNIT**

**The unit must be large enough for the type of operation carried out** e.g. sufficient working surfaces for the separate preparation of raw and cooked products, so that cross contamination cannot occur.

**The unit must be proofed against pests (e.g. flies and vermin) as far as reasonably practicable.**

**All internal surfaces must be constructed of washable materials and be easy to clean** e.g. vinyl floor tiles or continuous floor covering, plastic/laminate cladding for walls and ceiling.

**Tables, working surfaces, shelves, food display cabinets, counters, equipment utensils and display containers must be easy to clean and in good repair.** Particular attention must be paid to ensuring the edges of shelves and wood surfaces are sealed to allow effective cleaning. **Any surface that food comes into contact with must be capable of being disinfected.** Suitable materials for food contact surfaces include stainless steel, ceramics or food grade plastics.

**Natural or mechanical ventilation will be required so that internal temperatures do not get too high.** Suitable canopies must be provided over deep fat fryers and griddles.

**Adequate artificial lighting must be provided where necessary.**

## **4.0 CLEANLINESS, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR**

**The unit must be maintained in a good state of repair, with surfaces that are free from cracks, splits, chips or flaking decoration to enable effective cleaning to be carried out.**

**The unit must be kept clean. Cleaning must be done on a regular basis to remove visible dirt and debris.**

## **5.0 WASHING FACILITIES**

### **5.1 Water Supply**

**All mobile units must use water that comes directly from the mains supply. Alternatively, containers of drinking water may be used.** It is recommended that a minimum of 25 litres of drinking water are provided on the unit for washing hands, equipment and food.

**All wash hand basins and sinks must be provided with a separate hot and cold water supply, or hot water at a suitably controlled temperature** from a constant piped supply or an instantaneous water heater (gas or electric) via taps. The use of an electric kettle or “Burco” type boiler situated away from the washing facility and without proper plumbing is not acceptable.

### **5.2 Washbasins**

**All mobile units must have a washbasin. The hand washing facilities must be separate from any facilities provided for the washing of equipment or food. A supply of soap or detergent and hygienic hand drying facilities must be maintained at the washbasin.** It is recommended that disposable paper towels are used.

### **5.3 Sinks**

**All mobile units must have a sink for washing food and equipment. The size of the sink must be suitable for the needs of the business.** Where there is a large volume of food preparation, separate sinks for food and equipment washing may be required.

### **5.4 Waste Storage and Disposal**

**Refuse and waste must be kept in a suitable container which must be emptied regularly or at the end of the day.** The internal and external surfaces of waste containers must be washable and in good repair. The use of plastic linings make removing rubbish and cleaning the bin easier.

Waste water, where possible, should drain into the mains drainage system. Alternatively, it should drain into a closed container which must be emptied down a foul water drain, not gullies at the side of the road. Waste water must not be allowed to drain on to the road or standing area.

Separate designated containers should be used for “clean” and “waste” water e.g. colour coded, labelled.

No waste food debris including fat must be allowed to go down the drain.

## 6.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, you have a duty to ensure that you operate your vehicle in a manner which ensures the health and safety of your staff and any one affected by your work activity.

To ensure that any activity you carry out is done safely, you must carry out a risk assessment of that activity.

### 6.1 Making an Assessment

To carry out a risk assessment you should be first aware of the hazards involved.

A hazard is something that can cause harm and can be a machine, substance or even a method of work.

Some examples are given below:-

LPG  
Cleaning Chemicals

Having identified the hazards, you have to decide what the risks are and the likelihood that they could occur. For example:-

LPG - explosions and fire.  
Cleaning Chemicals - caustic burns to skin.

Finally you have to decide how to control these risks. For example:-

LPG - regular maintenance by a competent person.  
Cleaning Chemicals - the use of a safer alternative, or when not possible personal protective equipment.

The following information covers the more common hazards associated with mobile vehicles and details the precautions necessary to help control the risks.

**Please note, under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 you must record any significant findings of the assessment when you employ five or more persons.**

A leaflet entitled 'Five steps to risk assessment' provides further information and is available from your local Environmental Health Department.

## 7.0 LPG

In mobile catering units where LPG is used, all gas cylinders should be housed in a compartment completely separate from the rest of the unit. The storage compartment for the LPG must be:

- constructed of materials having at least a half hour fire resistance.
- sealed to prevent gas gaining access into the unit.
- of sufficient size to store all LPG cylinders including spares and constructed so that access can only be obtained from outside the unit.
- provided with ventilation openings at both high and low levels.
- secured to prevent tampering.
- used only for the storage of LPG cylinders, reducing valves etc and not for any other purpose e.g. storage of batteries.
- be provided with a suitable means of securing the cylinders in an upright position.
- located such that possible accidental damage e.g. in the event of a road traffic accident, is minimised.
- suitably labelled for LPG storage.
- be kept free of all sources of ignition in the compartment and sources of ignition must be a minimum of one metre from any cylinder.

Where separate storage compartments are not available, LPG cylinders may be kept outside the unit providing:

- the cylinders are secured to prevent tampering and in a position where it cannot easily be damaged.
- the cylinders are stored with the valve upright.
- they are stored more than 1 metre away from the unit or any source of ignition.
- all flexible tubing is kept to a minimum.

All appliances using LPG should be:

- fitted with an accessible shut off valve or tap on the pipework immediately before the appliance.

### **7.1 Ventilation to the Vehicle**

**Permanent ventilation must be provided at both high and low levels to the vehicle which must not be obstructed by stored items.** The minimum area of total fixed ventilation should not be less than 4000mm<sup>2</sup>.

### **7.2 Pipework and Fittings**

All pipework should be as short and accessible as possible and supported as required. Where practicable the pipework should be made of a suitable metal. Suitable metals for pipework are solid drawn copper tube, steel tube or stainless steel tube, used with suitable fitting and jointing compound.

Where flexible hose is used, it is subject to the following restrictions:

- The length must not exceed 0.5 m
- Its use restricted to where it passes through walls and partitions
- Where temperatures are unlikely to exceed 50°C
- Must conform to BS3212 or any other appropriate European Standard and marked accordingly and must be renewed every two years.

### **7.3 Appliances**

Appliances such as grills, hot plates, ovens etc should be:

- securely fastened to the vehicle.
- not in use whilst the vehicle is in motion and the gas supply turned off at the cylinder.
- manufactured to a recognised standard.
- be installed, used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturers advice.

Every LPG pipe should terminate with a readily accessible shut-off valve or tap immediately before the appliance.

All valves and taps should carry a clear indication of the open and closed positions, or of the direction they must be turned to close them.

### **7.4 Flame Failure Devices**

Wherever possible, flame failure devices should be fitted to gas appliances. This is to prevent a build-up of gas in the vehicle in the event of a flame being extinguished.

The fitting of flame failure devices is particularly important to appliances where the flame is not visible should it be extinguished such as ovens or on LPG operated refrigeration.

In the case of some older devices it may not be possible to fit such devices. It is recommended that you provide written confirmation of this from the manufacturer or a CORGI registered gas fitter.

### **7.5 Maintenance of the LPG Installation**

**It is a legal requirement that every employer or self-employed person ensure that any gas appliance, installation pipework or flue installed in any place of work under his control is maintained in a safe condition.**

Whilst it is for you to decide how to maintain the LPG installation in a safe condition, you should note that effective maintenance usually involves an on-going programme of regular/periodic examinations and remedial action as necessary. All such work should be undertaken by a competent person.

A suggested maintenance programme of the LPG installation should include the following.

## **DAILY CHECKS**

Before the installation is used the cylinders, pipework, appliances, flues and vents, should be visually checked by a suitably trained person. Any suspected leaks should be traced by the use of a soapy water solution.

A suitably trained person should understand

- the dangers associated with LPG
- How to trace leaks
- proper combustion
- danger of ineffective ventilation and flues
- action to take in the event of an emergency.

It is recommended that a record of all daily checks is kept, e.g. using a tick sheet which is signed by the person doing the checks.

## **INSPECTION AND TEST**

At least annually (and more frequently according to use and experience) the installation should be tested and inspected by a competent person (i.e. a CORGI registered engineer); a satisfactory test certificate should be obtained and ideally kept with the vehicle until the next inspection and test.

When purchasing a mobile catering unit or following any alterations or repair work to the LPG installation it is recommended that the installation is inspected and tested.

### **7.6 Training**

**All persons working in the mobile unit must be given adequate knowledge of the possible dangers associated with LPG and trained in the correct procedures for changing cylinders and the safe use of appliances.**

### **7.7 Fire Safety**

**All staff must be trained in the emergency procedures in case of a fire.** Specific advice on fire safety should be sought from the Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service. As a minimum you should

- train all staff and display written instructions of the action to be taken in the event of a fire.
- where frying is undertaken provide a fire blanket.
- provide a suitable fire extinguisher, e.g. a 9 kg dry powder extinguisher, located in a readily accessible position.

## 8.0 CHEMICAL SAFETY

Many of the chemicals that are used within the mobile vehicle such as oven cleaners, degreasers are potentially harmful if not used properly.

Most proprietary cleaners provide information on safe use on the label but if in doubt you should obtain hazard data sheets on the various chemicals that you use from your suppliers. These will detail the safety precautions to follow, what protective equipment to wear etc.

**You must then ensure that any person who uses these chemicals is instructed in their use and that the appropriate personal protection equipment is provided and used.**

## 9.0 FIRST AID

**A suitably stocked first aid kit must be carried on the vehicle at all times.** The contents should be examined frequently and the container should be identified by a white cross on a green background. A list of contents can be found in Appendix A.

In addition it is recommended an accident book is carried and details of any accident recorded.

The details recorded should include

Name  
Address  
Nature of Injury  
Any treatment given

**Please note certain types of accident are notifiable and must be reported to the local Environmental Health Department.**

Examples of notifiable accidents include

Fractures (other than fingers, thumbs and toes)  
Amputation  
Injury that results in a person being off work for over three days.

More information can be found on reporting injuries in the booklet entitled RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995) which is available from your local Environmental Health Department.

## 10.0 EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Given the nature of how mobile vehicles operate it is very likely that yourself or a member of your staff may be on their own well away from means of communication. This means that should an emergency occur such as a fire, they will be unable to summon help.

You should therefore ensure that some means of communication such as a mobile telephone is available to raise the alarm if necessary.

## **11.0 MANUAL HANDLING**

**You must carry out a risk assessment of all manual handling operations associated with your mobile vehicle e.g. lifting water containers or LPG cylinders or manoeuvring the vehicle into place.**

**Where ever possible you must introduce measures to either eliminate or reduce the amount of manual handling undertaken e.g. provide a trolley for moving LPG cylinders.**

**Where the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced then the staff must be given adequate instruction and training in manual handling.**

# APPENDIX A

## THE HEALTH AND SAFETY (FIRST AID) REGULATIONS 1981

First Aid Box Contents	Numbers of Employees		
	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 60
Guidance card or leaflet	1	1	1
Individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings	10	20	40
Sterile eye pads, with attachment: e.g. Standard Dressing No. 16 BPC	1	2	4
Triangular bandages (if possible sterile)	1	2	4
Sterile coverings for serious wounds (if triangular bandages not sterile)	1	2	4
Safety pins	6	6	12
Medium sized sterile un-medicated dressings approx. 10 cm x 8 cm e.g. Standard Dressings No. 8 and No. 13 BPC	3	6	8
Large sterile un-medicated dressing approx. 13 cm x 9 cm e.g. Standard Dressing No. 9 and No. 14 and the Ambulance Dressing No. 3	1	2	4
Extra large sterile un-medicated dressing approx. 28 cm x 17.5 cm e.g. Ambulance Dressing No. 3	1	2	4
If tap water is not available, sterile water or sterile normal saline in disposable containers, each holding at least 300 ml need to be kept near the first aid box	1	1	3