



MOBILE FOOD SERVICE STARTER GUIDE

A guide to opening your Food Truck in Nova Scotia

Let us navigate you toward success! For personalized assistance contact a [Business Navigator](#) at 1-844-628-7347



CREATE YOUR BUSINESS

- **Create a business plan** that includes items such as: A description of the mobile unit-type and class, market research, include your menu, a floor plan of the unit, desired locations, revenue forecast and budgetary requirements.

There are various government agencies and other organizations that offer free help for planning, and start-up financial assistance (at various interest rates).

Call a Business Navigator to find out more at 1-844-628-7347.

- **Request and secure a Business Name through the Registry of Joint Stocks** at [RJSC Connect](#) or contact 1-800-225-8227.
- **Register your Business** within 90 days to ensure your business name is secured and to receive your unique Business Number.

Types of Businesses include sole proprietorships, partnerships and corporations. Legal advice is recommended for preparation of incorporated documents.

- **Activate your Business Number** with CRA at 1-800-959-5525. Activation is mandatory if you have employees, you import or export, and/or your gross revenue exceeds \$30,000.
- **Workers Compensation Insurance** may be mandatory for your staff or an option you may want to consider. Contact WCB at 1-800-870-3331 or www.wcb.ns.ca to discuss your specific requirements. **Research any additional insurance** requirements such as liability and disability.



CHOOSE YOUR LOCATION

- **Next contact your municipality or town** to confirm your preferred location is zoned for your mobile food service. A vendor permit may be required depending on the municipality. The cost of vendor permits vary. For Halifax, contact 311. Now that you confirmed a location, you must create a vehicle layout.



VEHICLE LAYOUT AND CONSTRUCTION

Submit your drawings to a Public Health Officer (inspector) before construction starts. This will minimize the risk of costly changes.

Create a diagram or layout of your mobile unit, showing sizes and use of area, include food storage areas, and fire safety plan.

Materials – All surfaces must be smooth, non-absorbent and easily cleaned, such as stainless steel or plastic (wood is not acceptable).

Source of water – Potable water is required to be stored in a 130L tank capable of providing constant pressure to fixtures. You must have a water heater capable of providing a temperature not less than 45°C. Both a 2 or 3 compartment utility sink and separate handwashing sink are required.

Wastewater – You must have a wastewater storage tank with a capacity of at least 15% greater than the vehicle's potable water storage tank.

Waste storage – garbage, compost and recyclable receptacles must be provided for staff and public

Power – Any mobile unit using an exterior power supply must have a quick disconnect that does not require an electrician.

Your Public Health Officer must review your layout before starting to build or renovate. A Business Navigator can connect you with an Officer.



APPLY FOR PERMITS

Begin the permit process 3-6 months before opening.

- **Start by contacting a Business Navigator** at 1-844-628-7347 to determine which permits and licenses you require based on the type of your mobile unit.
- You will need to apply for a **Food Establishment Permit**. Contact Business Navigation or your regional [Department of Environment and Climate Change Office](#). They will connect you with an inspector that will be assigned to your business.
- **If you intend to use natural gas or propane**, a licensed installer is required. Contact the NS Technical Safety Division at 1-800-9LABOUR for more information and inspection requirements.
- Based on the type of mobile unit, a **valid reconstruction inspection and safety inspection** may be required. Contact an Access NS Centre for more information, 902-424-5200.
- A **vendor permit** may be necessary depending on the municipality. The cost of vendor permits vary based on preferred location and municipality. For Halifax, contact 311.
- Mobile units must comply with **Fire Safety Regulations**. Commercial grade appliances, "K" Class and a 5LB ABC Fire Extinguishers, NFPA 96 Exhaust Hood (for grease only), licensed propane and electrical are required and are subject to inspection. For more information, contact your municipality or town.
- **The owner and/or at least one person per work shift must be Food Hygiene certified.** Recognized courses are available from a variety of private companies online. **For a full list of approved courses contact Business Navigation or visit the [website](#) . Proof of certification is required upon inspection.**

Need more help?

Contact a **Business Navigator** at 1-844-628-7347 or email busnavigation@novascotia.ca Business Navigation offers personalized and timely help with regulation and requirements, including registration, permits and licenses to save you valuable time.



BE READY FOR FOOD INSPECTION

- **Keep it Mobile** – The unit must be able to be moved to meet the definition of a mobile food service unit. The unit may not be moved with the assistance of a tow truck, flatbed, or any other similar commercial vehicle. If not able to be moved, the unit must be permitted as a permanent food establishment.
- **Appropriate Ventilation** – Ensure a powered exhaust canopy, filters, and appropriate duct work is installed to remove cooking odours, gases, fumes and grease laden air from the cooking area.
- **Keep Hot Food Hot** - above 60°C/140°F. Cook all hazardous food to a minimum internal temperature of 74°C/165°F. Use a chef's (probe) thermometer to monitor temperatures.
- **Keep Cold Food Cold** - below 4°C/40°F. Keep frozen below -18°C/0°F. Use fridge thermometers to monitor temperatures. Coolers are not considered an acceptable means of refrigeration on a Class I unit.
- **Protect Food from Contamination** - Store ready-to-eat items above raw and cover all food. Store food 15 cm/6 inches off the floor. Use water that is safe to drink. Label chemicals and store them away from food and the food preparation area.
- **Practice Good Handwashing** - Provide hot and cold running water, as well as liquid soap and paper towels from dispensers. Designate a handwashing station with signage and do not use for any other purpose. Wash hands thoroughly before and after handling food.
- **Practice Good Personal Hygiene** –Wear clean washable garments which are used for no other purpose, and appropriate hair restraints. Do not work when you are sick.
- **Maintain Food Contact Surfaces** - Cleaning and sanitizing should be completed in two separate steps. Use soap and water followed by a solution of ½ to 1 tsp of household bleach per 1L of water, or any approved sanitizer. Keep all food contact surfaces clean and in good condition. Wash all utensils, dishes, and small equipment using either a 2 or 3 basin process.
- **Maintain Non-Food Contact Surfaces** - Keep surfaces clean, sanitary and in good repair. Fix construction issues as they arise. All surfaces must be smooth, non-absorbent and easy to clean. Ensure proper operation and maintenance of equipment. Unused equipment should be repaired, or removed from the premises.

For a complete list of requirements see: **Guidelines for Mobile Food Service provided by Nova Scotia Environment and discuss your requirements with your Public Health Officer (inspector). Requirements may differ based on the type of mobile unit.**



PREPARE FOR EXCELLENCE

- Mobile Food Units are required to dispose of their own **garbage and recycling**. [Contact your municipality or town](#) to determine how and where you can do this affectively.
- Ensure you have a **commissary** available. This is a place where your unit can return each day for cleaning, waste disposal, replacement of products etc.
- Please ensure any changes to your location plans, menu and/or layout are communicated to your assigned Public Health Officer before you build or renovate.
- Post all required signs, and permits as outlined by inspectors.
- Mark your calendar. Schedule equipment maintenance and set reminders to renew your permits and licenses.
- Be ready for inspections. Some happen quarterly, twice a year and once a year. You will not be notified of your inspection date.
- **For payroll and tax assistance** contact CRA at 1-800-959-5525.
- **For information on parking on highways or highway signage**, contact Transportation and Active Transit I at 1-844-696-7737.
- In most municipalities **grease interceptors** are required for your business. In Halifax, contact Halifax Regional Water Commission at 902-420-9287 for more information.
- For Occupational Health and Safety requirements such as **WHMIS Training, First Aid and Workplace Health and Safety** contact OHS at 1-800-952-2687. Access the Small Business Safety Toolkit at www.Workplace-Safety-Toolkit.ca .
- For Employer/Employee obligations and rights including minimum wage, hours of work, terminations, vacation/holiday pay (etc.), contact the **Nova Scotia Labour Standards Division** at 1-888-315-0110.