Mobile Food Facilities

New Applicants
Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: Where can I obtain copies of the application and guidelines?

A1: On our website at www.sfdpw.org (enter "Mobile Food") or by contacting the Bureau of Street-Use and Mapping at 1155 Market Street, 3rd Floor (between 7th and 8th), or by phoning (415) 554-5810.

Q2: When did the new process go into effect?

A2: The Board of Supervisors adopted Ordinance No. 298-10 on December 3, 2010 and this became law 30 days later on January 3, 2011.

Q3: When can I submit my application to DPW?

A3: March 7, 2011 at 8:20 AM

Q4: Can DPW suggest or help me find an appropriate location?

A4: DPW may provide assistance by providing and answering questions regarding "Site Criteria" in the approved guidelines; however, since we do not know your business plan, we cannot provide or suggest detailed site information.

Q5: What is the procedure for 30-50 people applying for the same location?

A5: On the above date, DPW will be accepting COMPLETE applications on a FIRST COME FIRST SERVE basis; INCOMPLETE applications will not be accepted. Certain locations that may accommodate more than one (1) MFF will also be accepted and filled on a FIRST COME FIRST SERVE based upon COMPLETE applications.

Q6: Will there be a preference/grandfather clause for vendors/applicants who currently have legal carts, department approvals, etc.?

A6: Vendors/applicants who have current valid SFPD Permits will be able to get their first year MFF Permit from DPW at no charge. Vendors/applicants who have their DPH & SFFD decals/approvals will be able to get their permits sooner than those who do not. Also, push cart vendors who have had their permits on or before July 19, 1995 are grandfathered in" as it relates to their approved locations & menu items.

Q7: Since DPW has the right to close vendors/revoke or suspend permits at any time, would the guidelines allow DPW to close down one vendor and open up another vendor at the same location?

A7: Possibly, this depends on the reasoning behind why DPW may have revoked the first vendor's permit. The reason may be due to a complaint related to "like food", if the complainant does not object to the second vendor's menu, unlike the first vendor's; or it may be due to a violation by the first vendor of the approved Codes, guidelines and regulations; whereas the second vendor agrees to comply with said guidelines and regulations.

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Q8: Can vendors share a location?

A8: Yes, provided either the space allows for the same day & time; or for vendors that agree to alternate days and times.

Q9: Can either the 300-foot radius rule or the "No MFFs within 1,500 feet of a public middle or high school" be amended?

A9: No, this is outlined in the approved Ordinance; however, with regard to the 300-foot radius rule, this is a minimum, and for blocks that may be in excess of 300 feet, the notification requirement extends to the entire block face.

Q10: Will existing vendors be notified when new vendors move into a nearby location?

A10: Yes, the minimum 300-foot radius notification includes all businesses (defined as all non-residential properties), as well as all approved MFF vendors within this radius.

Q11: Can vendors have a map of locations in use, and also which locations are still available?

A11: DPW will be developing a map of all approved MFFs and locations for the public's use, and that will be posted on our website, once the MFFs and their locations obtain their necessary approvals. For regulations regarding zoning, please visit www.sfgov.org/planning and enter Zoning Maps.

Q12: What will DPW consider as a "complete MFF application"?

A12: In order for an application to be deemed complete, it must include the following:

a. A completed DPW application form;
b. Two (2) photographs of the permit applicant(s);
c. Half of DPW fees; Board of Appeals surcharge, DPH & SFFD fees paid in full;
d. Site Plan (dimensioned footprint of MFF, property lines, sidewalk widths, existing parking alignment, adjacent building(s), existing sidewalk furniture, etc.)
e. 300-foot radius notification material (radius map, mailing list & labels, postage).

Q13: What WILL NOT need to be included at the time of initial submittal?

A13: The following does not need to be submitted to DPW in order for an application to be deemed will result in the disapproval of the MFF application):

a. DPH Certificate of Sanitation;
b. SFFD Approval/Inspection Decal;
c. Current SF Business Certificate; and,
d. Description of Mobile Catering Vehicle.

For complete information see DPW Order 179,044. Or contact DPW's Mobile Food Facilities Permits at:
The Department of Public Works
Bureau of Street-Use and Mapping
Mobile Food Facilities
1155 Market Street, 3rd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103