



## Yakima County Fire Marshal's Office Public Information Handout **FP-9** **Mobile Food Vending/Food Trucks**



Mobile food vendors have all the potential ingredients for a fire that can quickly get out of control, causing serious damage, injury, and even death. These include open flames, hot equipment, electrical connections, cooking oils, cleaning chemicals, propane, engine oil, and paper products.

A fire can be devastating, but there are basic fire safety measures you can take to prevent fires and minimize damage.

### **Location:**

Do not obstruct. Do not place mobile food vending vehicles, trucks, trailers, carts, or similar equipment in a manner that obstructs or interferes with fire lanes, fire department connections, fire hydrants, or building egress.

### **Fire Safety Basics: Fire Prevention**

Automatic fire-suppression System in the truck. These systems automatically dispense chemicals to suppress the flames and also have a manual activation switch. Activating the system automatically shuts down the fuel or electric supply to nearby cooking equipment. Your fire-suppression system must be professionally inspected every six months.

Keep portable fire extinguishers as a backup. A minimum of one 2A:10-BC fire extinguisher is required for all mobile food vendors. Where cooking involves deep fat fryers, a Class K fire extinguisher is also required.



### Fire Safety Basics: Fire Prevention

Schedule regular maintenance on electrical equipment, and watch for hazards like frayed cords or wiring, cracked or broken switch plates, and combustible items near power sources.

#### LPG (Propane)

If you utilize propane, ensure that the vessels are secured to the food service platform in a manner that provides reasonable security while parked or in transit and that they are in compliance with DOT regulations (see last page).

#### Portable Generators

Never refuel a generator while it is operating! Locate generators at least 20 feet away from your mobile food vending vehicle unless the generator is 6,500 watts or smaller and not readily accessible to the public.

### Train your food truck staff on these fire safety basics.

**Find and use a fire extinguisher appropriately.** An acronym you may find helpful is PASS – Pull out the pin, Aim at the base of the fire, and Sweep back and forth.

**Clean up the grease.** Cleaning exhaust hoods is especially important since grease buildup can restrict air flow. Be sure to also clean walls and work surfaces, ranges, fryers, broilers, grills, and conventional ovens, as well as vents and filters.

**Never throw water on a grease fire.** Water tossed into grease will cause it to splatter, spread, and likely erupt into a larger fire.

**Remove ashes** from wood and charcoal-burning ovens at least once a day.

**Properly store flammable liquids.** Keep them in their original containers or puncture-resistant, tightly sealed containers. Although a food truck kitchen is very small, you should store containers in well-ventilated areas away from combustible supplies, food, food-preparation areas, or any source of flames.

### Train your food truck staff on these fire safety basics.

**Tidy up to avoid fire hazards.** Store paper products, linens, boxes, and food away from heat and cooking sources. Properly dispose of soiled rags, trash, cardboard boxes, and wooden pallets at least once a day.

**Use chemical solutions properly.** Use chemicals in well-ventilated areas and never mix chemicals unless directions call for mixing. Immediately clean up any chemical spills.

### Prepare an Emergency Plan

If a fire breaks out in your food truck, your staff must take control of the situation, and all employees must safely exit the vehicle and lead customers to a safe location away from the truck.

**Be prepared to power down.** Train at least one worker per shift how to shut off propane and electrical power in case of emergency.

**Have an evacuation plan.** Designate one staff member per shift to be evacuation manager. That person should be in charge of calling 911, determining when an evacuation is necessary and ensuring that everyone exits the food truck safely. Ensure your staff knows where all of the exits are.

**Offer emergency training.** Teach new employees about evacuation procedures and the use of fire-safety equipment. Give veteran staff members a refresher course at least annually.



## **ATTENTION - FOOD TRUCK OPERATORS**

### **Compressed Cylinders must be inspected.**

Cylinders are required to be requalified or replaced every 5 to 12 years, depending on the cylinder type, condition, and previous qualification method.

(Ref 49 CFR 180.205 (d) and 180.209)

The original manufacture/test date and any requalification/retest dates must be presented in a specific manner. Cylinders that are overdue for requalification must not be refilled.

If propane tanks are manufactured to ASTM standards and built into the truck's body, making them difficult to remove, they are exempt from DOT inspection requirements.

For more information, contact the Hazmat Info-Center: 1-800-467-4922.

## **NEW AS OF 2024**

Yakima County Fire Marshal's Office utilizes a regional program through the Washington State Association of Fire Marshals that recognizes inspections performed by other participating agencies. This program is intended to make it easier and more efficient to conduct inspections of mobile food preparation vehicles across the area and simplify the process for the owners/operators. To look up the participating agencies, go to [https://www.wsafm.com/Food\\_Trucks](https://www.wsafm.com/Food_Trucks).

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact Yakima County Building and Fire Safety at (509) 574-2300.