



Hays County Development Services

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Food Establishment - Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Do I need a permit to sell food in the county?

A. Yes, whether you are wanting to operate a retail food establishment, restaurant or sell food from a mobile vehicle.

Q. Do I need to be a Certified Food Manager or Food Handler to sell food in the county?

A. Yes. Every food establishment in the county must employ at least one Certified Food Manager. Other food employees must complete an accredited food handler training course.

Q. Where can I become a Certified Food Manager or Food Handler?

A. These courses are available online. The course must be approved by the Texas Department of State Health Services. (<https://www.dshs.texas.gov/foodestablishments/>)

Q. Is there a different permit for a Food Establishment vs Mobile Food Establishment?

A. Yes. A mobile food establishment must be mobile and able to move daily. A food establishment would be a “brick & mortar” location.

Q. How many inspections and how often do I get inspected as a mobile food vendor?

A. You will have to be inspected before you receive your permit. You will be inspected at least twice per year in addition to inspections in response to any consumer complaints.

Q. Do I have to renew my food permit?

A. Yes. All Food Establishments must renew annually at the end of each calendar year.

Q. What is a commissary for a Mobile Food Establishment? How often do I have to visit a commissary?

A. A Commissary or Central Preparation Facility must be visited daily by a Mobile Food Establishment -- A Commissary is a facility that is an approved and permitted retail food establishment at which food is prepared, stored, and wrapped; and the Mobile Food Unit is supplied with fresh water and ice; and emptied of waste water into a proper waste disposal system, and cleaned, including washing, rinsing, and sanitizing of those food-contact surfaces or items not capable of being immersed in the Mobile Food Unit utensil-washing sink. Use of a private residence as a central preparation facility is prohibited.

Q. Does the county have “seasonal” permits, if I only operate a few months out of the year?

A. No. each permit expires at the end of each calendar year.

Q. Do I need a Mobile Food Permit from Hays County to operate in Hays County, if I already have one from Travis County?

A. Yes, you need to have a permit in each jurisdiction that you are operating in. Hays County does the food permitting in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Q. Do I need a Mobile Food Permit from Hays County, if I already have one from San Marcos, Dripping Springs, or Wimberley?

A. Yes, you need to have a permit in each jurisdiction that you are operating in. Hays County does the food permitting in the unincorporated areas of the county and also in the cities of Buda and Kyle. If you are operating in one of those cities, be sure to contact the city to find out what additional permits they will require.

Q. Who do I contact about a complaint on a Food Establishment or Mobile Food Establishment?

A. You can call the Hays County Development Services at 512-393-2150 and speak with an Environmental Health Specialist or email us at foodcomplaints@co.hays.tx.us