



HOW TO OBTAIN A PERMIT FOR A
Mobile Food Truck

City of San Diego
Development Services Department

INFORMATION
BULLETIN

148

July 2020

This information bulletin describes the approval process and submittal requirements for Mobile Food Trucks.

I. MOBILE FOOD TRUCKS

Mobile food trucks are motorized vehicles from which food or drink (prepared on-site or pre-packaged) is sold or served to the general public, whether consumed on-site or elsewhere. They are retail food facilities and health regulated businesses subject to San Diego Municipal Code Chapter 4, Article 2, Division 1 and Land Development Code (LDC) Section 141.0612.

Other types of commercial service or vending from vehicles are not provided for by citywide zoning and are subject to the prohibitions and regulations in Chapter 5, Article 4, Division 1.

II. APPROVALS REQUIRED

- A.** Mobile food truck operators shall obtain a Health Permit from the County of San Diego (San Diego County Code - Title 6, Division 1).
- B.** Mobile food truck operators shall maintain a valid business tax certificate issued by the City Treasurer. (Non-profits are exempt).
- C.** Most operations are exempt from a City permit. However, property owner authorization is required for any mobile food truck activity on private property, regardless of whether or not a permit is required. In accordance with SDMC Section 141.0612(f), no City permit is required for the following:
1. Operations within the public right-of-way in accordance with SDMC Section 141.0612.
 2. Operations in industrial zones or commercial office zones.
 3. Operations on the property of a school, university, hospital, or religious facility with the written consent of the property owner or authorized school official.
 4. Operations in RM-3, RM-4, and RM-5 zones in association with a multiple unit development with 16 or more dwelling units with the written consent of property owner or authorized leasing office.
 5. Operations serving an active construction site.
 6. Catering of a private event as an offsite delivery service or in accordance with the limitations in SDMC Section 141.0612(d).
- D.** A Mobile Food Truck Permit issued by the Development Services Department (DSD) is required for mobile food truck operations on private property in certain areas with high pedestrian and vehicle activity, except where the mobile food truck operations are exempt from a City permit by SDMC Section 141.0612(f). One permit can cover multiple trucks on a single property.
- E.** A Special Events Permit issued by the Special Events Director is required for any mobile food

truck operations that would result in the assembly of 75 people or more on public property. (See SDMC Section 22.4004).

F. Additional permit options:

1. A Temporary Use Permit may be requested for a seasonal or limited time event (maximum of two events per year) in a location the use would not be permitted per the underlying zone.
2. A Neighborhood Use Permit may be requested for approval to deviate from the requirements in SDMC Section 141.0612.

III. LOCATIONS

A. DOWNTOWN. Mobile food trucks are permitted in a majority of downtown areas.

1. Approval from Civic San Diego is required to operate on private property (i.e. surface parking lots). Please contact Civic San Diego at (619) 235-2200 to obtain an approval stamp on the site plan prior to submitting a Mobile Food Truck Permit Application to DSD.
2. On-street mobile food truck operations are exempt from the requirement for a permit.
3. Daily operations are not permitted in the following special character areas, unless authorized as part of a special event:
 - a. **Gaslamp Quarter Planned District.** The boundary is approximately 8 blocks located along 5th Avenue;
 - b. **Little Italy Neighborhood NC Zone.** The boundary is approximately 6 blocks located along India Street;
 - c. See SDMC: Chapter 15, Article C, Division 3, page 102.

B. PARKING IMPACT OVERLAY ZONE. Mobile food trucks are not permitted in the *public-right-of-away* within the Parking Impact Overlay Zone as described in Section 132.0802 which refers to property located within the beach area and the campus impact area as shown on Map Nos.. C-731 and C-795, filed in the office of the City Clerk.

C. PLANNED DISTRICTS. In accordance with SDMC Section 151.0401, mobile food trucks may be approved in accordance with the City wide zone (SDMC Chapter 13) that most closely meets the purpose and intent of the applicable planned district zone in terms of permitted uses and intensity of those uses.

IV. SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS

This section identifies the documents and plans that are required:

A. Application

Provide one copy of the Mobile Food Truck Permit Application (DS-210).

B. Vicinity Map

A vicinity map specifies the location of a proposed project in relation to major streets in the area. It is not required to have this map drawn to scale but it should be proportional. Show at least two major cross streets and all other roadways leading to the site. A north arrow is also required. See Figure 1 for example.

C. Site Plan

A dimensioned site plan drawing showing the general layout of the proposed mobile food truck area. This plan must be legible and drawn to scale. The site plan and vicinity map must be shown on a sheet not smaller than 11" x 17" in size. For an example of a site plan see Figure 2. The site plan shall include all of the following:

1. The general layout and dimensions of the mobile food truck area.
2. Street, curb, sidewalk, property lines with dimensions.
3. Building (s) footprint with tenant space labeled with square footage/use type.
4. Sufficient detail to demonstrate that the vehicle and pedestrian circulation within parking areas are not blocked, diminished or in any way altered as a result of the mobile food truck operation area.
5. Sufficient detail to identify a level, paved area of a minimum dimension of 35 feet by 15 feet for each mobile food truck that is proposed to operate at the same time on the property. The area shall not include any parking spaces that are reserved, encumbered, or designated to satisfy the off-street parking requirement of a business or activity that would operate at the same time as the mobile food truck.
6. Location on the site where the food truck (s) will be parked.
7. Name, address, and the phone number of the property owner.
8. Street address of the proposed food truck site.
9. Legal description of the food truck site and Assessor's Parcel Number (APN). The County Assessor's office (619- 236-3771) can provide this information.
10. North arrow.
11. Drawing scale.

V. SIGNAGE

No signage other than that exhibited on or inside of the mobile food truck may displayed.

Mobile food trucks are required to post the County certification sticker and a notice stating "To report a violation, call City of San Diego Code Enforcement at (619) 236-5500". (Three (3) inch font minimum).

VI. ELECTRICAL CONNECTION

A mobile food truck operating on private property may utilize an electrical connection to maintain power as needed to maintain food storage in accordance with the California Retail Food Code health standards. However, the connection shall be made in a manner that does not create a trip hazard or other public safety hazard.

VII. OPERATIONS MUST BE SELF CONTAINED IN THE VEHICLE

No furniture, umbrellas, generators, objects or structures may be placed outside the mobile food truck. Such development may only be permitted by operating in a location on private property

where no Mobile Food Truck Permit is required (i.e. industrial zones or on school property), or by obtaining a Neighborhood Development Permit that specifically provides for such development.

VIII. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE

No sales or service of alcohol shall be allowed by mobile food trucks.

IX. MOBILE FOOD TRUCK PERMIT FEES

The following fees are required to be paid annually. For your convenience, DSD offers on-line payments through [Open DSD](#). Payment may also be made in person by cash, check, debit card, Visa or MasterCard. Checks shall be in the exact amount, drawn on US banks, and made payable to the "City Treasurer." Due to space constraints, we are unable to store submitted plans awaiting fee payment.

Please note that plan check fees and other administrative fees are non-refundable. The fee for a Mobile Food Truck Permit will vary based on the complexity of the site context and the time necessary for staff review. All fees are based on the adopted fee schedule as it currently exists or as may be amended.

A. General Plan Maintenance

GPM Fee \$ 450.00

B. Mapping Fee

This fee is charged at submittal when there are plans, drawings, maps or other geographical documents utilized for project review

Mapping Fee \$ 10.00

C. Mobile Food Truck Plan Check Fee

Plan Check Fee \$ 346.38

D. Records Fee

This fee is assessed for all projects prior to final approval to recover the cost of imaging and archiving the documents in Records

Records Fee \$ 21.26

X. OPTIONS FOR SERVICE

Walk-in service is available at the Development Services Department located at 1222 First Avenue, 3rd Floor San Diego, CA 92101. Please visit the department's website at www.sandiego.gov/development-services for a list of business hours.

XI. SITE INFORMATION

Information regarding a particular lot may be obtained from the Records Section of the Development Services Department, located at 1222 First Avenue, Second floor. Appointments may be obtained by calling (619) 446-5200.

Documents Referenced in this Information Bulletin

- San Diego Municipal Code, ([SDMC](#))
- Mobile Food Truck Permit Application, [DS-210](#)

Figure 1 / Typical Vicinity Map

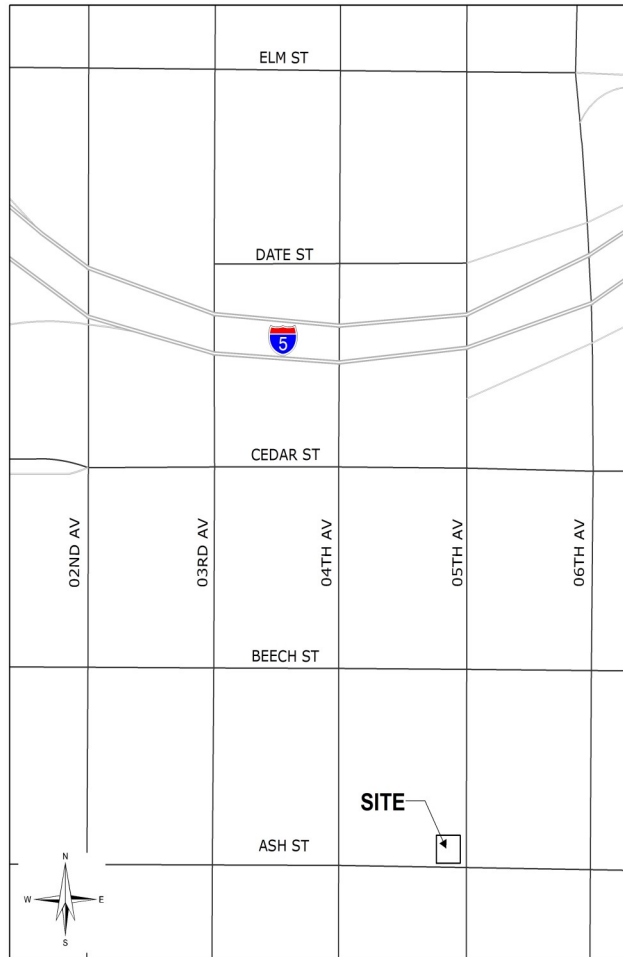


Figure 2 / Typical Site Plan Example

