

## Mobile Food Units Frequently Asked Questions

### Q1: What does the City of Chattanooga consider a Mobile Food Unit?

A1: A Mobile Food Unit (“MFU”) is defined as any motorized vehicle or trailer that exceeds four (4) feet in width, five (5) feet in height, or six (6) feet in length that includes a self-contained kitchen in which food is prepared or processed and from which food is sold or dispensed to the ultimate consumer. For more information see Chattanooga City Code, Chapter 20, Division 3, Sections 20-146 through 20-152 as well as 11-378 for definition of Push Carts.

### Q2: I’m interested in operating a MFU in Chattanooga. What agencies must I contact?

A2: First, you must obtain all certifications required by the Chattanooga Fire Department, Hamilton County, the Hamilton County Department of Health, and/or the State of Tennessee. Once you have obtained the required inspections and business licenses, the City Treasurer can process Mobile Food Unit permit applications.

### Q3: How do I apply for a Mobile Food Unit Permit?

A3: Before the Office of the Treasurer will permit a food truck, the applicant must provide all required materials and approvals such as a valid business license as well as the necessary approvals from the Chattanooga Fire Department and Hamilton County Health Department. The City Treasurer considers applications and issues Mobile Food Unit permits (application fee of \$50.00). Contact the Office of the Treasurer at 101 East 11th Street, Suite 100 Chattanooga, TN 37402 or by contacting Roberta Long, (423) 643-7262 or rlong@chattanooga.gov.

### Q4: What equipment does the City of Chattanooga Fire Department require?

A4a: All cooking appliances must be listed by *Underwriters Laboratories* or *NSF International* for mobile applications. Also:

- All fat fryers must have a lid over the oil that can be secured during transit
- Each gas fired appliance must have both automatic and manual shutoffs
- Vehicle must contain a minimum of one 10 BC-rated fire extinguisher and a K class extinguisher if a deep fryer is present

A4b: Each mobile food vehicle that uses propane or natural gas for cooking and or uses animal fats must be equipped with:

- A Type I or Type II commercial kitchen exhaust hood
- A working Ansul R-102 or K Class automatic fire suppression system
- A working ventilation system
- A working carbon monoxide detector
- All propane and natural gas pipes and fixtures must be made of steel, copper or brass. (No Plastic or Rubber)

**Q5: What additional information will the City of Chattanooga need before issuing a permit?**

A5: In addition to a completed City of Chattanooga Mobile Food Unit Permit Application, you will need to provide the following to the Office of the City Treasurer:

- The permit fee, by cash, credit card, or check payable to the City of Chattanooga
- A copy of your acquired Tennessee Department of Health License
- A copy of a valid government-issued driver's license for all drivers
- Proof of Commercial, Automobile, and Workers' Compensation Insurance, if applicable showing the City as an additional insured if you intend to operate on public property or right-of-ways
- An Executed Indemnity Agreement
- At least (2) color photos of the MFU

**Q6: What permits must be displayed in my Mobile Food Unit?**

A6: You must visibly display the Health Department License and the City of Chattanooga MFU Permit.

**Q7: I want to operate my Mobile Food Unit in City streets or on public property during a time that is not a special event - how do I do that?**

A7: You may only operate from on-street parking spaces or other public property where a Mobile Food Unit Zone has been established and during the times permitted. MFU zones are established through the Chattanooga Department of Transportation (CDOT). The application and a list of established MFU Zones is on the CDOT website. If a zone is already established, contact the appropriate entity (below) to reserve the space you need:

- Chattanooga Parking Authority to request to reserve **on-street** parking space(s) within an established zone.
- Youth and Family Development (YFD) Center to reserve space (usually in parking lot) at a specific **YFD Center** that has been established as a MFU zone by the Administrator of YFD or his/her designee.
- Chattanooga City Parks or Open Spaces Division to reserve space in a specific **park** that has been established as a MFU zone by the Director of Open Spaces or his/her designee.

Operating a MFU on City streets or rights-of-way outside of the Mobile Food Vending Zones or outside of a special event is prohibited.

**Q8: What is the process for establishing a Mobile Food Unit (MFU) Zone?**

A8: The Chattanooga Department of Transportation (CDOT) administers the MFU Zone process that establishes on what city property MFU's can operate. To request a Mobile Food Unit zone, please read the Mobile Food Unit (MFU) Zone Policy and Procedures and submit the included application. The application requires submission of a map showing the zone and affected area. The applicant is required to show 75% of property owners in the affected area approve of the area being designated as an MFU Zone. Anyone can apply for consideration of a MFU Zone.

**Q9: What else do I need, or need to know, to operate my Mobile Food Unit in an on-street parking space within an established MFU Zone?**

A9: Obtain a copy of the approved MFU zone. Confirm that the space in which you would like to operate your MFU is within the zone. Contact the Chattanooga Parking Authority (CPA) to request usage of an available on-street parking space within the MFU zone. CPA will coordinate with City departments to assure there are no scheduling conflicts (with existing Work Zones, Special Events, or other potential conflicts) and will respond within seven (7) days with confirmation of the location. For non-metered on-street parking spaces within the CPA jurisdiction, spaces are treated the same as metered spaces as far as the fee and the process for reserving those spaces. For on-street parking spaces outside of the CPA jurisdiction, but which are part of an established zone, spaces are not reserved but are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

**Q10: How do I operate my MFU in spaces outside the CPA boundary that are otherwise established to be part of an MFU zone?**

A10: Operation of MFUs outside the CPA jurisdiction is subject to the same laws and processes and procedures as within the CPA jurisdiction, but will be administered by CDOT. Note, initially, spaces within an established MFU zone that are outside of the jurisdiction of the CPA will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

**Q11: How much does it cost to park my MFU in a public on-street parking space?**

A11: Reservation fees (\$15/day per space as of publication) apply to all on-street parking spaces within the City of Chattanooga regardless of whether or not they are metered or not.

**Q12: Where can I operate my Mobile Food Unit other than in the designated Mobile Food Zones?**

A12: MFUs can be operated in conjunction with permitted special events, within YFD and public Park property per permit requirements, and on private property per the requirements of Chattanooga City Code, Chapter 20, Division 3, Sections 20-146 through 20-152 as well as other requirements as applicable.

**Q13: I am the owner or operator of a private property. I would like to invite a Mobile Food Unit (MFU) onto my property. What do I need to do?**

A13: Assure that the MFU has all the required current permits and assure that your property zoning classification allows the use of mobile food vending. Also, one provision of City Code requires that MFUs operating on private property have written permission from the property owner to operate the MFU on said property. Such written permission may be required to be produced to verify lawful operation.

**Q14: How can I set up my Mobile Food Unit at Special Events?**

A14: You must contact the designated person in charge of the special event to request to be a vendor.

**Q15: Can I use signs to advertise my business?**

A15: Yes, but an MFU is limited to signs “mounted to the exterior of the mobile food establishment”. All signs mounted on the Unit shall be secured to the MFU and shall not project more than six inches (6”) from the exterior of the Unit. Electronic signs are prohibited. For more information see Chattanooga City Code, Chapter 20, Division 3, Sections 20-146 through 20-152.

**Q16: May I use amplification equipment on or around my Unit?**

A16: No.

**Q17: Where can I access all the rules that apply to Mobile Food Units?**

A17: You can find detailed information including definitions, permitting process, zones, indemnity, insurance requirements, and much more in City Code. For more information see Chattanooga City Code, Chapter 20, Division 3, Sections 20-146 through 20-152.