



# NIH Division of the Fire Marshal

## Administrative Interpretation 24-1

### Mobile and Temporary Food Service

**Code references:** NFPA 1 (2024) Chapter 50 (Commercial Cooking Equipment) and 10.10.9 (Open Flame Devices),

**Background:** The code references above apply to mobile and temporary food service. This interpretation summarizes the NIH program of fire prevention and protection for these operations at special and recurring events on the Bethesda Campus. Built-in cooking equipment in buildings is covered by the NIH Manual Chapter 1370 building permit process.

#### Interpretation:

1. Mobile and temporary food service operations covered by this interpretation:
  - a. Mobile food units (trucks, trailers, and carts) in which cooking is performed.
  - b. Mobile food units with generators or LP gas systems (either mounted or portable).
  - c. Temporary barbecues, cooking operations, and open flame food warming except those at 15 group residences and the Children's Inn exterior grill station.
2. Advance permit process for mobile food units that contain cooking equipment or LP gas:
  - a. Mobile food units must obtain an advance permit to operate on the NIH campus.
  - b. Permit inspections will be conducted jointly by the Division of the Fire Marshal (DFM) and the Division of Occupational Health and Safety (DOHS) for fire code and food safety requirements, respectively.
  - c. Advance inspections will occur on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings by appointment on 5100 West Cedar Lane at the drop off circle.
  - d. Operator must call DFM at 301-496-0487 to schedule the date and time. Provide sponsor or operator name, phone number, mobile unit name and tag number, and DOHS application approval number.
  - e. When future events are known, DFM will provide the results of the inspection to the event sponsor.
  - f. Disapproved units may request a re-inspection after corrections are made.

3. Event permit process:

- a. An inspection and permit are required for each event.
- b. Mobile food units: Bring your copy of the advance permit and present it at the CVIF for entry.
- c. Event sponsor must notify the DFM in advance of pre-arranged events by emailing event information to the Fire Prevention global email address.
- d. Event sponsor must request an inspection and permit on the day of the event by calling the DFM hot work line 301-496-0414.
- e. Event sponsor must provide name, organization, phone number, event location, and type of food service. For mobile food units, also provide the vehicle tag number and unit name.
- f. DFM must inspect the site on the event day. Allow enough time for inspection prior to the start of cooking or serving. Mobile food units should plan for at least one-half hour for each unit.
- g. Mobile food units remaining in the same location overnight may be given multi-day or weekly permits at the discretion of DFM.
- h. Mobile food units operating at multiple locations on the same day must obtain individual permits for each location.
- i. DFM inspections are conducted only from 6:00 AM to 3:00 PM Mondays through Fridays except Federal holidays.
- j. Event sponsor must be present during the DFM inspection.
- k. Each permit will be effective for the duration and location of a single event only.

4. Requirements to be followed during an event by mobile food unit operator or event sponsor:

- a. The issued cooking permit must be posted at the site in plain view.
- b. The operation must meet the requirements of the codes referenced above and the issued permit.
- c. Report any fires, hazardous materials spills, or other emergencies to the NIH Emergency Communications Center (911 from land line or 301-496-9911 from cell) even if the fire appears to be out or the emergency mitigated.
- d. If an NIH fire extinguisher is discharged, contact the NIH Fire Department at 301 496-2372.

**Supersedes:** Administrative Interpretation 21-3, dated 12/15/22

**Prepared by:** Deputy Fire Marshal Kenneth Linder, P.E.

**Date Issued** 1/17/2024 **Fire Marshal** 

# Mobile & Temporary Food Unit Requirements

- References are to the 2024 edition of NFPA 1, Chapter 50, unless noted otherwise.
- Checklist is summarized - See the code references for detailed requirements.

## LP Gas Systems

	Cylinders ≤ 200 gal. and secured upright (50.8.8.1.1 & 50.8.8.1.1)
	Disconnected containers & cylinders secured upright during transport & storage NFPA 58, 2024 (9.3); COMAR (29.06.01.08 VVV)
	Cylinders located outside vehicle shall meet the following
	Proper road clearance NFPA 58, 2024 (6.27.3.3(A))
	Valves, appurtenances, and connections are protected NFPA 58, 2024 (6.27.3.3(E))
	Weather protection NFPA 58, 2024 (6.27.3.3(G))
	Cylinders inside must be in a compartment that meets the following NFPA 58, 2024 (6.27.3.3)
	Vapor tight to inside
	Accessible only from outside
	Vents provided near top & bottom of compartment
	Vents at least 3' from vehicle openings below the vent level
	Cylinders are tested at the following intervals (50.8.8.3.5)
	E designation = 5 years
	S designation = 7 years
	No letter designation = 12 years
	Propane leak detector provided & UL 1484 listed for vehicle use (50.8.8.2.1)
	Propane leak detector tested monthly (50.8.8.2.2)
	Gas shutoff on each appliance (50.8.5.1)
	Main shutoff, if provided: accessible & permanent reflective sign (50.8.8.1.2)
	Flex connector is provided between regulator outlet & fixed piping NFPA 58, 2024 (6.27.5.1(B))
	Gas piping enters vehicle directly beneath or adjacent to appliance NFPA 58, 2024 (6.27.5.1(I))

## Cooking Equipment & Ventilation

	Grease-producing equipment has listed hood, filters, and exhaust (50.2.1.1)
	Make-up air openings are provided and unobstructed (50.6.1.3)
	Grease buildup inspection documentation; can be by operator (50.6.4):
	Monthly for solid fuel
	Quarterly for wok cooking & charbroiling
	Semi-annually for other cooking
	Baffle 8" high installed between deep fat fryers and flame-producing cooking, or min. 16" between appliances (50.7.1.2.4 & 50.7.1.2.5)
	Deep fat fryers have lids that are secured when vehicle in motion (50.8.13.1)
	Appliances located so that a fire does not block escape (50.8.5.4)

### **Vehicle-Mounted Generators & Electrical Systems**

Generator unit is listed (50.8.7.2)
Generator compartment vapor resistant to vehicle interior (50.8.7.3)
Generator fuel lines and exhaust piping do not penetrate interior area (50.8.7.4)
No damaged wires, open boxes/panels, etc. per NEC (50.8.6.2)

### **Fire Suppression System**

Grease-producing cooking equipment, hoods, and plenums have suppression system compliant with UL-300 (50.5.1.1 and 50.5.2.2)
Semi-annual maintenance by approved company NFPA 17A, 2024 (8.3.2)
Interlocked with fuel and electric power (50.5.3.1)
Manual station in escape path (50.5.4.1.1)
Audible and visual alarm on exterior of NEW vehicles (50.5.5.2)

### **Fire Extinguishers**

Fire extinguishers of proper types must be charged, tagged, mounted, unobstructed, near a means of escape (50.5.7.1)
Class K for cooking with oil and fat (50.5.7.2)
Class 20:BC for generators and fuel-fired equipment (50.5.7.5)
Class 2:A for wood or charcoal (50.5.7.3)
CO2 extinguishers shall not be aboard (50.5.7.6)
Placard next to class K extinguisher stating to activate system first (50.5.2.1)

### **Vehicle Safety**

At least one CO detector installed where heat sources are nonelectric and open flames used (50.8.10.1)
No seating for the public inside the vehicle (50.8.3.2)

### **Staff Emergency Training**

At least one worker initially trained in the following (50.8.11.1)
Using portable extinguishers and extinguishing systems
Shutting off fuel sources
Notifying the Fire Department
Proper refueling and gas cylinder change-out
Performing leak detection
F=Understanding fuel properties
Annual refresher training provided to designated personnel (50.8.11.4)
Training documentation remains on board & available upon request (50.8.11.5)

## **Event Setup**

	Vehicle 10' from building entrances & exits, other vehicles, tents, and other combustible materials (50.8.2.1 and 50.8.2.2)
	Chocks, jacks, or wheel clamps in use (50.8.2.3)
	Access maintained for fire lanes, hydrants, FDCs, other fire equipment (50.8.1.4)
	No impediments to immediate escape (50.8.2; COMAR 29.06.01.08 UUU)
	Windows are open and/or ventilation is on before cooking (50.6.1.1)
	Exhaust systems with filters are operated only with filters in place (50.6.1.2)
	Portable generator separated from cooking operations (50.8.6.4.1)
	Portable generator guarded with cones, fencing, other barrier (50.8.6.4.2)
	Portable generator fueled only when shut down and cooled (50.8.9.3.2)
	Propane leak detection testing done each time a connection is made or cylinder changed NFPA 96, 2024 (17.8.3.3)
	Propane system inspected before use (50.8.8.2.3)
	Documentation of propane detection testing is maintained on vehicle NFPA 96, 2024 (17.8.4.3.1)
	Phone available or other approved emergency communication (50.8.1.5.1)
	Location address posted for emergency reporting (50.8.1.5.2 & 50.8.11.6)
	Public not allowed inside (50.8.3.2)
	One staff person has documented emergency training (50.8.11.2)