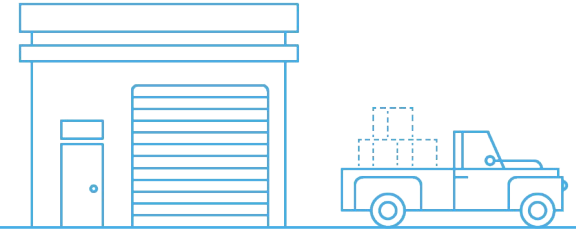




# Mobile Food Vendor Checklist

This guide tells you which forms you need to fill out, offices you need to visit, and decisions you need to make.



## Get Going

These things are crucial to accomplishing other steps, so get them in motion now.

Apply for an Employer Identification Number (EIN), also known as a Federal Tax ID Number from the IRS. This is used to identify your business and allows you to hire employees. If you are a sole proprietor without employees, you may choose to use your Social Security Number instead.

Choose and file a business name. File a Fictitious Business Name (FBN) Statement at the Office of the County Clerk if you will be using a name other than your given name, the names of your partners, or the officially registered name of your LLC or corporation.

Apply for a Business Tax Certificate Permit from the Office of Finance. If you plan to expand your services, such as serving alcohol or having employees, other permits may be required.

Apply for a Public Health Operating license from the L.A. County Department of Public Health - Environmental Health and Safety.



## Visit

Talking to people at these offices will help you figure out what you need.

Office of Finance  
Special Desk Unit  
200 North Spring St. Room 205  
Los Angeles, CA. 90012  
(844) 663-4411

Dept. of Environmental Health and Safety  
5050 Commerce Drive  
Baldwin Park, CA. 91706  
(888) 700-9995

Los Angeles County Clerk  
12400 Imperial Highway  
Los Angeles, CA. 90650  
(800) 201-8999

Street Vending Compliance Program  
(626) 430-5160



## Read

Reading up on these materials will prepare you for opening your mobile food vending business.

Review the City of Los Angeles Minimum Wage Frequently Asked Questions to make sure your business is compliant.

Visit [finance.lacity.org](https://finance.lacity.org) for essential reading about permits and taxes.

Review the [fee schedule](#) for licenses issued by the L.A. County Department of Public Health

Read the California Department of Public Health's [Safe Food Handling Practices](#) guide

Read the L.A. County Department of Public Health [guidelines for mobile food facilities](#)

## Choose Your Business Entity

- ❑ You could operate your mobile food business as a sole proprietorship or partnership, but you should also consider other legal entities that could protect your personal investments such as a corporation or limited liability company (LLC).

**Tip:** Catering will involve being in other people's business or homes, which increases the likelihood of injury or property damage. Establishing your business as an LLC or corporation would make sure that your business, and not you personally, would be responsible for any liability.

## Get Licensed

- ❑ [Register your business](#) with the City, County and State.
- ❑ Apply for a [Business Tax Certificate](#) from the Office of Finance and mail the completed form to the address provided in the application
- ❑ Visit the L.A. County Department of Public Health to apply for your Public Health Operating license and other licenses or permits you may need, based on your operations

**Tip:** You may be asked to provide various types of information with your health permit application such as a copy of your menu or a description of your safe food handling practices

## Secure a Space at a Commissary

- ❑ California law requires that all mobile food vendors rent space from a food facility, known as a commissary, to prepare food, store inventory, and for parking your vehicle when not in use.

## Open Your Business

- ❑ Connecting with people will be the key to your success. Network with event planners, join your local Chambers of Commerce, or get a booth at a fair or farmers market.
- ❑ Social media marketing can be effective method for getting the word out. Start a Facebook or Yelp page for your business, and consider using other platforms such as Instagram or Twitter to showcase your work.

## Bring on staff

- ❑ Before you start serving food, you'll need to obtain a Manager's Food Safety Certification for yourself and/or a designated employee.
- ❑ Review [business.lacity.org/manage/employees](http://business.lacity.org/manage/employees) for information on additional wage and employment guidelines.
- ❑ All employees who handle food (preparation, storage or serving) must also take a food safety training course and obtain a Food Handler Permit. New employees have 30 days to obtain the permit. A list of accredited providers can be found at:

**Tip:** California law requires an on-duty catering employee or manager to have state food safety certification

## Research locations



- ❑ As a mobile food vendor, you can travel to new locations and develop multiple customer bases. Research prime selling spots, but make sure to consult the local health, police and fire departments to determine the regulations of each location.

## Here are some local events that offer booths for rent or ample networking:

- ❑ CicLAvia - CicLAvia is an open street event throughout Los Angeles that brings out thousands of visitors a month.
- ❑ Los Angeles Food & Wine Festival - LA Food and Wine is a four day food festival that brings out foodies from all over Southern California
- ❑ Downtown Art Walk - The Downtown Art Walk is monthly showcase of many of the galleries in Downtown Los Angeles. Thousands of visitors come each month to eat local fare and walk from gallery to gallery.