



General Mobile Food Vending Information

The New York City Department of Health & Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) issues both a mobile food vending operator's [license](#), which is similar to the concept of a Department of Motor Vehicles driver's license, and a mobile food unit [permit](#), which is similar to a motor vehicle registration. One is for the person and the other is for the cart or truck. **Both** of these items are needed for a person to legally operate a food vending business.

Although anyone can apply for an operator's license at any time, the Department of Health & Mental Hygiene is limited by law in the total number of street vending permits which may be issued. As permit vacancies become available -- when current permittees do not renew timely or if they fail to meet their inspection requirement -- the department sends notification letters to those individuals on existing waiting lists that they may now apply. There are different lists: lists for veterans and non-veterans; lists for those operating citywide or in a specific borough; lists for those operating in the warmer season or those operating all year, and still other lists for those who wish to sell only fresh fruits and vegetables in designated areas of the city. No one may apply for one of these permits unless they have been contacted from any of these lists.

You cannot add your name to an existing list. You can only seek to apply for a waiting list position when a new list is created, and the creation of a new list is dependent upon the turnover rate of the existing lists and how fast we go through them. For this reason, it is impossible to predict exactly when the next time the department will be creating new lists. However, the lists we have do not all finish at the same time. Some lists finish faster than others. Please call '311' for information about when any of our lists may re-open.

Please note that, as long as you have a currently valid mobile food vendor license, there are still options that are open to you, including:

- vending from a cart/truck whose permit is issued to another individual and who would be willing to share his/her permitted cart/truck with you.
- applying for a "restricted area" mobile food vending permit, which does not require a waiting list. This type of permit authorizes mobile food vending on private property in a commercially zoned area or on property under the jurisdiction of the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation and is exempt from the statutory limits which apply to public street vending. More information about vending in a New York City park is available online at: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/opportunities/concessions>. More information about the "restricted area" permit is provided in the detailed requirements checklist found [here](#).
- applying for an annual permit to operate a "temporary food service establishment" at various city street fairs. These are even more restrictive than the "restricted area" permits mentioned above since they limit a person to a specific location assigned by the sponsor of the individual street fair on the specific day and time of the event. Please note that a mobile food vending license is not needed in conjunction with this type of permit but you will need to have taken and passed the Food Protection Course. You can find more information about these "temporary food service establishment" permits at on.nyc.gov/TFSE.

Please visit www.nyc.gov/health/mobilefood for further information.