

California Permit Requirements

Checklist

MOBILE KITCHEN TRAILER RENTALS FOR TEMPORARY FOODSERVICE OPERATIONS

Purpose & Scope

This checklist applies to the temporary deployment of mobile commercial kitchen trailers in the State of California for use during:

- Commercial kitchen renovations
- Emergency response or disaster recovery
- Seasonal or peak-demand foodservice operations
- Temporary continuity of operations for existing facilities

Typical users include hospitality businesses, senior living communities, healthcare facilities, universities, corporate campuses, and professional foodservice operators.

This checklist is not intended for permanent installations, street food vending, or independent food truck operations.



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Building & Temporary Use Permits

Purpose: Approve temporary placement of the mobile kitchen trailer on private property during renovation, emergency, or seasonal use.

Primary Stakeholders Involved:

- Client / Facility Operator
- General Contractor (if applicable)
- City or County Building Department

Checklist:

- Temporary Structure or Temporary Use Permit issued by the city or county
- Approval for temporary placement duration
- Site plan submitted if required, showing:
 - Trailer location
 - Access routes
 - Utility connection points
- Zoning confirmation for temporary use on private property
- Approval for long-term temporary parking if applicable

Note: Requirements vary by municipality; some jurisdictions waive certain building permits for temporary trailers supporting existing permitted kitchens.



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Health Department / Environmental Health Approvals

Purpose: Ensure food safety compliance for temporary foodservice operations supporting an existing facility.

Primary Stakeholders Involved:

- Client / Foodservice Operator
- County Environmental Health Department
- Mobile Culinaire (documentation support)

Checklist:

- Temporary foodservice approval or Mobile Food Unit authorization, as required by the county
- Menu submitted for review if required
- Kitchen layout and equipment list provided (from Mobile Culinaire)
- Potable water system meets California Retail Food Code (CalCode) requirements
- Wastewater tank sized at least 15% larger than potable water tank
- Commissary agreement secured only if required by the county
- Pre-operational inspection scheduled and passed
- Ongoing health inspections approved
- All foodservice staff hold valid California Food Handler Cards

Note: Counties often evaluate mobile kitchen trailers used during renovations differently from public food trucks. Existing permitted facilities may receive modified requirements.



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Fire Department / Life Safety Approvals

Purpose: Verify fire safety, ventilation, fuel systems, and emergency controls.

Primary Stakeholders Involved:

- Client / Facility Operator
- Fire Marshal / Fire Department
- Propane Provider or Gas Contractor (if applicable)
- Mobile Culinaire (system documentation)

Checklist:

- Fire marshal review of the temporary kitchen installation
- Fire suppression system inspected and certified
- Type I ventilation hood approved
- Class K fire extinguisher installed
- Additional ABC extinguishers if required
- Propane use permit obtained (if propane is used)
- Propane tanks properly located, secured, and labeled per California Fire Code
- Generator inspected and approved if used
- Emergency shut-offs clearly identified and accessible



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Utility & Infrastructure Approvals

Purpose: Ensure safe temporary connections to site utilities.

Primary Stakeholders Involved:

- Client / Facility Operator
- General Contractor
- Licensed Electrician
- Licensed Plumber
- Wastewater / Grease Disposal Provider
- Local Utility Providers

Checklist:

- Approved fresh water supply connection method
- Approved wastewater disposal method
- Plumbing connection permit if required by jurisdiction
- Electrical connection permit if connecting to site power
- Licensed California electrician used for electrical work
- Backflow prevention installed if required
- Grease and greywater servicing arranged with approved provider
- Temporary utility installations inspected as required



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Final Pre-Opening Verification

Purpose: Confirm all approvals are in place before foodservice begins.

Primary Stakeholders Involved:

- Client / Facility Operator
- General Contractor (if applicable)
- Health Department
- Fire Marshal

Checklist:

- All required permits issued and available on-site
- Fire marshal approval completed
- Health department approval completed
- Utilities safely connected and operational
- Commissary relationship documented if required
- All equipment powered, tested, and temperature-verified
- Staff trained on emergency procedures and equipment operation
- Mobile kitchen trailer fully compliant and ready for operation



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Key California Regulatory References

- California Department of Public Health – Food & Drug Branch
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/Pages/DFDCS.aspx>
- California Retail Food Code (CalCode)
<https://emd.saccounty.gov/EH/FoodProtect-RetailFood/Pages/CalCode.aspx>
- Local County Environmental Health Departments
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DRSEM/CDPH%20Document%20Library/EMB/REHS_EH_Dept_Contact_List_050925.pdf
- California Department of Housing & Community Development – Building Codes
<https://www.dgs.ca.gov/bsc/codes>
- California State Fire Marshal / California Fire Code
<https://osfm.fire.ca.gov/>



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