

Mobile Food Opportunities

There are two main types of permitting tracks available to mobile food facilities (MFFs). Each depends on the specific locations you are interested in, and offer various advantages and disadvantages. More specific information regarding the permitting process is available in the Permits section.

Public Right of Way: Most sidewalks and streets in San Francisco fall under the Department of Public Works' (DPW) public property permitting process (for a complete list of available locations, visit DPW's website). Before starting on the permit paperwork, you should spend a sufficient amount of time researching potential locations.

Look for things like foot traffic, nearby bathrooms, available parking for your food truck or trailer plus the truck that tows it, and restaurants within the area. Permit applications run the risk of being denied if they are protested on the basis of "like foods," which means any restaurant serving similar food can block your permit. For this reason, it is important to do the research beforehand and introduce yourself to the neighbors so that they can get to know you and offer support.

Private Property: On private property, the fees are up to the property owner; usually % of sales. To negotiate private locations, contact the property owner. As mentioned, parks in San Francisco are considered private property. Those run by the City of San Francisco are run by the Department of Rec & Parks through a public RFP process.

Plus Fairs, Festivals and Events: Special events (either one-off or recurring) can provide additional sources of revenue for your mobile business. The permit and application process may vary with each event, so be sure to check with the event organizer for specific details.

Very Basically What You Will Need

- **An Idea:** All of this, of course, begins with an idea. What are you going to be selling, will you benefit from being mobile, who are your customers? If you have not written this process into your business plan, does it work with your business plan?
- **A Commissary (or 2):** All MFF's are required to use a commissary for food prep, food storage, parking,