

Itinerant Food Vendor Reciprocal Licensing Frequently Asked Questions for Itinerant Food Vendors

What is reciprocal licensing/permitting of itinerant food vendors?

This is a process where an itinerant food vendor can receive a license and be inspected by one local health jurisdiction and then be allowed to operate in another local health jurisdiction as long as the two local health departments have signed the reciprocal licensing/permitting agreement.

How do I know which Departments of Health are participating in the reciprocal licensing/permitting?

The list of departments of health that are participating can be found on the CT DPH website (<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Food-Protection-Program/Itinerant-Food-Vendors>)

How does this affect my business?

This will allow you to operate as an itinerant food vendor in locations outside of the jurisdiction of the health department that issued you the license/permit and conducted inspections **AS LONG AS** the health department that licensed/permitted you is part of the reciprocal agreement. You will be able to sell food in the jurisdictions of other health departments that have signed the reciprocal agreement without pulling a new permit.

If I have a license/permit for my itinerant food establishment, can I travel throughout the state and sell food?

You can only sell food as an itinerant food vendor if you are licensed/permitted by a health department that is part of the agreement and you can only sell food in jurisdictions that have signed the reciprocal agreement. You can only sell food that you were approved to sell by the permitting local health department.

What is not covered by the reciprocal licensing/permitting agreement?

There are many local ordinances that are not covered by the agreement, such as fire, parking, zoning, building, and other required local permits. Itinerant food vendors shall receive proper local approvals prior to operating their business in towns where these other types of permits are required for itinerant food vending establishments. Advance notification may be required for local approvals. **Always contact the local municipality to determine what permits you need before planning to serve food there.**

Some local ordinances also cover the type of food truck that is allowed. For example, some towns will not allow an open-air food service so always check with local officials prior to making plans to travel to that town or city to sell food.

What is an itinerant food vending establishment?

As per Connecticut Regulation 19-13-B48(a)(7) "*Itinerant food vending establishment*" means a food vending business serving food or drink from any establishment or conveyance without fixed location and without connection to water supply and sewage disposal systems.

What is a temporary event?

There is no definition of a temporary event in Connecticut Regulations 19-13-B42 or 19-13-B48. Temporary event has become a widely used term for scenarios where Temporary Food Service Establishments and Itinerant Food Vendors set up and sell food to the public. It can be used to describe large or small events covering one or multiple days.

What is a temporary food service establishment?

As per Connecticut Regulations 19-13-B42(a)(14) "*Temporary Food Service Establishment*" means a food service establishment that operates at a fixed location, not to exceed two (2) weeks, in connection with a special recreational event, including but not limited to carnivals, fairs, festivals, celebrations, public exhibitions or other similar transitory gatherings.

Does an itinerant food vending establishment need an additional permit/license to operate at a temporary event?

No, as long as the itinerant food vending establishment follows the procedures outlined in their original permit application AND does not alter their menu AND the scope of the event does not require them to modify standard operating procedures/practices.

Altering in this case means:

- adding new food items that the truck isn't already equipped to handle
- adding additional or new equipment outside of the truck to handle larger crowds/capacities

They also must have the ability to leave the site to address potable water supply, proper disposal of wastewater and resupplying food stuffs.

Yes, if the scope of the event presents large challenges for the itinerant food vending establishment to continue to operate in its original approved permitted state.

Challenges can include insufficient water supply, wastewater management complications, and safe storage of food stuffs for the length of the event.

Does this MOU cover multi-day events such as county fairs, carnivals, and music festivals where itinerant vendors do not return to base each day?

No, these multi-day events are not covered by the MOU. Vendors must register with the event coordinator and get the necessary approvals for selling food at these events.

Are there other events not covered by the reciprocal licensing?

There are organized events that require food trucks to be registered. It is always best to communicate with the event sponsor to determine the requirements for special events.

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Does the reciprocal licensing/permitting cover catering at a wedding, bar or bat mitzvah, anniversary celebration or other private, non-public event? It depends if you are preparing food using your mobile food truck or if you are preparing the food at a fixed site. If you are using your food truck, you are considered an itinerant food vendor.

I have a food cart that is towed behind my vehicle, does the reciprocity agreement include me?

Yes, this reciprocal licensing/permitting agreement covers an individual or business that prepares, offers, or sells food directly to consumers and conducts operations in a self-contained vehicular or wheel mounted food facility that can be moved from place to place but has all food preparation equipment within the vehicle.

Can I be inspected by health departments other than the one that licensed/permited me?

Yes, local health has the authority to conduct inspections at any time when a vendor is selling food in their jurisdiction. The jurisdiction where you are licensed/permited can collect inspection fees. Other health departments can conduct inspections but cannot collect an inspection or other fees.

What authority do the health departments have if I am not licensed/permited by them?

Local health has broad authority to ensure that proper food safety practices are being carried out. No matter if you are selling food in the jurisdiction of the local health where you are licensed/permited or in the jurisdiction of another health district, local health food inspectors/directors can issue orders to hold or destroy food, if in the opinion of the inspector, such action is warranted and necessary to protect public health. Local health can also issue an order to cease operations if the health department determines that the itinerant food vending establishment is creating a nuisance that is injurious to public health

Does the health department where I plan to offer/sell food need to be contacted prior to selling food?

Yes, an itinerant food vendor needs to reach out to the health departments where the business does not have a license/permit to make the health department aware of the plan to sell food there. Itinerant food vendors must also reach out to the town or city to make sure that all permits are in place and learn if advance notice of intent to operate is required.