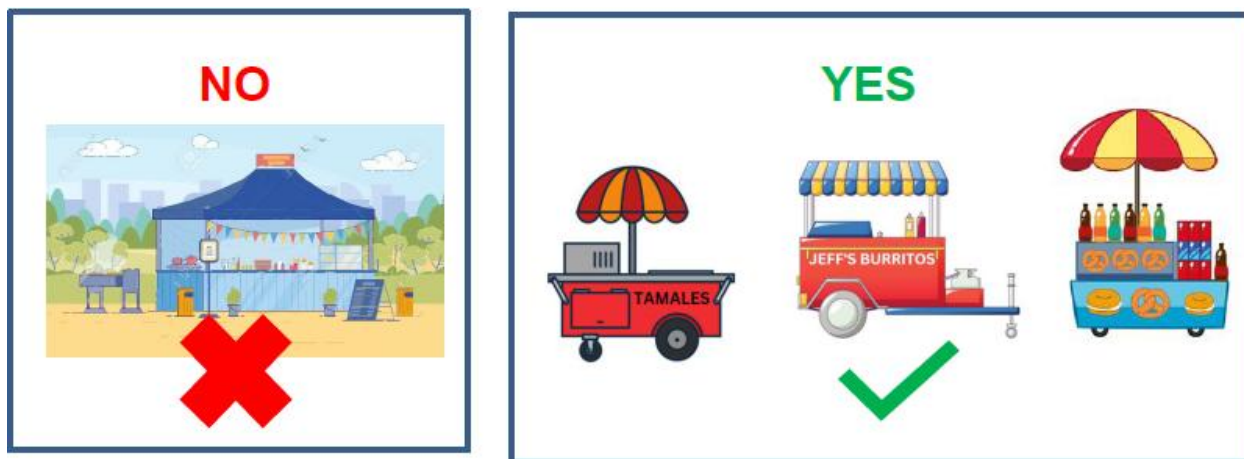


CMFO Frequently Asked Questions

Imperial County Environmental Health Division (“Environmental Health”) understands there may be many questions about what types of retail food operations can be permitted as Compact Mobile Food Operations (CMFO). This document answers frequently asked questions about CMFOs. This form is a way for us to provide answers to you about your proposed business and whether it can be permitted as a CMFO. You must also complete our Food Facility Plan Review process and obtain a valid Environmental Health Permit to Operate before you may operate. For more information, please go to our website: <https://www.icphd.org/environmental-health/food>.

CMFO Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

1. What is a CMFO? A CMFO is an unenclosed mobile food facility that operates from an individual or from a pushcart, stand, display, pedal-driven cart, wagon, showcase, rack or other **nonmotorized** conveyance. A CMFO is **not a pop-up** where many pieces of equipment are stored under a tent. **All equipment must be integral (connected to the unit). Pop up tents and food booths are not allowed.** Here are some examples of what a CMFO can look like:



2. What kinds of foods can I sell on a CMFO? CMFO's can sell prepackaged foods from approved sources that are properly labeled. A CMFO may have **limited food preparation** when the equipment to support the proposed menu is approved by Environmental Health. Limited food preparation includes the preparation of non-potentially hazardous foods (non-PHF) and some potentially hazardous foods (PHF). This means most food preparation will take place in an approved commissary kitchen, or the food will be cooked, reheated, or prepared to order at the CMFO. **Foods cannot be made at home and must be from an approved source.**

Limited food preparation does not allow the following:

- thawing foods
- cooling of cooked foods for later use
- grinding raw ingredients
- washing foods
- or preparing/processing milk or milk products (CFRC §113818 (b)).

3. What kind of equipment do I need to operate a CMFO? The equipment required for a CMFO depends on the proposed menu and whether operators will be conducting limited food preparation. **All equipment must be integral and not separate pieces of equipment.** If limited food preparation will be conducted on the CMFO, the minimum required equipment includes:

- a handwash sink
- mechanical refrigeration
- overhead protection

all of which need to be an integral (built-in) part of the CMFO (non-removable). Additional requirements such as having a 3-compartment warewashing sink may be required depending on the CMFO menu.

4. Where can I make my food? Can I use my house? No food storage or preparation may take place in a private home or other unpermitted facility.

5. Can I store my CMFO at my house? A CMFO may be stored in private home but will require a site evaluation and approval from Environmental Health prior to use. An approved commissary will still be required for preparation and storage of food and cleaning the CMFO unit.

6. Can I be exempt from obtaining a health permit? Only operations that offer 25 sq. ft. or less prepackaged non-potentially hazardous foods or whole uncooked/unprocessed produce are exempt from obtaining a health permit to operate.

7. Do I need to obtain a business license? Where can I operate my CMFO? You may need to obtain a business license depending on where you plan to operate your CMFO. If you are planning to operate within city limits, Environmental Health recommends contacting the city where you want to operate to determine whether a business license is required and if there are any local requirements or restrictions about where a CMFO may operate. If you plan to operate in the unincorporated areas of Imperial County, contact the Imperial County Treasurer-Tax Collector to determine if a business license is required.

8. What happens if I don't obtain a permit? Environmental Health may take away your food, and you could get fines, extra fees, and possibly face prosecution for selling food without a permit.

9. Where can I find out more information? Please visit our website • [Environmental Health Forms – Mobile Food](#).