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Announcing Standard 59 for Mobile Food Carts

NSF food equipment standards are developed to establish minimum requirements for the materials, design and construction, and performance of food equipment. *ANSI/NSF Standard 59 – Mobile Food Carts*, sets minimum requirements for four types of mobile food carts, depending on the type of food prepared and/or served:

- Prepackaged non-potentially hazardous foods
- Prepackaged potentially hazardous foods
- Non-potentially hazardous foods prepared onsite
- Potentially hazardous foods prepared onsite

To protect public health, the requirements in ANSI/NSF Standard 59 are intended to accurately reflect how mobile food carts are used in the field. The standard does not include vehicle-mounted food service equipment.

Requirements for each type vary significantly, and some of the key differences are outlined below. Please see ANSI/NSF 59 for specific requirements.

Prepackaged Non-Potentially Hazardous Foods

The most minimal requirements apply to carts that serve but do not prepare prepackaged non-potentially hazardous foods – for example, carts that sell prepackaged ice cream or bottled/canned soft drinks.

Because there is no direct food contact or need to hold food at minimum temperatures, the material, design, and construction must meet splash zone requirements. All permanent joints and seams must be sealed and smooth; materials must be corrosion resistant and non-absorbent; and construction

must be easy to clean and keep out vermin.

Prepackaged Potentially Hazardous Foods

Carts serving, but not preparing prepackaged potentially hazardous foods must meet the same splash zone requirements for design, construction, and materials as prepackaged non-potentially hazardous carts. In addition, they must also be able to hold food at applicable safe temperatures.

For enclosed hot food holding applications, the cart must hold food at 150°F or higher for at least eight hours at an ambient air temperature of 40°F. Cold storage compartments must maintain an air temperature of 40°F or less for at least eight hours at an ambient air temperature of 100°F.

Non-Potentially Hazardous Foods Prepared Onsite

Pretzel or popcorn carts, examples of this type, must meet the design and construction requirements for food zones. Materials in the food zone must be non-toxic, non-absorbent, and corrosion resistant. Food zone requirements also specify that internal angles of 135° or less must have a minimum continuous and smooth radius of one-eighth inch. Carts used outdoors must have all food zone preparation areas and holding areas enclosed to protect against contamination. Joints and seams must be sealed and smooth, and food contact surfaces must be readily accessible and easy to clean. There are no performance requirements for this type.

Potentially Hazardous Foods Prepared Onsite

Carts used to prepare and serve hot dogs, hamburgers or other potentially hazardous foods are subject to the most stringent requirements because they present the greatest health risk.

The material, design, construction requirements are the same as for non-potentially hazardous foods. Performance requirements are the same as prepackaged potentially hazardous food carts, with the added stipulation that cooking and rethermalization carts must be able to raise the temperature of food from 40°F to 165°F within two hours in an ambient air temperature of 40°F. Open top cold food holding equipment must hold food at temperatures of 40°F or less for eight hours with an ambient air temperature of 100°F.

Look for the NSF Certification Mark on mobile food carts. For more information, visit www.nsf.org or send an email message to info@nsf.org.