



## What is Unpermitted Sidewalk Food Vending?

Unpermitted sidewalk food vendors operate in a variety of settings, but typically set up on sidewalks as pop up tents with open grills and food preparation. These operations do not meet California Health and Safety Code (H&SC) requirements designed to protect the public. Unpermitted sidewalk food vending is not allowed under state law and cannot be issued permits.

## What are the Public Health Concerns?

Unpermitted vendors often have no access to restrooms, sinks to wash their hands, utensil washing sinks to maintain food handling equipment clean and sanitary, or refrigerators to keep food at safe temperatures. Additionally, food is often exposed to contamination at these unsanitary operations. All of these factors increase the risk of foodborne illness.



Public Health's mission is safe and healthy communities and that includes ensuring the food sold in Los Angeles County is prepared in facilities that promote health and safety. The Environmental Health Division inspects businesses to verify compliance with applicable local, state, and federal codes.

### Certification Sticker



### Letter grade



### Valid Public Health Permit



A permitted street food vendor or a sidewalk food vendor is someone who operates from a Mobile Food Facility (MFF) or a Compact Mobile Food Operation (CMFO). MFFs sell foods from large carts, trailers, or food trucks that are parked on the street. CMFOs sell prepackaged or limited prepared food from non-motorized vehicles like pushcarts or stands and are vended on the sidewalk. Sidewalk food vendors must comply with the H&SC requirements and use permitted food carts to ensure safe food storage, preparation, and handling, to reduce the potential for foodborne illness. MFFs and CMFOs are required to display their Public Health Permit, Certification Sticker and Grade Card at all times.



## Can Unpermitted Pop Up Sidewalk Vendors Get Permits?

Sidewalk pop-up food vending operations are not allowed under State law and cannot be issued permits. To provide additional opportunities for unpermitted vendors to enter the permitted economy, and, at the direction of the Board of Supervisors, Public Health has implemented several programs to promote legal pathways for vendors to operate safely and compliantly:

- **Compact Mobile Food Operations (CMFOs):** [ph.lacounty.gov/CMFO](http://ph.lacounty.gov/CMFO)
- **Microenterprise Home Kitchen Operations (MEHKOs):** [ph.lacounty.gov/MEHKO](http://ph.lacounty.gov/MEHKO)
- **Temporary Food Facilities (TFF)** at approved community events: [ph.lacounty.gov/TFF](http://ph.lacounty.gov/TFF)

## How is Public Health Enforcing State Law?

Changes in state law to decriminalize sidewalks have constrained local enforcement authority. Efforts to remove individual sidewalk vending operations have had limited effectiveness, with vendors returning to sell in nearby locations within hours or days of enforcement activities. In many instances, individuals encountered at street vending operations are employees rather than the responsible parties directing the enterprise and often are preyed upon vulnerable individuals subject to labor violations and/or human trafficking.

As a result, Public Health is focusing enforcement efforts on the larger organizations operating unpermitted food enterprises, including central food preparation and distribution hubs that support multiple sidewalk food vending locations. These unpermitted centralized operations often provide food preparation, storage, transportation, and equipment for multiple vendors. By addressing the source of organized unpermitted food activity, Public Health aims to improve long-term compliance and better protect public health.

To date, Public Health has worked with law enforcement and the District Attorney's office to close down operations at 16 unpermitted warehouse sites, confiscating 36 tons of food and citing warehouse operators for their illegal practices.

