

# GUIDE TO STARTING YOUR OWN **FOOD TRUCK FEST**

## #CHIFOODTRUCKFEST



**BACP**  
BUSINESS AFFAIRS  
CONSUMER PROTECTION

SMALL  
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\*CENTER\*



## SELECT A LOCATION

The first ingredient to host a successful food truck fest in your neighborhood is location. Select a location that receives enough pedestrian traffic for the time of your event to sustain the number of food trucks you're seeking to invite.

Also, be aware of Mobile Food Vehicle (MFV) license operational provisions\*:

- MFVs may operate from a legal street parking space, and in designated Food Stands, not to exceed a 2-hour service limit.
- MFVs may operate on private property, not to exceed service limits of two hours, as long as the property meets the applicable Zoning requirements, and the property owner provides written permission. *Also be aware of any insurance requirements that property owners may require from food trucks or event organizers.*
- No MFV may park or stand within 200 feet of any principal customer entrance to a restaurant which is located on the street level with the exception of 12 AM – 2AM.
- MFVs are not allowed on privately-owned vacant lots, or a lot of a vacant building.
- Except at designated Food Stands, MFVs are not allowed in the restricted parking area bounded by the Chicago River, Michigan Avenue and Harrison Street.
- Mobile food vending is prohibited in the Medical Center District.

If your proposed food truck fest location does not meet the MFV license operational provisions, please contact the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) to find out if your event qualifies under the Special Events Permit operational provisions (see section on Special Events Permits below).



## OBTAIN A SPECIAL EVENTS PERMIT (IF APPLICABLE)

A **Special Event Permit** may be obtained to host a food truck event. The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) issues Special Event Permits. The Permit Package Application may be found in DCASE's **Chicago Neighborhood Festivals web page**. If the location of your fest falls within 200 feet of an entrance to restaurant and/or the event will exceed the two hour service limit, you may apply for a Special Event Permitted and these restrictions do not apply.

Also, please be aware that the licensed food truck participants of your event must complete the Special Event Food Truck License Application portion of the Special Event Permit Application and pay the appropriate fee to participate in a food truck fest permitted by DCASE.



## INVITE LICENSED FOOD TRUCKS

The second ingredient to ensuring a successful food truck fest is inviting licensed food trucks. Food trucks must have either a Mobile Food Dispenser (MFD) or Mobile Food Preparer (MFP) License to operate at your event in Chicago. More information about food truck licensing may be found in BACP's **Mobile Food Vendor Licenses web page**.

To search for licensed food trucks, access the City's Data Portal at [data.cityofchicago.org](http://data.cityofchicago.org) and type **Business License - Current Active** in the search field to access Chicago's dataset of all current business licenses. Set the license description filter to Mobile Food License. All of Chicago's currently licensed MFD and MFP's will appear. A majority of food trucks are on social media and have websites. Use this list to contact and invite only those who are licensed by the City of Chicago.



## PROMOTE YOUR EVENT

Food trucks and their followers are avid social media users. Create marketing materials and promote the event early and often on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media platforms. Devise a customized, catchy hashtag (e.g., #ChiFoodTruckFest) to generate a following. Tag food trucks attending your event to promote amongst their followers and beyond. And always tag **@ChicagoBACP** - we're on the look out to support the next local food truck fest!

## QUESTIONS? CONTACT US AT 312-74-GOBIZ

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\*City Council may from time to time define areas, in the interest of preserving public health and safety or avoiding traffic congestion, in which no mobile food vendor may prepare or dispense food from a wheeled vehicle. The City Clerk shall maintain for public inspection and copying a file of all ordinances defining such areas.