



CITY OF Tigard Starting a Food Cart Business in Tigard

April 2025

If you are planning to operate a food truck, open a food cart, or run a cart pod in the **City of Tigard**, there are important things you will need to know to ensure that your business is ready to operate. This guidebook is to provide you with some key information on what you will need to start a food cart business in Tigard. The City encourages those interested in these types of businesses to have early conversations with our team to help you understand and navigate requirements and approval processes before investing in design or construction.

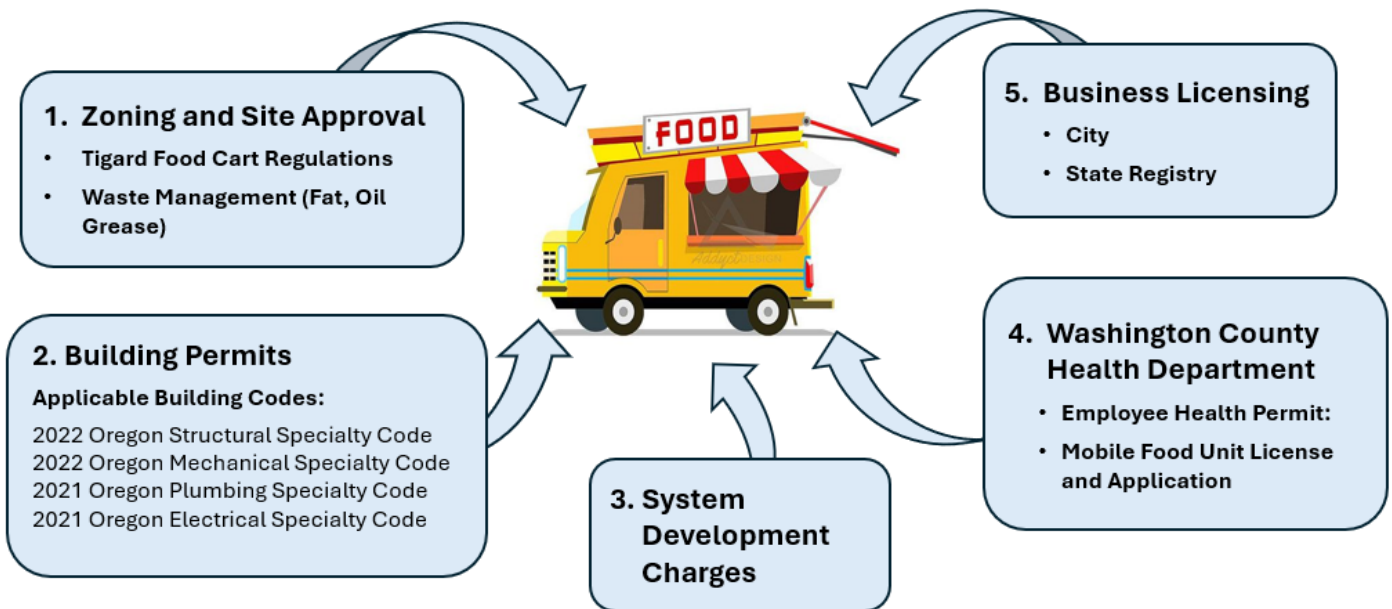
Contact Information:

Planning Division: 503-718-2421 or tigardplanneronduty@tigard-or.gov

Building Division: 503-718-2439 or tigardbuildingpermits@tigard-or.gov

Economic Development Division: TigardEconomicDevelopment@tigard-or.gov

FOG management: 503-718-2459 or at JoeC@tigard-or.gov





1. Zoning and Site Approval

Before selecting a site, verify that food cart operations are permitted under the property's zoning. The **Planning Division** can confirm allowed uses and explain any site-specific conditions. Call **503-718-2421** or send an email to tigardplanneronduty@tigard-or.gov, or review the **Tigard Development Code** (<https://ecode360.com/TI5024>).

The City of Tigard has adopted a new code for food carts and food cart pods, effective **January 28, 2025**. You can review the entire Food Carts Regulations in [Chapter 18.750 Food Carts](#).

This code provides standards and processes for approving food carts and food cart pods in Tigard. The main goals of these standards are to:

- Support small business owners by allowing food carts.
- Ensure food carts are safe and meet health standards.
- Keep the city's appearance and character intact.
- Minimize any negative effects on nearby businesses and neighborhoods.

The code limits food carts in areas of the city where other commercial activities like retail shops and restaurants are also allowed.

The standards are focused on protecting public health, safety, and welfare, and provide minimum expectations for how food carts are located and operated. There are separate standards for food carts up to three per site and for food cart pods, which consist of four or more carts on a single site.

The standards for food carts largely mirror the standards that have been in place since food carts were first allowed through existing policies. Those standards are focused on ensuring that carts do not conflict with existing facilities and preserve a safe pedestrian environment. New standards are intended to protect sanitary sewer pipes and prevent fire risk.

The standards for food cart pods include a few additional requirements related to the provision of permanent utility connections and providing restrooms on the site. These are similar to requirements that apply to other restaurant uses.

Some Key Standards: While these do not address **ALL** the standards associated with food carts and food cart pods, the following is a list of ones to consider:

- More than three food carts on a subject property are considered a Food Cart Pod.
- The entire footprint of all food carts must be located on a paved surface.



- The food cart must meet a minimum six-foot setback from any street property line and 20 feet where a property is adjacent a residential zone.
- The food cart must be separated from any other food cart or building on the property by a minimum of five feet.
- The food cart pod must include at least one permanent building on the property that provides public restrooms.
- Any new building of more than 800 square feet must meet the minimum and maximum setback standards for the base zone.
- The food cart pod must not include more than 20 food cart stalls.
- Each food cart stall must be a maximum of 375 square feet and contain no more than one food cart.

There are other standards that may apply to your cart that should be considered. You will want to review all the standards in the Food Carts Regulations ([Chapter 18.750 Food Carts](#)).

2. Building Permits and Construction Standards

Depending on how your food cart is set up, you may need permits for structures like decks, utility connections, or other installations. Prefabricated trailers for coffee/food service or similar uses intended to be placed on a site but may be moved, are not regulated by the State Building Code. The Food Cart must maintain its portability, which includes keeping the wheels and towing tongue on the unit. Any permanent connections to water, sewer, gas or electrical service must obtain permits through the City Building Division. Contact the **Building Division** at **503-718-2439** or tigardbuildingpermits@tigard-or.gov , or visit <https://www.tigard-or.gov/your-government/departments/community-development/permit-center>.

Food cart projects must follow Oregon’s statewide building codes, including:

- 2022 Oregon Structural Specialty Code (OSSC)
- 2022 Oregon Mechanical Specialty Code (OMSC)
- 2021 Oregon Plumbing Specialty Code (OPSC)
- 2021 Oregon Electrical Specialty Code (OESC)

You can review these codes www.oregon.gov/bcd.



Electrical

The Food Cart may be connected to an approved electrical connection. Permits are required for the addition of any electrical service. This means that an approved electrical connection point adjacent to each food cart is required, so the connecting electrical cord does not cross driveways, walkways, access points or create a tripping hazard. Electrical service to the Food Cart must be by an approved electrical cord/plug without use of extension cords, connecting to a circuit with the correct amperage to serve the trailer/vehicle. The electrical cord must be protected from physical damage. An electrical permit is required for installing an outlet.

14.04.065 Electrical Program Administration

- **Permit Requirement:** Most electrical work requires a separate permit for each building or structure, with some exceptions for minor installations or temporary setups.
- **Permit Revocation:** The Building Official can suspend, or revoke permits issued in error or based on incorrect information.
- **Plan Review:** Electrical plans must be reviewed as per state procedures.
- **Corrections and Stop Orders:** If work violates the code, the Building Official can order corrections or stop the work until compliance is achieved.

Water

The Food Cart may be connected to a potable water system in an approved manner (see next paragraph), or the cart must connect to an approved above ground or in-cart potable water tank to supply fresh water to the cart, consistent with Section 5-3 of the Oregon Health Authority's 2012 Food Sanitation Rules. This means that an approved potable water connection point or tank adjacent to each food cart must be available, so the connecting piping does not cross driveways, walkways, access points or create a tripping hazard. The potable water supply shall be by an approved fixture (such as a yard hydrant or hose bib) with an approved backflow device. A plumbing permit is required for installing a fixture and/or backflow device. The water supply shall be by an approved potable water hose with a 'quick disconnect' type connection and protected from physical damage and freezing weather by an approved heat tape and insulation.

Wastewater

The Food Cart shall either be connected to an underground sanitary sewer system with an in-line approved grease trap, or the cart shall connect to individual or community wastewater holding tanks. Tanks shall be owned and serviced by an Oregon Department of



Environmental Quality licensed pumper. Indirect discharge or leakage draining into the storm water system is prohibited. Disposal cannot be to a storm catch basin or sewer cleanout. The connecting piping must be located so they do not cross driveways, walkways, access points or create a tripping hazard. The connection of the food carts' sanitary sewer outlet to the approved sanitary sewer system may be by a flexible or solid pipe that is approved for conveying sanitary waste. The sewer pipe must be protected from physical damage. A plumbing permit is required for installing in-ground sewer pipe and an approved sanitary sewer receptor. Grease Interceptors: Food service areas are required to provide a method to collect fats, oils and grease from entering the public sewer system. This is in the form of a grease interceptor as required by the State Plumbing Code. This requires a Plumbing Permit that is obtained through the Building Division. Food Carts connected to the sanitary sewer must utilize an approved grease interceptor.

Fats, Oils, and Grease Management

FOG or Fats, Oils, and Grease is the by-product of cooking and food and beverage preparation for homes and businesses alike. When it is discarded down the drain, it cools and hardens and sticks to pipes. Over time, FOG can accumulate enough to cause blockages in the sewer pipe for private property owners and publicly owned sewer systems. This can lead to sewage backups in homes, businesses and sewer overflow in the street. Sewer overflow can be very messy and expensive to clean up, so everybody needs to do their part. All businesses that generate fats, oils, and grease (FOG), including food carts, must implement measures to reduce the disposal of those materials into public sanitary sewer pipes.

For food carts, this means that all wastewater must be pre-treated through a grease separator apparatus prior to disposal into the public system. As an alternative, all wastewater can be collected on site and transported to designated disposal areas operated by Clean Water Services.

Adequate FOG management is a requirement for all new and existing food carts within the city. For more information on FOG management, contact Joe Coulter at 503-718-2459 or at JoeC@tigard-or.gov.

3. Development and Impact Fees

- New food carts will be assessed for **System Development Charges (SDCs)** for parks and transportation and may also require the payment of SDCs for sewer and water. Specific fees will depend on the specifics of the proposal. Contact the City's Building Division for a full fee estimate.



4. Health and Safety Requirements

All food carts must meet health standards set by the **Washington County Health Department**. You can reach them at **503-846-8722** or HHSEHealth@washingtonty.or.gov, or visit the Food Safety Program page at <https://www.washingtonty.or.gov/environmental-health/food-service-licensing>.

To open a food service business in Washington County, Oregon, you'll need to obtain several licenses and permits. This includes a food handler's license, and various permits related to food safety and potentially liquor service.

Employee Health Permit (also known as a Food Handlers License):

- A food service license, also known as an employee health permit, allows food trucks to safely sell and serve food onsite. These licenses ensure that every employee knows how to do their part to keep their diners safe from foodborne illness.
- Every employee who prepares or serves food in Oregon must get their Food Handler's license within 30 days of being hired.
- **Food Handler safety training manual** (in multiple languages), **online testing**, and **application** are available at: <https://www.washingtonty.or.gov/environmental-health/food-handler-certification>

Food Safety Permits:

- A mobile food unit permit ensures that the space where you plan to prepare and/or serve food is compliant with local food safety and worker safety standards. You cannot operate a food truck, food cart, or any other kind of mobile food business without one.
- **Washington County Mobile Food Unit License and Application** can be found at: <https://www.washingtonty.or.gov/environmental-health/mobile-food-unit>

Other Permits:

- Depending on your specific operations, you may need additional permits, such as for catering or temporary offsite events. Check with Washington County for current food safety regulations: <https://www.washingtonty.or.gov/environmental-health/food-safety>
- You can also learn more at Oregon Health Authority Food Safety Program site at <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/HealthyEnvironments/FoodSafety/Pages/FoodCode.aspx>



Liquor License (if applicable):

- If you plan to serve alcohol, you'll need a license from the Oregon Liquor and Cannabis Commission (OLCC): <https://www.oregon.gov/olcc>

5. Business Licensing

Operating a food truck, food cart, or food cart pod in Tigard requires you to register your business with the **State of Oregon** and obtain a **City of Tigard Business License**.

Oregon Business Registration:

- To register your business through the Secretary of State, you need to file the appropriate forms, such as the Articles of Organization for an LLC or Articles of Incorporation for a corporation, depending on your business structure.
- You can file these forms online through the **Oregon Business Registry** at <https://sos.oregon.gov/business>.
- The primary reason for registering with the Secretary of State is to establish legal recognition of your business entity and to ensure compliance with state law.

City of Tigard Business License:

- The City of Tigard Business License Program is a requirement of the [Tigard Municipal Code](#) and requires anyone engaging in any business within the city limits to pay a business license fee unless specifically exempt by State or Federal statute. Business license fees support the Tigard Police Department's Commercial Crimes Unit, which provides services to businesses to protect them from crime and investigate crimes against businesses.
- You can apply by downloading the application from the city's website, applying in person at Tigard City Hall, or calling/emailing for assistance.
- <https://www.tigard-or.gov/business-development/economic-development/resources-for-businesses/business-license>

Check List for Starting/Running a Food Truck/Cart/Pod in Tigard

State of Oregon		
	Business Registration	https://sos.oregon.gov/business
	Liquor License (if applicable)	https://www.oregon.gov/olcc
Washington County		
Health Department: 503-846-8722 or HHSEHealth@washingtoncountyor.gov		
	Employee Health Permit (Food Handlers Permit)	https://www.washingtoncountyor.gov/environmental-health/food-handler-certification
	Food Safety Permit for Mobile Food Unit	https://www.washingtoncountyor.gov/environmental-health/mobile-food-unit
City of Tigard – Business License		
	Business License	https://www.tigard-or.gov/business-development/economic-development/resources-for-businesses/business-license
City of Tigard – Land Use and Planning		
Planning Division: 503-718-2421 or tigardplanneronduty@tigard-or.gov		
Tigard Development Code: www.tigard-or.gov/urbanplanning		
	Zoning	
	Single Cart Application	
	Pod Application	
City of Tigard – Building		
Building Division: 503-718-2439 or tigardbuildingpermits@tigard-or.gov https://www.tigard-or.gov/your-government/departments/community-development/permit-center		
	Site Review	
	Building Permits	https://www.tigard-or.gov/your-government/departments/community-development/permit-center
	System Development Charges	
	Water	
	Wastewater / FOG	
Resources		
	Oregon Health Authority Food Safety Program	https://www.oregon.gov/oha/ph/HealthyEnvironments/FoodSafety/Pages/FoodCode.aspx
	Small Business Administration (SBA) Startup Support	https://www.sba.gov/launch
	Food Truck Business Plan Template and Operations Best Practice in Oregon	https://pos.toasttab.com/blog/on-the-line/food-truck-licenses-and-permits-in-oregon#
	Tigard Economic Development	Email TigardEconomicDevelopment@Tigard-OR.gov or visit https://www.tigard-or.gov/business-development/economic-development