



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIES

Factory Assembled Structures  
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August 2, 2017

**Important information about getting your food truck approved by L&I.**

Labor & Industries inspects food trucks and concession trailers to be sure they are safe prior to being used. Except for the *simplest units* ([link](#)), this also involves submitting plans before the truck or trailer is inspected. Plans show how the electrical, gas piping, cooking equipment, exhaust hood and fire suppression systems are built and whether they will meet the minimum requirements.

Many states have little or no regulations for food trucks and trailers. New or used units coming from these locations have a very difficult time passing inspection and they often need expensive repairs before they can be approved. Even if a food truck or trailer has been used for years in another state, it is no guarantee that it will pass inspection in Washington.

Before buying a food truck or trailer, you should see whether you will be able to get it approved and what you will need to fix before you have it inspected. Typically, the three most expensive problems to fix in food trucks and trailers are the exhaust hoods/ fire suppression systems, the location of LP gas tanks and the location of electrical panels. If you are unfamiliar with these systems, you should look for help from a licensed professional, a reputable food truck company or a food truck association. Other problems that frequently need fixing include improper cooking equipment, water lines, drain lines, gas piping and electrical wiring.

Exhaust hoods installed above the cooking equipment have the same requirements that you would see in a restaurant. They are designed to contain and extinguish cooking fires and can be expensive to install. They are heavy gauge metal, have grease filters, restaurant type exhaust fans on the roof and in most cases a fire suppression system. Hoods that are home built or that have regular wall, ceiling or attic fans, or lack fire suppression cannot be approved. There is no way to fix a substandard hood so that it will pass inspection. If you have to replace the hood, it will need to be either a "listed" (UL710) hood or it will need to be fabricated by a company that specializes in this work and understands all of the code requirements for building it. Fire suppression systems must be installed by certified companies that are approved to do this.

Liquid propane (LP) tanks must be located in one of three places. On trailers, they can be mounted on the front towing hitch, like an RV trailer. The tank must not extend past the side of the hitch where it might be damaged by the towing vehicle during a turn. On trucks or trailers they can also be mounted either under the floor like a motor home or they can be mounted inside a sealed compartment that is within the body of the truck or trailer and accessed from the outside. LP tanks mounted on the rear bumper or wall, on the roof, or exposed to the inside the unit will not pass inspection and need to be moved.

Electrical panels must be installed so that you can stand in front of them without a counter, appliance or other obstruction below them. Panels that are located under counters or sinks or recessed back into cabinets also will not pass inspection and need to be moved.

Other issues can arise in food trucks and concession trailers that can cause problems for owners trying to get them approved. Complete information on L&I food truck requirements can be found on the L&I web site [www.lni.wa.gov](http://www.lni.wa.gov).

Finally, some local jurisdictions have restrictions on how food trucks can be used. You will need to check with the local health department, fire marshal, or others to see about local permit requirements.