California Food Truck Pre-Inspection Checklist

HCD insignia, used-truck buyer checks and the county health inspection — in the order you need them.

The order of approvals
1. DMV registration → 2. **HCD insignia** → 3. County mobile food facility permit.
Source: HCD Information Bulletin 2021-04.

HCD fees (special purpose commercial modular)
New insignia $51 · Inspection $238 first hour, $109 each additional hour, $51 additional half hour · Replacement insignia $83. Confirm before paying.

Part A — Does this unit need an HCD insignia?

- [ ] People work **inside** the unit while it operates (truck *or* towed trailer) → insignia required — Health & Safety Code §18012.5, §114294(c)
- [ ] Operator works **beside** the unit (pushcart, compact mobile food operation) → generally not required; confirm with the county in writing
- [ ] Borderline design (open-sided, walk-up counter, canopy cart) → written answer from county environmental health **before** building or buying

Part B — Verifying or obtaining the insignia

- [ ] Metal HCD plate located on the exterior beside the entry door; marked **SPCM** with a serial number
- [ ] Serial number photographed and written here: _____
- [ ] HCD called on **(800) 952-8356** to confirm the serial number belongs to this unit
- [ ] No alterations since approval (new cooking equipment, generator, moved sink, rewiring, gas work). If altered → contact HCD
- [ ] Plate missing but unit was previously certified → replacement application, form **HCD MH 416** ($83)
- [ ] Never certified, converted or from out of state → inspection application, form **HCD MH 415**, with fees
- [ ] Unit prepared for HCD inspection: panels open, systems connected, appliance data plates visible, drawings and builder paperwork on hand
- [ ] Corrections completed and re-inspection passed; insignia attached

HCD office	Address	Email
Northern Area Office	9342 Tech Center Drive, Suite 550, Sacramento, CA 95826	NAOstaff@hcd.ca.gov
Southern Area Office	3737 Main Street, Suite 400, Riverside, CA 92501	SAOstaff@hcd.ca.gov

Part C — Buying a used truck: before you pay

- [ ] Insignia found, legible, and serial number confirmed with HCD
- [ ] Seller states in writing what has changed since the unit was approved
- [ ] Most recent California county health permit and inspection report seen
- [ ] Out-of-state unit treated as uncertified — another state's approval does not transfer
- [ ] Written quote for corrections obtained from a builder who works to HCD standards
- [ ] Sale contract made conditional: "subject to HCD insignia being issued"
- [ ] No county plan-check fees paid until the insignia is on the unit

Part D — County health inspection (mobile food facility)

Items inspectors check first, with the California Retail Food Code section. Your county's plan-check guide is the final authority.

✓	Item	What the inspector looks for	CalCode
	HCD insignia	Legible plate on any occupied unit	§114294(c)
	Handwashing sink	Dedicated sink at least 9 × 9 × 5 inches, separate from the warewashing sink, easy to reach	§114311
	Warewashing sink	Three compartments with two metal drainboards where unpackaged food is cooked or prepared	§114313
	Wastewater tank	Capacity at least 50% greater than the potable water tank; additional 15% of water supply where water is used in food or beverages	§114240
	Cold and hot holding	Cold food 41°F or below; hot food 135°F or above; thermometer in every unit	§113996
	Commissary	Operates from, and is stored at, an approved commissary or other approved facility	§114295
	Identification	Business name in letters 3 inches or taller; city, state, ZIP 1 inch or taller; customer side — two sides for motorized units	§114299
	Safety equipment	First-aid kit in an enclosed case; charged 10 BC-rated fire extinguisher mounted inside units with cooking or heating equipment	§114323
	Restroom access	Toilet and handwashing within 200 feet travel distance when stopped for more than one hour	§114315

Part E — Paperwork to have on the truck

- [ ] Current county health permit and decal displayed
- [ ] Commissary agreement and recent commissary service records
- [ ] Food safety manager certificate; food handler cards for all staff
- [ ] Written operating procedures: cold and hot holding, handwashing, cleaning and sanitizing, waste
- [ ] Temperature logs for the last 30 days (refrigeration, hot holding, cooking)
- [ ] Sanitizer test strips and a log of sanitizer checks
- [ ] Probe thermometer, calibrated, with calibration record

Need the written procedures and logs? AuditBinder generates the food safety binder county inspectors ask for — procedures, temperature and sanitizer logs, and checklists for mobile units. One-time purchase, no subscription: **audit-binder.com/food-truck-haccp-binder**

For information only; not legal advice. Fees, forms and procedures change — confirm with HCD and your county environmental health department before you buy, build or pay. Sources: HCD Information Bulletin 2021-04 (MH); HCD insignia fee schedule (checked November 2026); California Health and Safety Code sections cited. © 2026 AuditBinder.