

SHOPPING FOR A HOT DOG CART?
CHOOSE THE BEST

We have a cart to suit everyone.

101

HOT DOG CART



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Getting a Business License

There are three types of licenses that your local city hall may require that you have:

1. [Business](#) License.
2. Location Permit.
3. Special Events Permit.

Business Licenses are usually procured at city hall. The cost usually varies from about \$60.00 to as much as \$300.00 per year depending on the city. Often cities have [information about](#) business licenses posted on the city web site. You may even be able to obtain and pay for your license online.



They should, at the same time, give you details about the Do's and Don'ts, where you can and cannot locate your hotdog cart, and information on any other local by-laws that apply to the hot dog vending business. This is a good time to ask any questions about the retail [food](#) business

as it applies to your area.

Check at the same time to see if you will also require a Location License for your [hot dog cart](#). For instance, if you want to have one location for mid week business, Monday to Friday, and another location for working on the weekend, you may be required to have separate location permits for these.

One final license that you should inquire about is a Special Events Permit. If you want to take advantage of any special tourist events, sports events, etc, you may be required to also have a separate permit for those occasions in addition to your normal location permit.

Sample Business Plan

Executive Summary

I plan to start up a hot dog cart vending [business](#) in the downtown Hungryville business complex serving the lunch hour business crowd 10:00am to 2:00pm weekdays Monday to Friday.

This area is currently under serviced with long line ups observed at the 3 existing vendor carts and 4 sit down or take out restaurants. Many of the area workers have to walk a long distance or even drive to get to these existing venues. I have determined that a fourth vendor cart strategically located at the ABC Business Complex would be highly successful. This business complex alone has a weekday population of 5000 personnel not including visitors.

The American hotdog council estimates that Americans consume 20 Billion hot dogs per year. They are enjoyed by 95% of U.S. households. That works out to be 70 hotdogs per person per year. Approximately 15% of these are purchased at American style hotdog vendor carts. Based on these figures and a retail price of \$5.00 per serving including side order and beverage, the annual sales potential in the Hungryville business complex area is \$ 262,500.

The business will be registered under the name "Bob's Dogs Vending Co.". It is a sole proprietorship.

To start up the business I require a 2 year [loan](#) of \$10,000.00 in addition to my own investment of \$5000.00 to cover the purchase cost of the vendor cart and start up supplies. Please refer to my attached Start Up Cost Estimate sheet. I plan to start the business June 1st.

Marketing Plan

Estimated gross annual sales are \$ 175,000.00 based on estimated sales of 200 average vendor servings per day. This sales level is realistically achieved by daily serving only 4% of the personnel in the business complex alone.

The product line will consist of standard size quality sausage dogs, jumbo size dogs, related condiments, side order items including cole slaw and potato chips, as well as canned soft drinks and bottled water. Please see the attached Menu sheet.

Prices have been set by researching prices charged by other area vendor carts. The profit margin achieved is 66%. Please see the attached item cost versus retail price comparison sheet.

To achieve success and market capture, a professional quality focused business approach is to be maintained. This will ensure customer satisfaction and repeat business. Please see the attached policy sheets titled “Vendor Cart Dress Code” and “Employee Rules of Conduct”. These will be company policy and strictly adhered to. Competitors are 3 existing vendor carts and 4 sit down or take out restaurants, all at a considerable walking distance from the ABC Business Complex.



Operational Plan

The cart will be stored and serviced at the owner’s residence at 21 Green Park Drive, Pleasant view, OH. It will be moved into location daily ready for business at 10:00am . Perishable [food](#) supplies will be stored or purchased from John’s Deli at 123 River’s Edge in Hungryville and loaded into the cart each morning. This arrangement will also facilitate meeting all health dept. regulations.

See the attached copy of the storage and supply agreement between John’s Deli and Bob’s Dogs Vending Co. The vendor cart meets all health dept. codes and

regulations and will be properly licensed and inspected. It will be maintained according to the manufacturers Vendor Cart Operations and Maintenance Guide as well as all county health department guidelines. A business license and location licence have been acquired from the city. A rental agreement has been reached with the ABC Office Complex management.

Food supplies and other necessary supplies have been sourced from local reputable and reliable suppliers. Please see the attached “Supplies List” and “Vendor Cart Reorder Form” for details.

Financial Plan

Monthly estimated sales are	\$14700.00
Monthly sales profit margin after food purchase costs	\$ 9786.00

Less the following costs (estimated monthly)	
Estimated product spoilage	\$ 586.00
Commissary rental	\$ 400.00
Vendor Cart Rental	\$ 400.00
Business/ Health licenses	\$ 100.00
Business insurance	\$ 100.00
Business training	\$ 100.00
Other Business costs (tel, bank)	\$ 50.00
Cleaning supplies	\$ 100.00
Clothing allowance	\$ 100.00
Equipment repairs allowance	\$ 200.00
Business loan repayment	\$ 600.00
TOTAL monthly expenses	\$ 2736.00
Monthly Net Profit	\$ 7050.00

2) Start Up Expenses Worksheet

1	Business License Fee - 1 year	\$100.00
2	Vendor Cart Location License Fee - 1 year	\$100.00
3	Health Department Cart Inspection Fee	\$25.00
4	Health Department Food Handler Training Course Cost	\$50.00
5	Hot Dog Cart Purchase Cost - New Yorker + Options	\$3500.00
6	Initial Food Inventory Purchase Cost - 1 month	\$300.00
7	Initial Cost of Other Cart Supplies	\$50.00
8	Commissary Storage Fee - 1 month	\$0 to \$50.00
9	Vendor Cart Location Rental Fee - 1 month	\$0 to \$300.00
10	Business Supplies	\$10.00
11	Business Insurance - 6 months	\$400.00
12	Other Business Costs (Telephone, Bank)	\$100.00
	Total Start Up Costs	\$4435.00 to \$4785.00

3) Sample Commissary Agreement

Letter of Agreement between Commissary and Hot Dog Cart Vendor

Date: _____

This is a letter of agreement between John Delicious, owner of John's Deli, and Robert Dogleash, owner of Bob's Dogs Vending Co., to lease the use of the refrigerated storage area of John's Deli.

John's Deli agrees to set aside room for the estimated 3 day supply of meat for Bob's Dogs and to allow these supplies to be delivered here. John's Deli will also supply daily to Bob's Dogs the estimated daily supply of grated cheese, chopped onions, chili, and cole slaw at the agreed upon prices and amounts as shown below.

Grated cheese 5 lbs / day \$2.50/lb

Chopped Onions 5 lbs / day \$ 2.50/lb

Chili 5 lbs / day \$ 2.50/lb

Cole Slaw 10 lbs / day \$ 2.50/lb

The lease amount will be \$500.00 monthly paid at the beginning of each month. The food items supplied will billed weekly and payable upon receipt of invoice.

The lease will be in effect for one year from the above date and begin when the first supplies are received on site at John's Deli. The lease may be terminated at any time due to

non-payment, non-compliance, or with 30 days notice from either party.

Signed and Agreed by:

John Delicious, John's Deli

Robert Dogleash, Bob's Dogs Vending Co.

Order Form

Last Name _____

First Name _____ M.I. _____

Address _____ Apt./Unit _____

City _____ Province _____ Postal Code _____

Phone (____) _____ E-Mail _____

Method of payment ☐ ☐ ☐

Cheque VISA MasterCard

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Name as it appears on card _____


Signature

Item No.	Price	Qty	Amount
		.	
Subtotal			
PST			
GST			
Shipping			
Total			

3) Sample Commissary Agreement

Letter of Agreement between Commissary and Hot Dog Cart Vendor

Date: _____

This is a letter of agreement between John Delicious, owner of John's Deli, and Robert Dogleash, owner of Bob's Dogs Vending Co., to [lease](#) the use of the refrigerated [storage](#)  area of John's Deli.


John's Deli agrees to set aside room for the estimated 3 day supply of meat for Bob's Dogs and to allow these supplies to be delivered here. John's Deli will also supply daily to Bob's Dogs the estimated daily supply of grated cheese, chopped onions, chili, and cole slaw at the agreed upon prices and amounts as shown below.

Grated cheese 5 lbs / day \$2.50/lb

Chopped Onions 5 lbs / day \$ 2.50/lb

Chili 5 lbs / day \$ 2.50/lb

Cole Slaw 10 lbs / day \$ 2.50/lb

The lease amount will be \$500.00 monthly [paid](#)  at the beginning of each month. The [food](#) items supplied will be billed weekly and payable upon receipt of [invoice](#).

The lease will be in effect for one year from the above date and begin when the first supplies are received on site at John's Deli.

The lease may be terminated at any time due to non-payment, non-compliance, or with 30 days notice from either party.

Signed and Agreed by:

John Delicious, John's Deli

Robert Dogleash, Bob's Dogs Vending Co.



4) Sample Rental Agreement

Rental Agreement between Land Owner and Hot Dog Cart Vendor

Date: _____

ABC Business Complex, 6789 Commerce Way, Hungrytown, OH, 5778, (123) 456-0987

This is a letter of agreement between Don Intime, property manager of the ABC Business Complex, and Robert Dogleash, owner of Bob's Dogs Vending Co., to rent on a monthly basis 2 adjacent parking spaces in the north end parking lot for the purpose of operating a hotdog vending cart during business hours Monday to Friday each week. ABC Business Complex will also allow Bob's Dogs access to an outdoor electrical supply outlet to furnish 120 volt power to the vendor cart using an approved outdoor extension cord.

The lease amount will be \$750.00 monthly paid at the beginning of each month.

The lease will be in effect for one year from the above date and begin when Bob's Dogs first commences business pending delivery of the vendor cart from the manufacturer. The lease may be terminated at any time due to non-payment, non-compliance, violation of local safety codes, or with 30 days notice from either party.

Signed and Agreed by:

Don Intime, Property Manager, ABC Business Complex

Robert Dogleash, Owner, Bob's Dogs Vending Co.

5) Negotiating for a Location

How to Negotiate for a Location with a Landlord:

See It From His Point of View:

Keep in mind that the small amount of rent that you will generate is not likely to be the Landlord's greatest concern or motivation. His primary concern is his own primary line of [business](#). If he is a property manager overseeing a plaza or a business complex, he will be concerned about how your business will affect his other tenants. If he is a large store owner, he will be concerned about how your business reflects on his store's reputation and affects his customer traffic.



In fact, don't even bring up the matter of rent. If the subject of money is to be raised, let him be the one to bring it up.

Motivate the Landlord:

- First highlight the benefits that your hot dog cart will bring to his establishment:
- Your WillyDog cart will draw more business to his business.
- Your WillyDog cart will not take away from existing business but will enhance it by adding variety.
- Your WillyDog cart will improve employee and customer morale.
- Your WillyDog cart will keep his employees from leaving the area for lunch and taking long breaks.
- Your WillyDog cart is attractive and can be used in promotional ads.

Impress the Landlord:

Also emphasize how you intend to operate your hot dog cart in a manner that will enhance his business environment. Mention the following:

- You will operate your WillyDog cart in a professional and safe manner (meeting all [health](#) guidelines, snappy uniform, area clean-up, etc.).
- You will create a positive atmosphere that will be good for his business as well.
- You can be flexible and reasonable to [deal](#)  with.
- Show the Landlord your [Business License](#)  and Health Dept Permit as these will establish your credentials as a professional food service.
- Show the Landlord your employee rules of conduct policy and vendor cart dress and deportment policy as these will allay his fears and build his confidence in you as a reputable vendor.
- Show the Landlord a picture of the WillyDog cart you intend to use as well as its specifications and features.

Sell Yourself as a Professional Business Person:

Negotiate in person. Look professional. Dress the part. First impressions really count the most.

- Men should be clean shaven. Dress in business [clothes](#) and wear a tie.
- Women likewise should dress as business person not in casual or revealing clothes.
- Show him your employee standards of conduct handbook.
- Rehearse your presentation so you can handle any objections professionally.

Other points to keep in mind:

Know exactly what you want and need from him to be successful – the location and amount of space you will use, AC power, hours of operation, etc.

Have a copy of the rental agreement for him to sign.

Monthly rent should not exceed two days gross sales.

Rent for special events should not exceed 15% of gross sales.

Do not allow the Landlord to dictate your working hours.

6) Day to Day Bookkeeping

Bookkeeping That Works.

Cook the Food – Not the Books

A simple, straight forward bookkeeping system is important to you and your business. It is the foundation of a successful business.

Good bookkeeping will enable you to analyze your business on an ongoing basis.

Good bookkeeping will also save 🟢 you much time and minimize frustration.

Keeping It Simple (KISS me quick)

A key rule of thumb is the KISS principle (Keeping It Simple is Smart). Many people think that bookkeeping and financial statements are highly complicated activities reserved for the realm of accountants only. For a small business 🟢, this simply is not the case. The only skills required are to be able to count, record, add and subtract. Some simple forms for inventory control and profit / loss statements make this even easier.


One method used in keeping the accounting simple and easy is to pay CASH 🟢 up front for all your supplies. This has a few important advantages:

1. You should get better prices for paying up front compared to paying on account in 30 days.
2. You are able to quickly determine the success 🟢 of your recent activities.


3. There will be no surprises at the end of the month when the bills come in.
4. Your accounting will be kept to a few minutes each day rather than a time consuming burden at the end of the month.


Keep Accurate Records Daily (KARD me)

CASH does not mean that you don't get receipts or are involved in shady activities such as dodging taxes. It is simply a tool to keep accounting simple and to get the best prices for supplies.

You will need to keep all your receipts in order  to keep accurate records both for your own information and to show government agencies at tax time. Without accurate records, you will find it difficult to take advantage of all the business deductions and credits to which you are entitled.

Never rely on your memory. Put it in writing.

Keeping your records simple and up to date will also save  you money when you actually do need an accountant at tax time.

Keep receipts of all business related expenses including day to day supplies, equipment purchases, employee pay, office supplies, business loan  interest, and vehicle mileage or fuel (spent driving to work, suppliers, business meetings, etc). These various expenses are all deductions at tax time and they will really add up over the year.

Keep business expense items on separate bills from other personal expense items i.e. business food supplies versus personal groceries. Mark on the receipt what the items were for i.e. a special event or weekly supplies. You may have to write in what the items actually are as many stores use acronyms in their descriptions that military pilots would find mind numbing. This will prevent much confusion.

Keep your records in a safe place such as a filing cabinet or banker's box. Keep separate labeled file folders for the different types of business expenses such as consumable food supplies, equipment purchases, uniform expenses, advertising and promotion, [loan](#) interest payments, employee pay, office supplies, vehicle expenses, rent payments, licensing and training, etc. The different expenses have different rates of deduction or different [places to go](#) on the tax form. Keeping them separate will save a ton of time and money at year end tax time.

Make up new record folders for each new year.

7a) Sample Inventory Form

Vendor Cart Inventory Form

#	✓	Product Item	Supplier	Qty	\$ea.	\$Total
1		Reg. Hot Dogs	John's Deli			
2		Jumbo Dogs	John's Deli			
3		Reg. Buns	Tina's Bakery			
4		Jumbo Buns	Tina's Bakery			
5		Chip Bags 60g	Costco			
6		Cole Slaw	John's Deli			
7		Chopped Onions	John's Deli			
8		Sauer Kraut 4L	Costco			
9		Grated Cheese	John's Deli			
10		Reg. Mustard 4L	Costco			
11		Hot Mustard 4L	Costco			

12		Ketchup 4L	Costco			
13		Relish	Costco			
14		Mayonnaise 4L	Costco			
15		Red Onion S. 1L	Costco			
16		Soda	Costco			
17		Bottled Water	Costco			
18		Fruit Juice	Costco			
19		Forks	Costco			
20		Napkins	Costco			
21		Foil Bags	Restaurant Supply			
22		Take Away Bags	Costco			

7b) Sample Statement Form

Profit / Loss Statement

Date: _____

Location: _____

Items	Purchases & Expenses	Remaining Qty or Income
	A	B
Sausages		
Hot Dogs		
Buns - Regular		
Buns - Special		
Pop		
Water		
Juice		
Condiments		
Chips		
Commissary		
Propane		
Wages		
Cash  On Hand		
Location Rent		
Other Supplies		
Other Supplies		
Other Expenses		
Other Expenses		
Sub-Totals	\$	\$

Net Profit = (Total of B) – (Total of A) = \$

Completed By: _____

Comments:

7c) Sample Day End Inventory Summary

Inventory Count

Date: _____

Item	Start	End	Sold	Waste
Sausages				
Hot Dogs				
Buns - Reg				
Buns – Spl				
Pop				
Water				
Juice				
Chips				

Completed By: _____

Comments:

c) Getting Health Dept. Approvals

Check with your Local Health Dept.

They will tell you about local codes to which you and your new cart must conform. Obtain a printed copy of these health codes for future reference.


Take with you the schematics and details of your hot dog cart (print these off from our site). They may want to know the technical specifications such as materials of construction, equipment installed, water capacity, and other features to compare with their codes and regulations.

Be professional, friendly, polite and patient. Take notes. Ask questions if you do not fully understand any points. It is easier and less costly to ask questions first than to pay fines later.


Many hot dog vendors step around local health codes by making a deal 🍀 with a nearby commissary. A commissary is a restaurant or deli that will provide you with food preparation and storage services. By getting them to set aside some storage area for your food and prepare some of the condiments, you avoid the hassle and worry of having to meet many difficult regulations! In some areas the local laws require that a hot dog cart operator must work from a commissary.

See the section of this site [Health Department Links](#) for a list of helpful links to various Health Department [web sites](#) 🍀 in the U.S. and Canada. These often have good detailed information for food service businesses. We have included clues and directions to get you to the places you need to go.

You can also go to your local city web site and your county health department web site and search for information. Look for headings or search for info using the terms food handling, food protection, food manager certification, food service certification, mobile vendor, hot dog vendor, permits, and licenses.

Often these local city governments offer short training courses on starting a small business  in their city and food handling certification courses. These courses usually take between 6 and 15 hours and generally cost between \$100 and \$400. Often city business permits can be procured on-line. A food handling course varies in length from 1-3 days.

See the section Health Guidelines for a plain language comprehensive guidebook on how to run a hotdog cart within the parameters required by most health departments in North America.

Customers  in California must now conform to the new California Retail Food Code which came into effect in July of 2007. The new Cal Code is the most comprehensive set of health department legislation affecting mobile food vendors in the United States. To help our customers accomodate these new regulations, we have set up a special web site to deal exclusively with hot dog carts in California. Please see our new site California Hot Dog Carts .

1) Health Dept. Links


Health Department Help Page

Links to some handy web sights useful in starting up an American or Canadian [hot dog cart](#) business.

U.S. [Food](#) Health Links:

The United States is a world leader in the science of Food Safety and has a huge infrastructure in place to govern this area. As a result some of these sites are enormous. It's like trying to drink from a fire hydrant. So we have included clues and directions on how to get to some of the pertinent information for an American hotdog cart operator.

www.healthguideusa.org/local_health_departments.htm

Links to County [Web Sites](#) : This site is a huge index of all the county health departments in every state in the USA. Click on the above master link. Then click on your State and then your County. This will take you to your local county health department web site. Look for internal links with headings such as Food Safety, Environmental Safety, Mobile Food Units, Regulations and Licensing, or go to the Search Box and search terms such as hot dog carts, mobile food stands, temporary food stands, food vending, or itinerant food vending.


www.fda.gov

It's a big site! Go the the A-Z index. Then to the "S" in the Index. It provides a list of links to all the various State health departments.

www.foodsafety.gov

Another big site. Lots of info. Click on the button for "Federal and State Gov't Agencies". Then go down to the heading entitled "State and Local Gov't Agencies". If your state isn't listed click on the first subheading "Overall Listing of State, County and territory Listings". There you will find a comprehensive contact list.

www.fsis.usda.gov

Excellent information on safe food handling, meat storage  guidelines, and background info on the meat products you will be selling. Just type "hot dog" in the search box in the upper left corner of the home page.

www.profoodsafety.org

Information for foodservice professionals in 14 languages!

www.idph.state.il.us/about/fdd/fddintro.htm

This Illinois Health Department site has some excellent info on food safety and printable charts on food temperature requirements.

www.lapublichealth.org

Click on "Food Safety". Many other useful links for American hotdog cart vendors in California and especially the Los Angeles area.

For Canadian Hot Dog Stand Operators:

www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Canadian Federal Government Health site (Health Canada). In English or French.

Go to the A-Z index to “F”. Click on “Food Safety”, then click on “Safe Food Handling”.

www.inspection.gc.ca

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) site. In English or French.

To find your local food health authority anywhere in Canada follow these instructions: Click on “Food”, then “Retail Food”, then “Information for Restaurateurs and Food Service Operators”, then “Local Inspection Authority”.

Also go to A-Z Index, Then click on “Food”, then go to “F” for “Food Safety Tips”. Good info at “Barbecuing”.

www.regional.niagara.on.ca

This site has some really good plain language tips for a hot dog cart operator. Click on “Living”. Click on “Public Health” on the drop down menu. Then click on the “A-Z Index”. Scroll down to the heading “Hot Dog Cart Requirements”. Good info!


www.toronto.ca

Click on “Health” under the heading Living in Toronto. Click on the A-Z Index. Scroll down to the heading “Hot Dog Carts – Requirements for”. Excellent information in a practical easy to read format!

2) Health Guidelines

Serving Food:

Check with your local County Health Department for your specific local codes concerning mobile [food](#) vendor carts pertaining to your area as they do vary somewhat from place to place. For instance, some Health Departments will not allow hot dog carts to serve dairy based condiments such as mayonnaise, grated cheese or even squeeze bottle cheese. In other areas of the country, these condiments are allowed.

The following guidelines, however, are generally universal in nature and are designed to keep you, [your cart](#) , and your food safe and appealing. Keep in mind that as a hot dog vendor you are considered to be a food handler by the [Health](#) Department officials and, therefore, you must operate under strict health guidelines.

Poor personnel hygiene, especially lack of or improper hand washing, is the number one cause of food borne disease outbreaks in the United States. It is also a very easily preventable cause of disease transmission. In this case the old axiom “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” is very true. One such incident of disease transmission could seriously harm many [people](#) and ruin your business. Follow the guidelines!

Meet the Meat Guidelines:

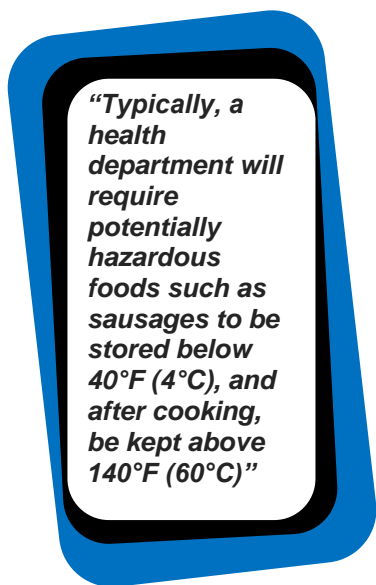
Meat is considered by health officials to be a potentially hazardous food. This is because if it is stored at an improper temperature it can support the rapid growth of bacteria which would then harm any human consumers even after it has been cooked. Therefore, hot dog

vendors must take great care in storing, handling and cooking their meat.

Many Health Departments will only allow hot dog vendors to serve pre-cooked meat products in the form of wieners or sausages that are to be re-heated to a specific temperature by steaming, barbequeing and/or grilling on the cart. The Health Department may not allow what are considered to be hazardous foods such as raw meats to be cooked on a mobile food cart. These hazardous foods include raw hamburger, ground beef, chicken, pork or steak.

Cooked meat must then be held above the temperatures specified by the Health Department. This required holding temperature also varies from place to place. This also requires the hotdog vendor cart

to have a thermometer on hand to monitor the holding temperature.



Refrigerated meats must be stored below a specified cold storage temperature. This will require you to have another thermometer to monitor the temperature in your ice box or refrigerator. This cold storage temperature is usually about 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

. The temperature zone between the cold storage temperature and the hot holding temperature is called the Danger Zone.

Perishable foods such as meats should not be stored in this Temperature Danger Zone for more than 4 hours as this will result in rapid bacterial growth and food spoilage. Any meat that has been in the Temperature Danger Zone for over 4 hours must be discarded. Do not serve it!

Health Departments will require that you heat certain foods to certain temperatures before allowing you to serve them to people.

Pre-cooked hotdogs must be re-heated to 165°F before serving. To accurately determine this temperature insert the thermometer lengthwise into the center of the hotdog. Be sure not to pass through the meat and touch the cooking surface as this will give you a false high temperature reading.

Previously uncooked meats must be cooked to the following temperatures according to the New York State Department of Health:

- Chicken 165°F
- Hamburger 160°F
- Pork 150°F

Take great care to avoid cross contamination between meats and other food items. Always thoroughly wash and sanitize food preparation surfaces, equipment and utensils between uses. Be especially careful when handling raw, fresh or frozen meats. The area used for preparing meats must be washed and [sanitized](#) before being used to prepare any other food items!

Do not place cooked meat back on the plate or surface used to prepare or transport the raw, fresh or frozen meat.

Do not use the same utensils to handle cooked and raw, fresh or frozen meat.

Raw, fresh and frozen meats must be stored below and separate from any other food items to prevent them from contaminating the other items (such as by dripping on them).

Following these rules keeps the product fresh and prevents the growth of bacteria.

Considering Condiments:

Many Health Departments will not allow hot dog vendors to serve dairy based condiment products in the form of mayonnaise, grated cheese or even squeeze bottle cheese on the cart.

Some Health Departments will only allow hot dog carts to serve condiments that do not require refrigeration after opening.

Condiments must be kept in clean, washable containers and must be kept covered to prevent insects, dust, leaf litter, or rain to enter. Jars with screw lids may not be acceptable as they do not automatically close after each use. Often hot dog cart operators use condiment containers with hinged lids that automatically spring closed.

Otherwise condiments may be served in small single service plastic packages. Squeeze bottles should be thoroughly emptied and cleaned at the end of each day or shift and fresh product added at the beginning of each new day or shift.

If refrigerated condiments are allowed, keep them below the specified temperature. This will require a thermometer to monitor the temperature.

Handling Food:

Do not work with food when you are sick, sneezing, have a runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, dark urine or yellowing of the skin (jaundice) or fever. Do not handle food if you have an infected cut or burn, pus or boil. Wear gloves over any cuts, abrasions, or burns.

Do not touch the food with your bare hands. All food should be handled using gloves, tongs, forks, spoons or other utensils. Keep a clean supply of spare utensils in a clean covered container.

Remember, if it hits the ground, it is dirty – there is no 10 second rule here!

Clean your utensils at days end and store them in a clean washable covered container. Do not mix clean and used utensils together.

Provide proper food wrappers for your customers so they do not have direct hand to food contact.

The local Health Department may require you to have a sink or even as many as 3 sinks for washing utensils. (One for washing, one for rinsing and one for sanitizing in chlorine bleach)

The local Health Department may require you to have another sink devoted solely to hand washing.

Have hand soap, hand sanitizer and paper towels on hand at all times.

Hands must be washed after using the toilet, coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, handling money, garbage or any other unsanitary or toxic item. Hands must be washed immediately when you enter your work area (the hot dog cart) even if you have just washed them in another area such as the bathroom.

Hands must be washed using hot water and soap and lather for 15-20 seconds and then dried using a single use towel (such as paper towels), a clean towel on a roller dispenser, or by an air dryer. Do not use a multi-use hand towels such as are used at home.

You must also wash your hands after eating, drinking, smoking, washing dirty dishes or other equipment, handling raw meat or other food, or even before putting on gloves to handle food.

The use of gloves should not be seen as a means to short cut proper hand sanitation. Gloves can also pick up and spread germs. You would not use gloves to handle raw meat and then also to serve

cooked food as this would transmit bacteria from the raw food to the cooked food.

Keep your finger nails clean and trimmed short. Do not wear finger rings as these can trap and carry food particles and bacteria and transfer them to clean food. Rings can also cut through gloves.

Headgear such as a hat or hairnet must be worn to contain hair and prevent it from contaminating the food. No-one likes to find a hair in their hot dog. It could cost you customers or your hard earned reputation as a quality vendor.

Keep your clothing clean and neat.

Smoking is prohibited when handling food! Do not smoke, chew tobacco, eat or drink when serving food. You must leave the food preparation and serving area for any of these activities. Move a short distance away from your cart to eat, drink or smoke. You must wash your hands when you return.

You are, however, allowed to drink from a closed beverage container (such as closed with a lid) while in the food service area. It must have a handle to prevent your hand from touching the area that your mouth will touch or it must have a drinking straw. Wash it between uses or discard it after use.

Do not store food on the ground or the floor. This would subject it to contamination from dirt, insects, water, and spills.

Do not store cleaning chemicals alongside food or utensils. They must be completely separate. Keep all such chemicals clearly labeled.

Take great care to avoid cross contamination between foods and other items. Always thoroughly wash and sanitize food preparation surfaces, equipment and utensils between uses. Be especially

careful when handling raw meats. The area used for preparing raw meats must be washed and sanitized before being used to prepare any other food items! Remember that raw meats are considered hazardous foods by many Health Departments and you may not be allowed to serve them from a hot dog cart.

Raw meats must be stored below and separate from any other food items to prevent them from contaminating the other items such as by dripping on them.

Many Health Departments require a roof, canopy or umbrella to be installed over a cart to protect the food service area from rain, falling leaves, and bird droppings.

Have a garbage container on hand at all times. Do not allow it to over-flow. Dispose of garbage as required. Clean the container at the end of each day to prevent odor.


Keep your food preparation and serving areas clean. Clean up spilled condiments and wrappers.

Hot Dog Cart Healthy Daily Operations:

Keep an operations binder on hand in your cart 📁 that includes: your business and location license, your health permit, a copy of the local health codes, a copy of your location rental agreement (if applicable) or vendor permit (if serving at a special event), and the operations manual. Keep these papers in plastic protective sheet covers so that they stay clean and readable. Always have on hand the operations and maintenance manuals for any of the other equipment you are using on the cart.

Always keep your product within the temperatures specified by the local Health Department. This will require thermometers on hand to monitor temperatures. Following these rules keeps the product fresh and prevents the growth of bacteria. Typically a health department

will require hot foods such as sausages to be kept above 140°F (60°C) and cold perishable items below 40°F (4°C). Precooked foods such as hotdogs must be first re-heated to 165 degrees F and then held above 140 degrees F until served.

Wash the cart every day before and after use. First wash the cart with hot soapy water to remove any dirt or spilled food. Then use a sanitizing solution to kill any bacteria. A sanitizing solution may be made by adding 1 teaspoon (5mL) of chlorine bleach to 1 quart (1L) of water. You'll need heavy cleaning gloves for this to save  your hands and skin.

Use this same procedure for cleaning all surfaces used to store, prepare, cook or serve food, and all utensils and containers including sinks, faucets, and even the garbage cans (to prevent undesirable odor)



Fill the fresh water tanks with all new fresh potable water each day. Do not keep water from one day to the next.

Empty waste water tanks at the end of each day or shift. These also need to be washed to prevent odor.

Some local Health Departments will require the cart to be cleaned and loaded only at the commissary. The water tanks should only be dumped into an approved sewage drain, never onto the street or gutter.

d) Searching for a Location

The Ideal Location:

- is highly visible.
- has lots of pedestrian traffic.
- has no other competition.
- is easily accessible for your cart .
- is easily accessible for your customers .
- is close to a large hungry population.

Click here  for a list of potential [Hot Dog Cart Location Ideas](#) .




Do not be shy when asking for permission to locate your cart. Many businesses will appreciate a high quality, reliable [food](#) vendor. Some recognize that it keeps their employees close to work at lunch time (therefore shorter lunch breaks and more productivity). Others will realize that you may actually help attract customers to their business! Be sure to mention these points to local businesses.

A good location may require you to pay rent to the land owner. Be sure to highlight the above advantages to him if he is also a large business operator such as a plaza owner, factory, or retail outlet. Click here for a [Sample Rental Agreement](#) that you can use. Include that exclusivity clause if you can!


Click here for more ideas from Will on [How to Select a Location](#) .

1) Location Ideas

Permanent Locations (Regular Scheduled Locations):

- Large Lumber / Hardware / Home Renovation  Stores (Home Depot, Home Hardware)
- Large Automotive Chain Stores
- Large Grocery Stores
- Big Box Stores (Costco )
- Large Grocery Stores
- Strip Malls / Plazas / Shopping Centers
- Industrial Parks
- Business Parks
- Large Factories
- Office Complexes
- Large Office Buildings
- Government Complexes
- Court Houses
- Hospitals
- Call Centers 
- Colleges, Universities, High Schools
- Military Bases
- Golf Courses
- Busy Downtown Streets
- Parks
- Beaches
- Parking Lots
- Transportation Hubs – Airports, Train and Bus Stations, Marinas, Freeway Off Ramps, Service Stations, Truck Stops, Car Washes
- Amusement Parks, Zoos
- Waste Disposal Sites

Special Events and Temporary Locations:

- Sporting Events – baseball, soccer, hockey, football, bmx races, little league, big league
- Sales Events / Grand Openings (especially large [car lots](#), furniture and [electronics](#) outlets)
- Large Construction Sites
- Charity Events
- School / Church / Club functions
- Business anniversaries, open houses, golf tournaments, company picnics
- Boat shows
- Air Shows and Fly Ins
- Car Shows
- Car Rallies
- Conventions
- [Music](#) Festivals
- Carnivals
- County Fairs
- Antique Shows
- Farm Shows
- Craft Shows
- Cultural Events
- Theatres
- Flea [Markets](#) , Swap Meets
- Home Shows
- Industrial Shows
- Parades
- Auctions
- Estate Sales
- Fishing Derbies
- Tourist Attractions
- Seasonal Areas:
- Beaches / Piers
- Marinas
- Zoos
- Parks

Catering:

- Birthday Parties.
- Anniversaries.
- Company banquets, tournaments.

Notes:

Keep in mind that you will need large pedestrian traffic to make it worth your while.

Be careful with special events that you meet the specific needs of that group of people in attendance at that event.

Keep an event log – record attendance (if known) and items sold. This will be valuable for planning for future events such as next year.

2) How to Select a Location

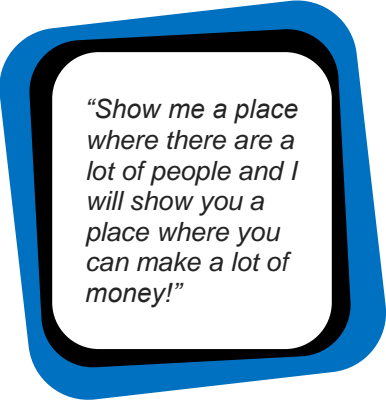
Make sure you put your Willy Dog business where the business is.

The 4 ingredients of a profitable Willy Dog site are:


1. High Visibility
2. Heavy Foot Traffic (or Drive-By)
3. Favorable Competitive Situation
4. Easy Customer Access

It often appears that some of the best spots are already taken by existing vendors or that they may be prohibited because of local by-laws or government regulations. Use a bit of imagination and you will find an endless quantity of excellent locations.

Most people think that the best [hot dog cart](#) locations are street corners. In reality, many of the best locations are on private property not public property locations.




"Show me a place where there are a lot of people and I will show you a place where you can make a lot of money!"

In the case of private property locations, it is usually a simple matter of confirming that the city's zoning rules allow for it and then just approaching the owner, general manager, or property manager to ask for permission to set up [shop](#) . You may have to

negotiate a monthly [rent amount](#) if they ask for it. It is often best to have a fixed amount of rent as opposed to a percentage of your total sales..

You may choose a location [for a single](#) event, a weekend, a season, or as a permanent location.

Generally, private property locations offer  the most flexibility, the least headaches, the best value, as well as being virtually unlimited in terms of long and short term versatility.

e) Searching for Suppliers


You'll need good local suppliers for your regular consumable supplies such as condiments, soft drinks, chips, napkins, etc. Check around at local [restaurant supply](#) companies, wholesale outlets and [big box stores](#), and commercial supply companies.


[Click here](#) for a comprehensive [List of Hot Dog Cart Supplies](#) . This lists all the things you will be using on a day to day basis in addition to the hot dogs and buns.

Click here for a list of typical [Food Suppliers](#) for links to many companies that [sell](#) the items needed on a [Hot Dog Cart](#).

Click here for sample of a handy [Sample Inventory Reorder Form](#) . Use it to keep track of your supplies and reorder them as required. Lists like these ensure you never forget something critical that will waste time or cost you money and business.

1) Sample Inventory Reorder Form

#	Ord'd	Product Item	Supplier	Qty	\$ea.	\$Total
1		Regular Hot Dogs	John's Deli			
2		Jumbo Dogs	John's Deli			
3		Regular Buns	Tina's Bakery			
4		Jumbo Buns	Tina's Bakery			
5		Regular Chips 60g	<u>Costco</u> 			
6		Nacho Chips 60g	Costco			
7		Cole Slaw	John's Deli			
8		Dill Pickles	Costco			
9		Chopped Onions	John's Deli			
10		Sauer Kraut 4L	Costco			
11		Grated Cheese	John's Deli			

12		Reg. Mustard 4L	<u>Costco</u> 			
13		Hot Mustard 4L	Costco			
14		Ketchup 4L	Costco			
15		Relish	Costco			
16		Mayonnaise 4L	Costco			
17		Red Onion Sauce 1L	Costco			
18		Soda - Coke	Costco			
18		Soda - Sprite	Costco			
19		Bottled Water	Costco			
20		Snapple	Costco			
21		Forks	Costco			
22		Napkins	Costco			
23		Foil Bags	Restaurant Supply			

24		Take Away Bags	Costco			
25		Hand Soap	Costco			
26		Bleach	Costco			

2) Supplies List

Condiments

- Relish*
- Ketchup*
- Chopped Onions¹
- Red Onion Sauce*
- Mayonaise*
- Hot Peppers*
- Mustard*
- Hot Mustard*
- Sauer Kraut*
- Chili
- Grated Cheese
- Any other locally popular condiment

Side Order Items

- Cole Slaw¹
- Pickles*
- Bags of Chips or Nachos*

Soft Drinks

- Soda
- Bottled Water
- Juice*

Other Supplies

- Take Out Bags*
- Napkins*
- Cutlery (if required)*
- Cleaning Supplies²
- Propane³

Possible Sources of Supply:

* Big Box Store / Wholesale Outlet

¹ Deli or Restaurant


² Restaurant Supply  Company

³ Auto Service Station

3) Food Suppliers

Hot Dog Cart Food Product Suppliers

Buns:

Often the best idea is to source these from a local bakery or [discount](#)  grocery chain. Otherwise you can order your buns from a national wholesale supplier. Here's a list:


Rosen's Buns

www.alphabaking.com

Wonder Bread

www.wonderbread.com

Weiners:

The following list is a selection in alphabetical [order](#)  of various American [hot dog cart](#) meat suppliers in the U.S. [Just click](#) on the links provided and find a distributor or warehouse nearest you.

Bar-S

www.bar-s.com

Dietz & Watson

www.dietzandwatson.com

Farmland Foods

www.farmlandfoods.com

Hebrew National

www.hebrewnational.com

Hormel Foods

www.hormel.com

Oscar Mayer

www.kraftfoods.com

Sabrett

www.sabrett.com

Usinger's

www.usinger.com

Vienna Beef

www.viennabeef.com

Wimmer's

www.wimmersmeats.com

CANADIAN SUPPLIERS:

Kretschmar

www.kretschmar.com

Maple Lodge Farms

www.maplelodgefarms.com


Schneider Foods

www.schneiders.ca

Shopsy's

www.mapleleaf.ca

Foil Hot Dog Bags:

These are a specialty item that can be sourced through a restaurant supply  company or from a specialty paper manufacturer. Here is a list of potential suppliers.

Ace Mart Restaurant Supply

www.acemart.com

Atlanta Concession Supply

www.sakida.com

Food Service Direct

www.foodservicedirect.com

Snappy Brand

www.popthis.com

f) Regular Schedule & Events Calendar

The Regular Schedule

Once you have selected your regular location, be reliable and consistent. Your [customers](#) will come to depend on you. Keep to your schedule of regular high traffic hours such as the 10:00AM to 2:00 PM lunch time shift.

Special Events

Keep a calendar of special events. These will be large events held at different locations and at different times from your regular schedule discussed above. These can be big money makers and will expose more [people](#) to your product.

Check your city web site for a calendar of upcoming events such as conventions, sporting events, parades, festivals, etc. These should not interfere with or replace your regular schedule.

Click here for a comprehensive [List of Special Events](#) ideas.

Special Events:

- Sporting Events – baseball, soccer, hockey, football, bmx races, little league, big league
- Sales Events / Grand Openings (especially large car lots, furniture and electronics outlets)
- Large Construction Sites
- Charity Events
- School / Church / Club functions
- Business anniversaries, open houses, golf tournaments, company picnics
- Boat shows
- Air Shows and Fly Ins
- Car Shows
- Car Rallies
- Conventions
- Music Festivals
- Carnivals
- County Fairs
- Antique Shows
- Farm Shows
- Craft Shows
- Cultural Events
- Theatres
- Flea Markets, Swap Meets
- Home Shows
- Industrial Shows
- Parades
- Auctions
- Estate Sales
- Fishing Derbies
- Tourist Attractions

Seasonal Areas:

- Beaches / Piers
- Marinas

- Zoos
- Parks

Catering:

- Birthday Parties
- Anniversaries
- Company banquets, tournaments

g) Selecting Your Cart

Select the right vending cart for you.

When you are selecting your cart be sure to keep your location in mind. You will want to be able to meet both the present and future demand at your regular location. You will also want a cart that will be able to handle the large volume at Special Events. This means having a cart that is large enough to supply you with a full days worth of product. Running out of product part of the way through your day not only reduces your profit but also damages your credibility as a reliable, regular fixture at your chosen location.

The second consideration is that you make sure that you meet all of the [health](#) code requirements for your area. We advise that you print off the schematics of the cart that you select so you can show your local health inspector. Our customer [service](#) department can also assist you in meeting these regulations.

[CLICK HERE TO SEE OUR FULL RANGE OF PRODUCTS](#)

h) Transportation

Unless you decide to operate a push cart and have it stored close to your regular location, you will likely need a [vehicle](#) with a [trailer hitch](#) so as to tow your cart. You will thus be able to easily move it to your regular vending location and any other special events locations, and then return it at days end to store it in a safe place. The trailer hitch ball should match exactly the size of the trailer hitch on your [hot dog cart](#). The towing vehicle should have an electrical adaptor so that it operates the brake and signal lights on the trailer.

You may also need a regular convenient parking spot for that vehicle. Remember to keep all of the parking receipts for tax time. Those daily expenses will really add up to a significant deduction at year end.

i) Management Guide

Owning your own hot dog cart [business](#) is going to be rewarding and enjoyable. The guidelines in this section should help you to be successful whether you have one hot dog cart or have several units with a [number](#) of employees running them.

Owning and operating several hot dog carts in different locations is a way to increase profits but it also comes with special challenges. Managing employees can be difficult and frustrating if not done properly. This section provides some ideas, guidelines and some business forms to use in managing [your](#) human resources effectively.

Hot Dog Cart Management Guide Index
- 1) Employer's Guide to Employees
- 2) Dress, Department & Hygiene Code
- 3) Employee Rules of Conduct
- 4) Employee Warning Notice
- 5) Employee Termination Notice

Please note that laws governing employees and sub-contractors vary from place to place. Make sure that you conform to these in every respect.

Both you and your employees should be familiar with the [Hot Dog Cart Operations and Maintenance Manual](#) , the [Employees Rules of Conduct](#) guide, and the [Dress, Department and Hygiene Code](#) . Review these with them in person and have copies of them in the cart for reference. Have employees sign them.

1) Employer's Guide to Employees

Great care must be taken in hiring and firing employees. (you never know when some kid's uncle is a hot shot lawyer with time on his hands and a grudge against hot dog vendors) (or the mayor, chief of police, newspaper editor, [Health](#) Dept. director, etc.) But seriously, many potential problems with employees can be avoided by following a few simple and reasonable steps. These guidelines are important even if the employees are family members.

Personnel are any company's most valuable asset. That's why large companies have departments called Human Resources devoted solely to managing this crucial resource. Many companies with incredible products failed because they mismanaged their human resources.

The best course is Selection, Education, Direction and Prevention.

Selection

Choose only quality employees that look and act the part. Don't be pressured or rushed into hiring. Check references. Referrals from friends and acquaintances are always your best source for good employees.

Education

Teach them what is expected of them and how to do the job required of them. Show them how to do it and then

have them do it themselves while you observe. Give them all the tools needed to do their job. Include written directions such as the “Hotdog Cart Operations and Maintenance Manual” and the “Health Guidelines”.

Direction

Give kind dignified correction when necessary and commendation for a job well done. Check up on their performance regularly. Reward excellence. Keep your promises. Show appreciation. Lead by example.

Prevention

Have them read and sign the “Employee Rules of Conduct” and the “Dress, Department, and Hygiene Code”. Quiz them to ensure these rules are clearly understood. This will prevent many problems and misunderstandings. Give written warnings for any serious violations or problems and have them sign it and you keep a copy. Firing is a last resort. Never fire in anger. Always maintain a calm, serious and professional bearing.

Here are some more suggestions in finding and dealing with employees:

Finding and Interviewing, Hiring and Firing

Where to Look for Good Help:

Referrals:

Referrals from friends and family are the best source as the candidates are known and easily checked. Good employees or former employees are another source. Ask if this person is someone they would be willing to work with. Good [people](#) know good people.

Classified Ads:

Place classified ads in the local newspaper “Help Wanted” section. This will likely draw a lot of response but a lot of the response will be unqualified or poor quality. You will have to sift through them carefully.

Schools:

High schools, colleges, universities and [trade schools](#) are a good source for part-time, weekend and seasonal help. They often have a job placement center or a job bulletin board. Place an ad on the job placement bulletin board. Make a personal appointment with the job counselor if they have one. Or ask a teacher or professor who they would recommend. Clearly outline the job and the kind of person you want. They will often give you a list of quality candidates.

Community Organizations:

Boy scouts, church groups, Rotary and Kiwanis clubs, etc. usually know of bright young people looking for work.

Government Employment Agencies:

Unlike private agencies, these services are free to both employers and employees. The best results occur by talking personally with a placement officer.

Help Wanted Sign:

Posting a sign on your vendor cart will draw a lot of response but also may prove time consuming. It may attract a lot of poor quality respondents. At the same time, the [applicants](#) will have a very clear understanding of what the job entails.

Keep records of all good applicants in case any don't work out or have to leave. This would include names and phone numbers.

Be clear and direct about the job description and hours of work. Do not sugar coat it as you will just waste your time.

Interviewing:

Ask questions to determine what kind of worker they will be. Ask about past work history and why they left those jobs.

Get at least 2 references from previous employers and check them. If these references are reluctant to answer questions or the applicant is reluctant to provide them, this is a clear indicator of a bad employee. Ask the previous employer if they would hire the person again if they are unwilling to provide details concerning the reason the person left their company. Sometimes people feel guilty for dismissing someone and will want to help them find replacement work so beware of vague details or evasive wording. If you can not reach any of the references previous employers ask for another. If they can't provide, do not proceed.

How a person dresses when appearing for an interview or applying for a job is a good indicator of their quality. If they don't appear clean, presentable, respectful, honest, reliable, personable, etc., for the interview, do not proceed.

If they are late for a specific interview appointment, it is a good indicator that they are unreliable.

Qualify the applicant for the job they will be performing. For example, role play as a customer to test whether they can add up the prices of various items and provide correct change.

Give the applicants a clear picture of what is required of them and spell out their earnings potential. This will avoid having them quit after a few days because the job didn't meet their expectations. Only hire after they have been informed of and agree to the rate of pay, hours of work, and when you will pay them.

Ask them if they have any reservations or difficulties about the job and its requirements for them.

Hiring:

Have the new employees read and sign the Employee Rules of Conduct, the Dress, Deportment, and Hygiene Guide, and the Hotdog Cart Operations and Maintenance Manual. Review it with them.

Give adequate training and supervision. A good rule of thumb is to work with each new employee for 3 days before sending them out on their own. Train them by having them do the work while you watch as opposed to you working and they watch. People forget what they see but remember what they do. Hands on training is best.

Even the best employees can develop bad habits if not supervised. Give correction, direction and counsel as required.

Avoid vague and subjective instructions like "keep the cart clean". Instead, give specific instructions such as "wipe down the cart every 30 minutes".

Any serious shortcomings should be handled in writing. See the Employee Warning Notice.

Give commendation for work well done.

Two part time workers may give you more security and flexibility than one full time worker.

Firing:

You can be held liable for certain penalties or even legal action if you terminate an employee without good cause or adequate warnings.

Employees should be warned in writing prior to termination. See the sample Employee Warning Notice. Keep a record on file of these. Verbal warnings for smaller infractions should be noted in their file.

Employers may lay off or terminate employees because of lack of work or to meet other staffing needs provided that the decision to terminate is not based on age or race. If an employee is laid off at the employer's convenience, he/she can usually collect unemployment insurance, for which a fee is paid by the employer.

If the employee is at fault, the employer does not have to pay any penalties. Employees can be fired for "good cause" which generally means unsatisfactory job performance.

Good Cause is determined by a 2 part evaluation:

1. A test of reasonableness. Was the employee terminated for failing to carry out a reasonable rule of the employer? For example, having the

- employee make correct change for a customer is a reasonable rule.
2. A test of knowledge. Did the employee have knowledge of this rule. Employees can not be required to comply with rules of which they have no knowledge.

Keep forwarding addresses of all employees and former employees. If dealing with minors such as teenagers, get the addresses of their parents. You may need these for mailing forms at year end.

Have the terminated employee sign the termination form as a condition of receiving their final pay cheque.

2) Dress, Department & Hygiene Code

Appearance Guidelines:

(Dress for Success)

A person's overall appearance must be neat and clean to convey the attitude of professionalism required of the [food](#) service industry. The following are some good general guidelines for American hot dog carts:

Clothing must be clean without stains. Fresh change of clothing each day.

Clothing should not be frayed or worn out.

Shorts are permissible but no cut-offs, short shorts, or bikini bottoms.

Short sleeve shirts are permissible but no bikini tops, halter tops, or muscle shirts.

If the vendor does not have his own [company shirts](#) or hats, those worn must not have logos or messages that are offensive. Clothing without such logos or messages are preferred.

Males must be freshly shaven.

Hair must be clean and neat.

The cash apron must clean and neat.

Health Code Guidelines:

(Food Focused Healthy Hygiene)

It is also very preventable. In this case the old axiom “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” is very true. One such incident could ruin [your business](#).

The following are typical health code guidelines for American hot dog carts and these must be followed and strictly adhered to:

Finger nails must be clipped and clean. Long hair must be tied back, pinned or contained in some manner so as to prevent contaminating food.

Do not touch the food with your bare hands. All food should be handled using gloves, tongs, forks, spoons or other utensils.

Hands must be washed after using the toilet, coughing, sneezing, blowing your nose, using the phone, handling money, garbage or any or unsanitary or toxic item.

Hands must be washed upon re-entering the work area (the hotdog cart) even if you have just washed them in another place such as the bathroom.

You must also wash your hands after eating, drinking, smoking, washing dirty dishes or other equipment, handling raw meat or other food, or even before putting on gloves to handle food.

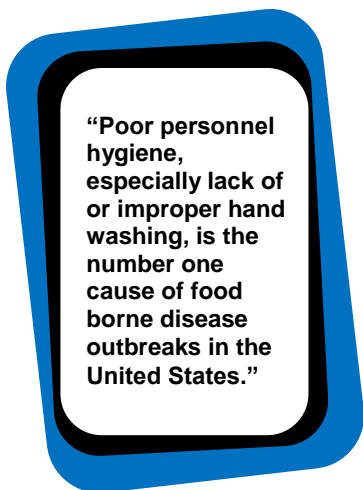
Hands must be washed using hot water and soap and lather for 15-20 seconds and then dried using a single use towel (such as paper towels), a clean towel on a roller dispenser, or by an air dryer. Do not use a multi-use hand towel such as is used at home.

The use of gloves should not be seen as a means to short cut proper hand sanitation. Gloves can also pick up and spread germs. You would not use gloves to handle raw meat and then also to serve cooked food as this would transmit bacteria from the [raw food](#) to the cooked food.

No smoking or tobacco chewing. (It is unsanitary around food, violates health code guidelines, and conveys a casual unprofessional attitude)

No chewing gum. (It also violates health code guidelines and conveys a casual unprofessional attitude)

Do not eat or drink when serving food. You must leave the food preparation and serving area for any of these activities. Move a short distance away from your cart. You must wash your hands when you return.



You are allowed to drink from a closed beverage container (such as with a lid) while in the food service area. It must have a handle to prevent your hand from touching the area that your mouth will touch or it must have a drinking straw. Wash it between uses or discard it.

Do not work with food when you are sick, sneezing, have a runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, dark urine or yellowing of the skin (jaundice) or fever. Do not handle food if

you have an infected cut or burn, pus or boil. Wear gloves over any cuts, abrasions, or burns.

Clothing must be clean and not allow cross contamination between raw and cooked foods.

3) Employee Rules of Conduct

Employees must arrive at work on time and ready for work.

Employees must arrive at Vendor location according to the prescribed schedule.

Employees must conform to the Vendor Cart Dress and Department Code.

Employees must read and conform to the guidelines provided for workers in the [food](#) service industry including instructions on personal washing, cleaning equipment, and handling food.

Employees must be able to safely and efficiently operate all of the equipment used in the operation of a [hot dog cart](#). Employees must be able to provide proper food services to customers in a timely and profitable manner.

Employees must always convey a friendly positive professional attitude especially when dealing with customers.

Employees conduct, hygiene and dress must always conform to the standards [required](#) of the local Department of Health for the Food service industry.

Non-employees are not allowed behind the cart. Non-employees are not allowed to operate any equipment.

Employees must be able to consistently and accurately charge customers the correct amount for the items purchased and give back the correct change.

All monies collected from sales will be deposited into the cash box at the end of each working day or shift.

All monies collected from sales will be counted and logged at the end of each working day or shift. An inventory of remaining

foodstuffs will also be counted at this time. Any reasons for discrepancies should be noted in writing at this time.

Employees will not borrow from the company cash box.

Employees will not sell any unauthorized products of their own from the food cart or on company time.

Employees will conform to the posted menu prices and will not extend special pricing to any friends, relatives, customers or themselves unless authorized by the company owner or supervisor.

Employees are required to maintain [business](#) confidentiality. Employees are not to discuss details of our business with non-employees such as sales volume, product costs, sources of supply, location or event plans, etc.

Any thefts of products or money will result in the employee's immediate work termination and will be reported to the appropriate authorities.

Any departure from the above guidelines may result in the employee's immediate work termination.

This instruction guide is binding and is to be read and signed by each vendor cart employee and kept on record by the company owner.

Employee Signature: _____

Employer Signature: _____

Date: _____

4) Employee Warning Notice

Employee Name: _____

Date: _____

This is a written warning of improper work conduct as described below. Failure to correct this conduct could result in disciplinary action including dismissal.

Details of improper conduct:

Corrective action necessary:

Has the employee been warned about this before?: _____

Dates: _____

Warnings were _____ oral _____ written.

Employee Response: I hereby acknowledge that I have been informed of the misconduct and corrective action as described above. My response, if any, is included below:

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Employer/Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

5) Employee Termination Notice

Employee Name: _____

Date: _____

Termination Effective Date: _____

Reason for Termination:

____ Voluntary (resigned)

____ Involuntary (fired)

____ Released

____ Laid Off

____ Other.

The employee listed above is no longer employed and has been informed of this.

Additional details and comments:

Employee Termination Statement: I have resigned for the following reasons:

Employee Signature:_____

Date:_____

Employer/Supervisor Signature:_____

Eligible for Rehire? ____ **Yes** ____ **No**

Additional details and comments:

j) Hotdog Cart Operations and Maintenance Manual

Serving Food:

Check with your local City or County Health Department for local codes concerning vendor carts specific to your area as they do vary from place to place. For instance, some Health Departments will not allow hot dog carts to serve dairy based condiments such as mayonnaise, grated cheese or even squeeze bottle cheese. The following guidelines, however, are generally universal in nature and are designed to keep you, your cart, and your [food](#) safe and appealing. Keep in mind that as a hotdog vendor you are considered a food handler by the Health Department officials and therefore must operate under specific guidelines.

Meet the Meat Guidelines:

Many [Health](#) Departments will only allow hot dog vendors to serve pre-cooked meat products in the form of wieners or sausages that to be barbequed and/or grilled on the cart. They may not allow what is considered to be hazardous raw meats (such as hamburger, ground beef, chicken or steak) to be cooked on the cart.

Cooked meat must be kept above the temperatures specified by the Health Department. This [required](#) temperature also varies from place to place. This also requires the hot dog vendor cart to have a thermometer on hand to monitor the temperature.

If refrigerated meats are allowed, keep them below the specified temperature. This will require another thermometer to monitor the temperature.

Following these rules keeps the product fresh and prevents the growth of bacteria. Typically a health department will require hot

foods such as sausages to be kept above 140°F (60°C) and cold perishable items below 40°F (4°C).

Pre-cooked hotdogs must be re-heated to 165°F before serving. To accurately determine this temperature insert the thermometer lengthwise into the center of the hotdog. Be sure not to pass through the meat and touch the cooking surface as this will give you a false high temperature reading.

Previously uncooked meats must be cooked to the following temperatures according to the New York State Department of Health:

- Chicken 165°F
- Hamburger 160°F
- Pork 150°F

Take great care to avoid cross contamination between meats and other food items. Always thoroughly wash and sanitize food preparation surfaces, equipment and utensils between uses. Be especially careful when handling raw, fresh or frozen meats. The area used for preparing meats must be washed and [sanitized](#) before being used to prepare any other food items!

Do not place cooked meat back on the plate or surface used to prepare or transport the raw, fresh or frozen meat.

Do not use the same utensils to handle cooked and raw, fresh or frozen meat

Raw, fresh or frozen meats must be stored below and separate from any other food items to prevent them from contaminating the other items (such as by dripping on them).

Considering Condiments:

Many Health Departments will not allow hot dog vendors to serve dairy based or edible oil condiment products in the form of mayonnaise, grated cheese or even squeeze bottle cheese on the cart.

Some Health Departments will only allow condiments that do not require refrigeration after opening to be served from a cart.

Condiments must be kept in clean, washable containers and must be kept covered to prevent insects, dust, leaf litter, or rain to enter. Jars with screw lids may not be acceptable. Otherwise condiments may be served in small single service packages.

If refrigerated condiments are allowed, keep them below the specified cold holding temperature. This will require a thermometer to monitor the temperature.

Handling Food:

Do not touch the food with your bare hands. All food should be handled using gloves, tongs, forks, spoons or other utensils. Keep a clean supply of spare utensils in a clean covered container. If it hits the ground, it's dirty – no 10 second rule here!

Do not work with food when you are sick, sneezing, have a runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, vomiting, dark urine or yellowing of the skin (jaundice) or fever. Do not handle food if you have an infected cut or burn, pus or boil. Wear gloves over any cuts, abrasions, or burns.

Clean your utensils at days end and store in a clean washable covered container. Do not mix clean and used utensils.

Provide proper food wrappers for your customers so they do not have direct hand to food contact.

The local Health Department may require you to have a sink or even up to 3 sinks for washing utensils. (One for washing, one for rinsing and one for sanitizing in chlorine bleach)

The local Health Department may require you to have another sink (4 total!) devoted solely to hand washing. It should not be used for any other purpose. The ware washing sinks must not be used for washing hands.

Have hand soap, hand sanitizer and paper towels on hand at all times.

Hands must be washed after using the toilet, coughing, sneezing, handling money or any or unsanitary item.

Hands must be washed upon re-entering the work area (the hotdog cart) even if you have just washed them in another place such as the bathroom.

You must also wash your hands after eating, drinking, smoking, washing dirty dishes or other equipment, sweeping or mopping, handling raw, fresh or frozen meat or other food, or even before putting on gloves to handle food.

Hands must be washed using hot water and soap and lather for 15-20 seconds and then dried using a single use towel (such as paper towels), a clean towel on a roller dispenser, or by an air dryer. Do not use a multi-use hand towel such as is used at home.

The use of gloves should not be seen as a means to short cut proper hand sanitation. Gloves can also pick up and spread germs. You would not use gloves to handle raw meat and then also to serve cooked food as this would transmit bacteria from the raw food to the cooked food.

Headgear such as a hat or hairnet must be worn to contain hair and prevent it from contaminating the food. No-one likes to find a hair in their hot dog. It could cost you customers or your hard earned reputation as a quality vendor.

Keep your finger nails clean and trimmed short. Do not wear finger rings as these can trap and carry food particles and bacteria and transfer them to clean food. Rings can also cut through gloves.

Keep your clothing clean and neat.

Smoking is prohibited when handling food! Do not smoke, chew tobacco, eat or drink when serving food. You must leave the food preparation and serving area for any of these activities. Move a short distance away from your cart. You must wash your hands when you return.

You are allowed to drink from a closed beverage container (such as with a lid) while in the food service area. It must have a handle to prevent your hand from touching the area that your mouth will touch or it must have a drinking straw. Wash it between uses or discard it.

Do not store food on the ground or floor. This would subject it to contamination from dirt, insects, water, and spills.

Do not store cleaning chemicals alongside food or utensils. They must be completely separate. Keep all such chemicals clearly labeled.

Do not place cooked meat back on the plate or surface used to prepare or transport the raw, fresh or frozen meat.

Do not use the same utensils to handle cooked and raw, fresh or frozen meat

Raw, fresh or frozen meats must be stored below and separate from any other food items to prevent them from contaminating the other items (such as by dripping on them).

Take great care to avoid cross contamination between foods and other items. Always thoroughly wash and sanitize food preparation surfaces, equipment and utensils between uses. Be especially careful when handling raw meats. The area used for preparing meats must be washed and sanitized before being used to prepare any other food items!

Many Health Departments require a roof or umbrella to be installed over a cart to protect the food service area from rain, falling leaves, and bird droppings.

Have a garbage container on hand at all times. Do not allow it to over-flow. Dispose of garbage as required. Clean the container at the end of each day.

Keep your food preparation and serving areas clean. Clean up spilled condiments and wrappers.

Hot Dog Cart Daily Operations Guide:

Keep an operations binder on hand in your cart that includes: your business and location license, your health permit, a copy of the local health codes, a copy of your location rental agreement (if applicable) or vendor permit (if serving at a special event), and this operations manual. Keep these papers in plastic protective sheet covers so that they stay clean and readable. Always have on hand the operations and maintenance manuals for any of the other equipment you are using on the cart.

Keep on hand a copy of the [Hot Dog Cart Daily Check List](#) . Do a check of your cart and its contents before you start up each day – just the way a pilot does a pre-flight check of his aircraft. This will save you from any unpleasant surprises after you get underway. Work from the written list and not your memory. Click here for a sample Hotdog Cart Daily Check List.

Always keep your product within the temperatures specified by the local Health Department. This will require thermometers on hand to monitor temperatures. Following these rules keeps the product fresh and prevents the growth of bacteria. Typically a health department will require hot foods such as sausages to be kept above 140°F (60°C) and cold perishable items below 40°F (4°C).

Wash the cart every day before and after use. First wash the cart with hot soapy water to remove dirt or spilled food. Then use a sanitizing solution to kill any bacteria. A sanitizing solution may be made by adding 1 teaspoon (5mL) of chlorine bleach to 1 quart (1L) of water.

Use this same procedure for cleaning all surfaces used to store, prepare, cook or serve food, and all utensils and containers including sinks, faucets, and even the garbage cans (to prevent undesirable odor)

Fill the fresh water tanks with all new fresh potable water. Do not keep water from one day to the next.

To load water: close taps, connect water fitting to tank, open tank valve (handle parallel to line), open water supply valve. Tanks will take 3-5 minutes to fill. When full: close water supply valve, close tank valve (handle perpendicular to line), disconnect water fitting, install plug.

Empty waste water tanks at the end of each day or shift. These also need to be washed to prevent odor.

Ensure the propane tanks are full and equipment is in good safe working order. Replace or repair as necessary. Always keep a spare filled tank on hand.

Keep a set of wheel chocks on hand for locations where the cart may be located on a slope. These may be made from some short lengths of 2x4 lumber.

Arrive on location early so as to be ready to serve clients hot prepared food when their lunch hour begins. You do not want to be opening up and lighting burners with a line up of waiting customers.

Be reliable. Customers will depend on you for lunch. Be there regularly. Become part of their routine. This will build a loyal regular customer base.

Be friendly and professional. Greet each customer. Be cheerful and smile. It costs nothing but makes a huge difference. Get to know your regulars by name. That builds loyalty. They will spread the word about you and draw more customers to your business. The best advertising is by word of mouth, and again, it costs nothing.

Keep adequate coins and small bills on hand for making change.

Post a menu complete with prices. Most people won't buy unless they first know the price. Prominently displaying what you sell will save you time explaining especially during a busy lunch hour. It enables your customers to decide before they order. Have this made professionally at a sign shop. Keep it under a clear plastic cover to protect it from the weather and dirt and to allow easy changing of its contents.

Be a Good Neighbor. Don't let your business interfere with others. Make it compliment and augment their businesses. This may include simple things such as providing a trash can for your customers and picking up litter at days end.

Safety Guidelines

Lightning

Hot dog carts can generally be operated year round in all kinds of weather. If the customers are there and willing to buy, we should be willing to open.

There are some exceptions and lightning is one of them.

If a lightning storm is seen moving in, close the cart immediately and do not return or open until it has passed.

Make sure all employee cart operators understand this

Fire

Fires are rare but can happen.

It usually will be a grease fire on the BBQ. In this case, either turn off the BBQ and let it burn out or douse it with water. Be careful of scalding by steam when dousing the burner with water.

The other type is a propane leak fire. This usually occurs under the BBQ where the tubes join the control knobs and the burners. In this case, turn off the propane supply at the tank. The fire should stop immediately. Then re-attach the tubes and make sure they can not come loose again. Turn the gas supply on again and relight the burners.

The other concern is clothing. It has happened that an operator has gotten too close to the burner with polyester clothing. This will cause the material to melt and may burn the person. This is one reason

why the butcher's apron should always be worn when operating a hot dog cart.

First Aid

Keep a small first aid kit in the cart to treat small burns, nicks and cuts. It should include disinfectant and "Band-Aids".

This is available from WillyDogs or at any pharmacy.

Sun Safety

Sun burn is a threat to anyone working out of doors. Extended unprotected exposure may cause health problems even cancer.

Always wear sun block and a hat. Hats that cover the tops of the ears are best. Do not rely on the cart's umbrella to always keep you out of the sun.

Wear sun glasses to prevent eye strain.

Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration and sun stroke.

Trailer Towing

Always check that the trailer hitch is firmly down and locked on the ball. Always connect the safety chains and the electrical wires.

Let's Get Cooking!:

Arrive on location early so as to be ready to serve clients hot prepared food when their lunch hour begins. You do not want to be opening up and lighting burners with a long line up of waiting customers.

Park the cart and put wheel chocks in place.

Open the gas valve at the tank. Turn the gas control at the burner to HIGH. Ignite the striker or light a match to the bottom hole of the BBQ. Have the lid open when lighting. Do not stand over the burners

when lighting. If the burners do not catch after a few tries, turn the control to OFF and allow the gas to dissipate before trying again. Do not leave the burner valve on for more than a few seconds before trying to light as gas will accumulate and the ignition will be violent and may cause injury.

Clean all areas as per food guide instructions.

First start heating things up before you set out your condiments and other items.

Fill the steam pan with about ½" of fresh water.

Allow the steamer to first heat up to about 170°F (77°C). This may take ½ hour.

While this is heating up, set out the condiments, napkins, wrappers, cutlery, side orders (chips) and other items, and clean as necessary.

When the steamer is up to temperature, load a selection of dogs. Standard hot dogs will take about 10 minutes to heat up. Jumbo dogs will take a few minutes longer. Allow more time in cold weather.

Use a thermometer to monitor the temperature of the meat. Always insert the thermometer lengthwise down the center of a hot dog to test temperature. Do not let the thermometer probe break through and touch the heating surface as this will give a falsely high reading.

Put the buns on the warming shelf so they are soft and warm when served.

When the meat is brought up to temperature, then open your umbrella and put out your menu sign. You are ready for business!

Continue to monitor and adjust the steamer temperature using the thermometer. Also keep the cold items cold by keeping the doors closed.

Trouble Shooting Guide:

BBQ will not light:

- Turn on propane at tank.
- Check that tanks have propane. A full tank weighs 39.5 lbs. Use a fish scale to weigh.
- Check line from tank to burner for kinks. Straighten any kinks.
- Too much wind. Move to protected calmer area and light the burners there. Keep the burner on the leeward side (the side opposite from where the wind is coming) on full and move back to location.
- Striker not working. Use a match at bottom hole.

Flames Underneath BBQ:

- Shut-Off gas immediately
- Check for grease spillage. Clean up grease.
- Check for loose tubes. Reconnect tubes and tie them off so they stay in.
- Check that gas control knob to unused auxillary burner is in OFF position.

Any other problems call WillyDogs for assistance.

Hot Dog Cart Routine Maintenance Guide:

The hot dog cart must be maintained in top roadworthy and sanitary condition at all times. To do otherwise risks being unable to function and thus lose business or, even worse, be penalized and fined by the Health Department.

Check the cart over each day before use. Inspect it the way a pilot conducts a preflight inspection of his plane. Remember that the cart is your primary business tool. Keep it well maintained.

Check the tires for wear and proper inflation pressure. Have the wheel bearings checked every 6 months. Replace tires when they are worn.

Inspect the trailer hitch. Be sure that it exactly fits the ball on the towing vehicle. Make sure the hitch is locked down on the ball for each trip. Always use the safety chains.

Always remember to connect the electrical plug for the trailer lights for each trip. Check that the lights (running, braking and turning) are all working. Keep spare bulbs on hand.

Inspect the electrical wires running from the tow vehicle through the trailer. Cover any wear prone areas with electrical tape or flexible plastic conduit (available at automotive supply or hardware stores). Watch for corrosion on the electrical connections. Wear or corrosion in the electrical system may cause a short circuit that will blow the fuse in the tow vehicle or trailer electrical adaptor and then none of the trailer lights will work.

Inspect the propane tanks and hoses. Ensure that the tank, and any spares you are transporting, are firmly secured in place. Replace worn hoses. (Do not attempt to repair by yourself or by using tape over the hose!!) Propane leaks can be detected using soapy water. Any leaks will be shown by expanding bubbles. Check that the tanks are not past the life cycle date. Close the tank valve at the end of each day.

A well maintained trailer will serve you many years and ensure your safety and profitability.

1) Daily Check List

1. Propane Tanks Filled
2. Water Tanks Filled
3. Grey Water Tanks Emptied
4. Steam Table Filled with Water
5. Ice Chests Filled
6. Hot Dogs Loaded
7. Buns Loaded
8. All Condiments Loaded
 - Mustard
 - Hot Mustard
 - Relish
 - Ketchup
 - Mayo
 - [Hot Peppers](#)
 - Chopped Onions
 - Grated Cheese
 - Sauer Kraut
 - Red Onion Sauce
 - Chili
 - Others
9. Side Orders Loaded
 - Chip Bags
 - Cole Slaw
 - Dill Pickles
10. Drinks Loaded

- Sodas
- Bottled Water
- Juice

11. Other Supplies

- Napkins
- Foil Bags
- Cutlery
- Take Away Paper bags
- Clean Serving Utensils
- Marker Pen

12. [Cash](#) Box with Cash/ Coin Float

13. Clean Cash Apron

14. Cleaning Supplies

- Detergent, Bleach
- Wash Cloths
- Bucket
- Hand Soap
- Trash Can
- [Garbage Bags](#)

15. Chair, Umbrella, Radio, Hat

16. Hotdog Cart Mechanical Integrity

- [Tires](#) inflated and road worthy
- All surfaces clean
- Appliances functional and in place
- All loose items secured, doors latched
- Overall appearance

Inventory Reorder Form

#	Ord'd	Product Item	Supplier	Qty	\$ea.	\$Total
1		Reg. Hot Dogs	John's Deli			
2		Jumbo Dogs	John's Deli			
3		Reg. Buns	Tina's Bakery			
4		Jumbo Buns	Tina's Bakery			
5		Reg. Chips 60g	Costco			
6		Nacho Chips 60g	Costco			
7		Cole Slaw	John's Deli			
8		Dill Pickles	Costco			
9		Chopped Onions	John's Deli			
10		Sauer Kraut 4L	Costco			
11		Grated Cheese	Moe's Deli			
12		Reg. Mustard 4L	Costco			

13		Hot Mustard 4L	Costco			
14		Ketchup 4L	Costco			
15		Relish	Costco			
16		Mayonnaise 4L	Costco			
17		Red Onion S. 1L	Costco			
18		Soda - Coke	Costco			
18		Soda - Sprite	Costco			
19		Bottled Water	Costco			
20		Snapple	Costco			
21		Forks	Costco			
22		Napkins	Costco			
23		Foil Bags	Rest. Supply			

24		Take Away Bags	Costco			
25		Hand Soap	Costco			
26		Bleach	Costco			

3) Sample Menu

Bob's Dogs – Menu

Dog List (the Kennel Crowd)

Loyal Dog\$ 3.00

Load it as you like

Big Dog\$ 4.00

Jumbo size dog loaded as you like

Cheese Dog\$ 3.00

Daily Dog with Chili and grated cheese

Kraut Dog\$ 4.00

Big Dog with Sauer Kraut and hot mustard

New York Dog\$ 4.00

Jumbo Dog with Red Onion sauce and hot mustard

Texas Dog\$ 4.00

Jumbo Dog with Chili sauce, jalapenos, chopped onions and hot mustard

Condiments List (Dress Your Dog Up)

Sweet Green Relish

Tomato Ketchup

Chopped Onions

Red Onion sauce

Jalapeno Peppers

Mustard

Hot Mustard

Sauer Kraut

Chili

Grated Cheese

Side Orders and Drinks

Bag o' Chips.....\$ 1.25

Bag o' Nachos.....\$ 1.25

Soda\$ 1.00

Bottled Water\$ 1.00

Fruit Juice\$ 1.25

Cole Slaw \$ 1.50

Large Dill Pickle\$ 0.50

k) Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)

Q: Do I need a special license?

A: Yes. Very likely you will need a [business](#) license. You may also require a permit to set up your cart on public property such as on a street, sidewalk, park, etc. Check with your local City Hall in person or on your city's web site for details, the by-law requirements, license cost, and so on. See the section in this Business Guide entitled [Getting a Business License](#) for more details.

Q: Do I need approval from the local Health Department authorities?

A: Yes. Very likely. Check with your local Health Department. They may be listed on the city's web site. If not, go to the section in this Business Guide entitled [Health Department Links](#) . Follow the links and instructions to find the web site of your local county Health Department. Get the details on the local health code requirements for hot dog carts. There may also be an initial inspection fee on your cart. See the section [Getting Health Department Approvals](#) as well as the subsection [Health Guidelines](#) .

Q: How do I find a good location?

A: A good location will have lots of pedestrian traffic and no competition. See the section [Searching for a Location](#) for more information and the subsection [Location Ideas](#) for a comprehensive list of good hot dog cart location ideas.

Q: Can I move the cart?

A: Yes. The large carts are all equipped with a trailer hitch for highway towing behind a vehicle. But it is best to find a good location and stay there so that people will know where to find you. This way you can quickly build a good base of regular loyal customers. The cart can be moved during “Off” hours to special events for extra income such as in evenings or on weekends. However you should have a regular consistent schedule at a good location. See the section “[Searching for a Location](#)” for more information on Regular locations and Special Events locations. See also the section [Tips for Success](#) for some practical suggestions in running [your](#) vendor cart business.

Q: What does NSF certified mean and does my hot dog cart need it?

A: NSF (National Sanitation Foundation) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization that develops standards for [food](#) service equipment manufacturers and provides third-party conformity assessment services for these food service equipment manufacturers.

To have NSF certification means that NSF has assessed and certified the conformity of the equipment with the appropriate NSF and ANSI (American National Standards Institute) standards.

Part of the certifications process is to have the equipment production facility audited annually so as to ensure that all the relevant standards [continue](#) to be met.

For hot dog carts this means that the materials used in construction are nontoxic, corrosion and heat resistant, and any coatings are tested for durability and abrasion resistance. In addition, the equipment has demonstrated that it can attain and maintain appropriate temperatures for reheating food in a prescribed time. Also the temperature indicating devices (Thermometers) used are verified to be accurate.

Your local Health Department or your State Government may specify that your hot dog cart must meet NSF standards. Or they may not. This will be indicated on their web site.

Hot dog carts come under NSF/ANSI Standard 59 for Food Carts.

Q: Where do I go to buy my hot dog meat and other supplies?

A: Check in our Business Guide under the heading [Searching for Suppliers](#) . There you will find a sub-section entitled [Food Suppliers](#) and another entitled [Supplies List](#) . These will direct you to suppliers for the various items needed to operate your hot dog cart.

Q: Can your hot dog carts serve pre-cooked chicken or ribs?

A: Yes. However, your local county Health Department may not allow this. They may not allow vendor carts to serve what they classify as hazardous pre-cooked meats which often includes pre-cooked chicken or pre-cooked pork ribs. Check with your local Health Department first before planning to serve such items.

Q: Can your hot dog carts cook raw steak, chicken or pork?

A: Yes. However, your local health department may not allow this. They may not allow vendor carts to serve what they classify as hazardous uncooked meats. This definition often includes raw or frozen chicken, raw or frozen beef, raw or frozen pork, and ground meats. These meats are considered hazardous because if they are not handled properly , they support the rapid growth of bacteria that are very dangerous to humans. Check with your local Health department first before planning to serve such items. generally speaking, hot dog carts are restricted to reheating previously cooked wieners and sausages.

Q: How much does shipping cost?

A: Shipping costs are calculated manually. Call us for details.

Q: Can you attach a coffee pot to a WillyDogs cart?

A: Yes. Coffee pots are shown in our [Cart Accessories](#) page at www.willydogs.com top right corner. It would require a 110 volt AC power supply outlet near the cart.

Q: Does the cart have hot and cold running water?

A: Yes. Most of the carts are completely self-contained with hot and cold running water. Check the specifications page for each individual cart at www.willydogs.com . Click on the picture of each cart for more details and specifications of equipment included with each cart. Some of the carts feature a 12 volt DC pressurized water system. Others have a gravity fed system.

Q: Can I get financing for my hot dog cart business?

A: Yes. We can direct you to a financing company that specializes in our type of business. Contact our customer service desk for details. For suggestions on making a business plan and calculating your start up costs for your new business, see the section in this Business Guide entitled [Getting the Financing Arranged](#) .

1) Health Department Questions

Q: Do I need approval from the local Health Department authorities?

A: Yes. Very likely. Check with your local Health Department. They may be listed on the city's web site. Get the details on the local health code requirements. There may be an initial inspection fee on your cart. See the section [Getting Health Department Approvals](#) as well as the subsections [Health Department Links](#) and [Health Guidelines](#) .

Q: What does NSF certified mean and does my [hot dog cart](#) need it?

A: NSF (National Sanitation Foundation) is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization that develops standards for [food](#) service equipment manufacturers and provides third-party conformity assessment services for these food service equipment manufacturers. The NSF has developed standards for American hot dog carts.

To have NSF certification means that NSF has assessed and certified the conformity of the equipment with the appropriate NSF and ANSI (American National Standards Institute) standards.

Part of the certifications process is to have the equipment production facility audited annually so as to ensure that all the relevant standards [continue](#) to be met.

For hot dog carts this means that the materials used in construction are nontoxic, corrosion and heat resistant, and any coatings are tested for durability and abrasion resistance. In addition, the equipment has demonstrated that it can attain and maintain appropriate temperatures for reheating food in a prescribed time. Also temperatures indicating devices used are verified to be accurate.

Your local Health Department may specify that your hot dog cart must meet NSF standards. Or they may not.

Hot dog carts come under NSF/ANSI Standard 59 for Food Carts.

Q: Can your hot dog carts serve pre-cooked chicken or ribs?

A: Yes. However, your local county Health Department may not allow this. Canadian and American hot dog cart operators follow very strict health guidelines. They may not allow vendor carts to serve what they classify as hazardous pre-cooked meats which often includes pre-cooked chicken or pre-cooked pork ribs. Check with your local Health Department first before planning to serve such items.

Q: Can your hot dog carts cook raw steak, chicken or pork?

A: Yes. However, your local Health Department may not allow this. They may not allow vendor carts to serve what they classify as hazardous uncooked meats. This definition often includes raw or frozen chicken, raw or frozen beef, raw or frozen pork, and ground meats. As mentioned in the previous FAQ question and answer, Canadian and American hot dog carts often must conform to very strict local guidelines. Check with your local Health Department first before planning to serve such items.

Q: Where can I get instructions on how to operate my WillyDogs cart so as to meet all the Health Department guidelines?

A: The [Operations Manual](#) Section of this guide has some good suggestions in plain language on how to meet the general guidelines of most health departments including washing and sanitizing the cart

and in safely serving food. Each city or county health department will have their own set of rules that they will make available to you. Ask them for clarification if any parts are not clear to you.

Q: Does the cart have hot and cold running water?

A: Yes. Most of the carts are completely self-contained with hot and cold running water. Check the specifications page for each individual cart at www.willydogs.com . Click on the picture of each cart for more details and specifications of [equipment included](#) with each cart.

l) Marketing and Selling

Effectively marketing your WillyDogs [hot dog cart](#) depends as much on how YOU present and conduct [your business](#) as it depends on the quality of your cart and the products you [sell](#).

This section will give you suggestions on dealing with [customers](#), responding to customers needs, and presenting your products effectively.

It is divided into the following sub-section topics:

- [The Psychology of Selling](#)
- [Advertising and Promotional Ideas](#)
- [Sample Promo Flyer](#)
- [Hot Dog Recipes](#)

1) The Psychology of Selling

How to Motivate Your Customers to Buy and to Return

Successful selling involves more than just putting up a sign and waiting for customers to beat a path to your cart.

While WillyDog presents different marketing challenges than, for example, operating a grocery store, the basic philosophy of selling holds true for all businesses. Customers must first be attracted to your sales site and then encouraged to buy your products. At the [point of sale](#) you must anticipate and satisfy your customer's needs and expectations.

It is this selling cycle – attracting customers, encouraging sales and satisfying customer needs – that is essential in assuring the continued growth and success of [your business](#).

Remember the rule: **it is easier to keep an old customer than to attract a new one!**

The Sale:

Once your customer has been attracted to your vending site, there are four factors that go into completing a successful sale:

1. The customer must have a clear idea of what is being sold and at what price.
2. All signs should be professionally made. (no homemade “marker on cardboard” signs)
3. You must be able to service the customer even if you get many customers all at once.
4. You must ask for the sale.

Up-Sell:

Always make sure you and your employees up-sell. It's very simple. Just ask a positive question. Or give positive suggestions.

Do not ask “Would you like a drink with that?”

Ask “What kind of drink would you like with that?”

If a customer is indecisive or unsure, help them, say something like: “Why don’t you try one of our Smokin’ Willy’s? Most of the guys seem to like it.”

Help your customer to make selections by asking leading questions like: “Would you like cheese on that?” “Would you like to try the Red Onion sauce?”

Customers will not see this as “up-selling” but rather as you showing a personal interest in them.

Pricing:

There are no hard and fast rules on pricing.

A good start is to first poll your competitors or other similar businesses in your local area.

Do not be afraid to charge more for your product. Charging 25% more than your competitors is not unreasonable.

The reason for this is simple. If you do a superior job, offer a superior product, and do it in a unique way, your customers will be very happy to pay more. There are many very successful [food](#) service franchises that follow this philosophy.

The convenience of your location is another reason why customers will be willing to pay more.

Customer relations:

How you speak to your customers is as important as what you say.

Always be friendly, positive and upbeat.

Don’t shout to attract customers - “Hey! Want a Hot Dog?”

Simply smile and say “Hello” or “Good Morning”. They will remember you when they return if you have what they want.

Make sure everything is continually kept neat and clean.

Keep your umbrella up – it is your “Open” sign.

Employee / Customer Relations:

Make sure all employees understand and apply these principles.

2) Advertising and Promotion Ideas

Promoting Your Hot Dog Vendor Business

A few well chosen methods advertising and publicity can do much to boost sales.

Many people believe that advertising and publicity are the same thing. But there are actually major differences.

Advertising directly tells people about [your business](#) and why they need your product.

Publicity is less direct. It may simply get people familiar with seeing your product.

Advertising will usually cost you money. Publicity can often come for free or even while you are making money!

For example: You can pay to advertise in the local newspaper or you can be included in a newspaper feature article on new businesses. The advertising costs. The news article publicity is free.

Here are a few ideas:

Advertising:

Introduce Yourself to a New Area.

When you set up your cart in a new area advertise yourself. This will get your new location off to a running start.

Print up some quality flyers and take them around to the businesses in the area so they will be familiar you. Include a nice color picture of you and your quality WillyDog cart.

Drop them off in [business](#) mailboxes. Post them on information boards. Hand them directly to business owners, managers, receptionists, and other employees. Dress neat and professionally while doing this as you are making that all important first impression of your quality food service vending cart!

The flyer should include your hours of business, location, menu, and cell number for phone orders. It should show that your cart is licensed and meets all the Health Code requirements.

Keep it to one page in length and one sided so it can easily be posted in a lunch room.

Include introductory [discount coupons](#) at the bottom of your flyer to encourage first time customers. See our sample Introductory Flyer in this Marketing section.

Signage and Graphics:

Have a vinyl graphics company make up some large quality graphic signs for your cart. This will help identify you and your products and draw customers.

Put up sandwich board signs 200 yards down the road to pull in traffic.

[Install](#) vinyl lettering on your vehicle to advertise your WillyDog cart. Include your regular cart location.

Tie a colorful helium balloon to your WillyDog cart to get noticed from a distance.

Publicity:

The WillyDog business is capable of generating a great deal of publicity.

The media is often interested in successful small businesses that epitomize the entrepreneurial “dream”. If you have an “angle”, a story which is somewhat unique or has a special interest aspect, the media may cover it. This can include newspapers, magazines, radio and television.

Include your WillyDog cart in any local events where the news media will be present. These include charity events, parades, cultural festivals, grand openings, etc. Check your local city and media web sites for listings on such upcoming events. Offer free “taste testing” to media personnel to draw them to your hot dog cart.

Always wear your WillyDog business apparel (hat, golf shirt) for these opportunities.

Here are some other Publicity Stunts that have been done successfully:

Keep a camera in your cart. If a celebrity comes by, get a photo of them with you beside your cart.

Have the mayor do a ribbon cutting ceremony for your new WillyDog cart.

Put your WillyDog cart in tandem in a parade.

3) Sample Promo Flyer

Bob's Dogs

New **"WillyDog"** Hot Dog Vendor Opening Next Week

On Front Street in Northern [Business](#) Park



Serving Lunch from 11:00AM to 2:00PM Daily Monday to Friday

Quality All Beef Sausage Dogs on Fresh Baked Buns

Your Choice of Tasty Condiments Including Mustard, Relish,
Ketchup, Grated Cheese, Chopped Onions, Red Onion Sauce,
Chili, Hot Peppers and Sauer Kraut

Regular - \$3.00 or Jumbo Size - \$4.00

Also Cole Slaw, Potato Chips, and Soft Drinks

Call In Your Order for [Faster Service](#) (123) 456-7890
[Save](#) With This Special Introductory [Coupon](#):



\$1.00 Off Any WillyDog Order in June

4) Recipes

Willies Hot Dog Carts

All American Hot Dog Cart Recipe Book

The [American Hotdog Council](#) estimates that Americans [eat](#) 20 billion hotdogs each year. Hotdogs are enjoyed in 95% of U.S. households. That works out to be about 70 hot dogs eaten per person in the USA each year. The variety of toppings and condiments used is remarkable.

People enjoy purchasing specialty foods and foods with a theme or regional focus. American style hotdogs have a host of special regional based recipes. Each region seems to have invented many unique ways to dress up a hotdog. These recipes then migrate across the country, taking the regional name with them, to be enjoyed by American hot dog connoisseurs everywhere.

The list is endless but here are a few of Willies hot dog recipes that you can use in your [hot dog cart](#) menu:

Chicago Dog: hotdog on a poppy seed bun with yellow mustard, green relish, chopped onions, tomato slices, dill pickle spear, sport (chili) peppers and a dash of celery salt. (No tomato ketchup in a true Chicago dog!)

New York Dog: hotdog on a bun with spicy mustard, red onion sauce and sauerkraut.

New England Dog: hotdog on a bun with fried onions, melted cheese, and mustard.

Texas Dog: hotdog on a bun with chili sauce, cheese, and jalapenos.

Rockie Dog: hotdog on a bun with grilled peppers, sauer kraut, and chopped onions.

Kraut Dog: hotdog on a bun with hot spicy mustard and sauer kraut.

Classic American Hot Dog: hotdog on a bun with tomato ketchup, yellow mustard, green relish, and chopped onions.

Coney Style Chili Cheese Dog: hotdog on a bun with mustard, chili sauce, chopped onions, and grated cheese.

Hot Dog Chili recipe:

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 (3 oz.) can tomato paste
- 3 oz. water
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. salt

Brown ground beef. Drain off [fat](#). Add onion and tomato paste, salt and water, and chili powder. Simmer 10 to 15 minutes. Other spices may be added to taste such as Italian seasoning, celery salt, pepper, red pepper and paprika. Also you can try adding some Worcestershire sauce, a clove of chopped garlic, soy sauce, brown sugar, and mustard to give some variety .

Red Onion Sauce for New York Style Hot Dogs:

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 medium onions-chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/4 cup tomato ketchup
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add onions and cook until soft. Stir in the cinnamon and chili powder and cook for 1 minute. Add the ketchup, water, hot sauce and salt and black pepper and bring to a simmer. Cook mixture for 10-15 minutes or until thickened. Transfer to a bowl and let cool to room temperature before serving. Can be refrigerated for up to 2 days, but bring to room temperature before serving.

Make up your own custom hotdog [recipe](#). But always remember to dress the dog and not the bun. Apply condiments to any hotdog in the following order: First add the wet condiments such as mustard, ketchup and chili. Then add the chunkier condiments such as relish, onions, sauerkraut, etc. Then you can add your shredded cheese and finally spices such as pepper or celery salt.

Have you got a delicious hot dog recipe that you would like to share? Send it to us and we may add it to this list of True All American Hot Dog Cart Recipes.

m) Tips for Success

Tips for Success

Be Reliable.

Customers will depend on you for lunch. Be there regularly. Become part of their routine. This will build a loyal regular customer base.

Be Friendly.

Greet each customer. Be cheerful and smile. It costs nothing but makes a huge difference.

Get to know your regulars by name. That builds loyalty. They will spread the word about you and draw more customers to your [business](#). The best advertising is by word of mouth and it costs nothing.

Keep a Clean, Tidy Shop.

People are turned off by mess especially where they buy their [food](#). Clean your cart daily before and after use. Clean all the equipment including condiment trays and bottles. Keep your garments and personal appearance clean and neat.

Click [here](#) for more info on the daily function of a hot dog cart, a daily supply check list, a supply reorder form, hot dog cart routine maintenance, a suggested dress code, and an employee department policy .

Maintain Quality.

A good reputation is priceless. Don't scrimp. Don't risk it by cutting corners using old product.

Be a Good Neighbor.

Don't let your business interfere with theirs – make it compliment and augment their business.

This may include simple things such as providing a trash can for your customers and picking up litter at days end.

Know Local Eating Habits.

Hot dogs are subject to regional differences. This may require condiments that reflect your local culture such as grated cheese, chili, hot mustard, etc. Even within a city, one neighborhood may be more [health](#) conscious, reflect a unique cultural flavor ie: require Kosher food, or prefer Red Onion Sauce on their dog. Ask. Listen. Learn. Adapt. Serve those needs. Advertise it. It means business.

Post a Simple Menu and Price List.

Many people won't buy unless they first know the price.

Prominently displaying what you sell will save you time explaining especially during a busy lunch hour. It enables your customers to decide before they order.

Attach your Menu / Price List to your cart with Velcro under a plexiglass cover (to protect it from dirt, rain, and facilitate easy cleaning and changing). Get it made professionally at a local vinyl graphics sign shop. It won't cost much and will look pro.

See the Operations Manual section J for a [Sample Menu](#) .

Take Phone Orders.

Post your cell phone number on your cart and keep a phone order log sheet. Have business [cards](#) made up that you can give to customers for them to have so they can call their orders in ahead of time. Print off some simple ½ page menu sheets like take-out restaurants do.

Many workers are so busy that they prefer to call their food orders in ahead of time and just pick them up. Often one person will pick up lunch for many. They save time not having to wait. You avoid long line ups and generate more business. It's another way to adapt to your customers needs and develop a loyal customer base.

Introduce Yourself to a New Area.

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Include introductory discount coupons at the bottom of your flyer to encourage first time customers.

See the [Marketing and Selling](#) section for further details.

