



**Department of Business Regulation**  
**Commercial Licensing Division**  
1511 Pontiac Avenue, Bldg. 69-1  
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

# **Commercial Licensing**

## **Guidance Document 2020-1**

**Updated Sept. 21, 2020 – Mobile Food Establishments and the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Governor Gina M. Raimondo has issued a series of Executive Orders declaring a State of Emergency in Rhode Island due to the COVID-19 virus. This guidance document is intended to clarify the ways in which Mobile Food Establishments (“MFEs”) can operate during this emergency.

The Rhode Island Department of Business Regulation (“The Department”), Division of Commercial Licensing (“The Division”) requests that MFEs take the following steps while operating during this emergency.

***Please note, dates listed below may change in conjunction with any current recommendations by Governor Raimondo and the Rhode Island Department of Health.***

- The Rhode Island State Fire Marshal's office is conducting inspection by appointment only. Please log in to your ViewPoint portal and message the office via the State Fire Marshal Application Completeness Review link within after clicking through the "My Applications" link.
  - Per Regulation 230-RICR-30-35-1.5 (E) All application requirements must be maintained and kept current for the duration of the Registration.
- The Rhode Island Department of Health, with minimal staff, will continue operations until further notice. Operational Inspections will be conducted by appointments as usual.
  - Any new or renewing applicants are instructed to mail or deposit the application in the lock box – which may cause a delay since there is no in-service customer service interaction during this pandemic.

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- **Expiration dates will not be extended relative to food licenses.**  
However, penalties will be waived should a license holder renew after the deadline during this pandemic.
- MFEs are still required, by law, to have both a state registration and a municipal license/permit in order to operate. Please contact the local municipality to ensure they're still allowing MFEs to operate.
  - In accordance to R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-11.1-7, municipalities can still prohibit MFEs from operating during this state of emergency for public safety reasons.
  - The Division is in contact with the municipalities to provide a comprehensive list of restrictions, if any, by municipality.
- All MFEs must be compliant with the safety precautions posted by the Centers for Disease Control (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>).
- The Division recommends **at least a two-person team** to work the MFE at all times – one person to ensure Governor Raimondo's five-person capacity for congregation is followed and to ensure a distance of six feet per patron waiting in line, and the other to prepare/complete and package the food for pickup.
  - All MFE employees should keep a 6-ft distance from other people, including coworkers, at all times.
  - Verbal health screening of all employees prior to starting work each day
  - Anyone who is sick must stay home.
  - All food must be packaged for takeout/delivery only. No congregating around the truck to eat.
  - Increase regular cleaning and hygiene procedures throughout the day.
  - If possible, have patrons order and pay online or phone to reduce contact.
  - The Rhode Island Department of Commerce (<https://commerceri.com/covid-19-business-checklist/>) has instituted a COVID-19 Business Checklist.
  - Much like grocery stores, MFEs **must designate the six (6)-foot distance** with cones, tape, or sidewalk chalk.

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- Executive Orders can be found here: <http://governor.ri.gov/newsroom/orders/>
- Assistance with business technology: <https://commerceri.com/tech-support-covid-19/>

If you have any questions regarding this guidance document, or any other matters pertaining to MFEs, please send an email to [jorge.bannister@dbr.ri.gov](mailto:jorge.bannister@dbr.ri.gov).

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