

Mobile Food Units

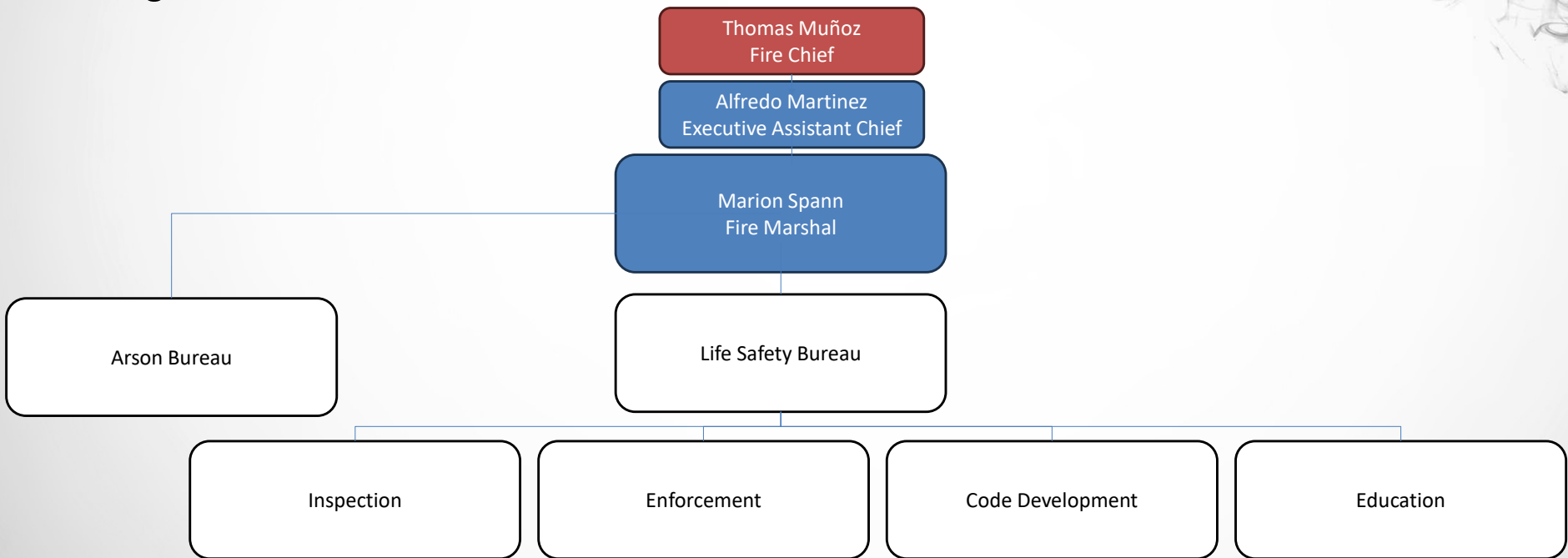
HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT



Quality of Life Committee/03.02.2025

Houston Fire Department

Organization Chart (selected)



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Mobile Food Units

Authorities

- Houston Code of Ordinances Chapter 20-37(a)
 - Any person desiring to operate one or more mobile food units in the city other than restricted operations mobile food units shall obtain an individual medallion for each...
- Mobile Food Unit Medallion – Houston Permitting Center
 - Approved by HHD through HPC. HFD has minimal oversight (LP gas)
- Life Safety Bureau Standard #10, sections 11.2-11.17
 - Can be provided to council upon request

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Mobile Food Units

HFD Purview

Rule

“Standby Personnel shall be required for all events where there are in use **four (4) or more LP-gas cooking appliances**, including mobile food preparation vehicles.

Exception

1. There are no more than four (4) appliances in use at the event, and the appliances are of the approved, portable type that uses non-refillable canisters. (For food preparation inside a building or structure, see Section 6103.2.1.7 of the Fire Code.)

2. The appliances used are mobile food units that meet the requirements of Appendix E of this standard.

The jurisdiction shall provide the standby personnel upon application and payment of fees specified in the Fire Code, and the standby personnel assigned shall be in uniform and shall remain on duty during the times such places are open to the public or when such activity is being conducted.




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Mobile Food Units

Inspections & Complaints



 Houston Fire Marshal's Office
MOBILE FOOD UNIT INSPECTION REPORT
1002 Washington Avenue, Houston, TX 77002

Annual Permit

MFU NAME _____ Date _____

MFU ADDRESS _____

OCCUPANT _____

CELL PHONE # _____ Email _____

MEDALLION # _____

PROJECT # _____ License Plate/VIN # _____

Apply for an LP-Gas permit for mobile food units (MFUs) using any amount of LP-Gas for commercial cooking. Go to the Houston Permitting Center at 1002 Washington, \$32,394.8811. Provide receipt for MFU inspection. Once approved, the LP-Gas permit will be mailed to you. The annual LP-Gas permit must be approved by the Houston Fire Marshal's Office within 90 calendar days of purchase (application receipt). **This permit shall be kept within the MFU.** The MFU does not need to be driven to 1002 Washington.

Provide an approved LP-Gas inspection report along with tags/stickers displayed on all LP-Gas appliances that are valid for **12 months** indicating that a commissioned (Railroad Commission of Texas) LP-Gas company has inspected the equipment. It must be approved by the Houston Fire Marshal's Office within 90 calendar days of the date printed on the LP-Gas system inspection report. The report must uniquely identify the MFU via a license plate #.

LP-Gas alarm shall be installed within the vehicle in the vicinity of the LP-Gas components (appliances). I acknowledge alarm will be installed prior to operation. IFC 319.8.5 Initial

All LP-Gas appliances shall be secured to the MFU so to reduce gas line separation or damage.

All unused LP-Gas lines shall be plugged or capped off.

All MFUs shall carry a red (3A-40BC minimum) fire extinguisher. In addition, a silver (Type K) fire extinguisher will be carried where deep-fry cooking is used. Lastly, where there is Automatic Suppression System (or KSS), it shall be maintained. All shall have current inspection tags. The tags for fire extinguishers expire annually, and the tag for the KSS expire every 6 months.

"No Smoking" signs shall be visible near propane containers in both English and Spanish.

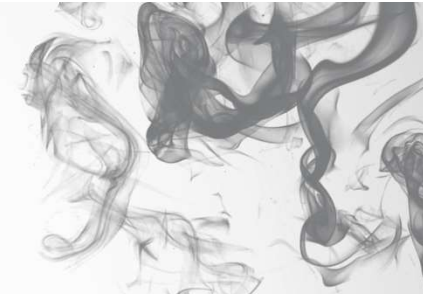
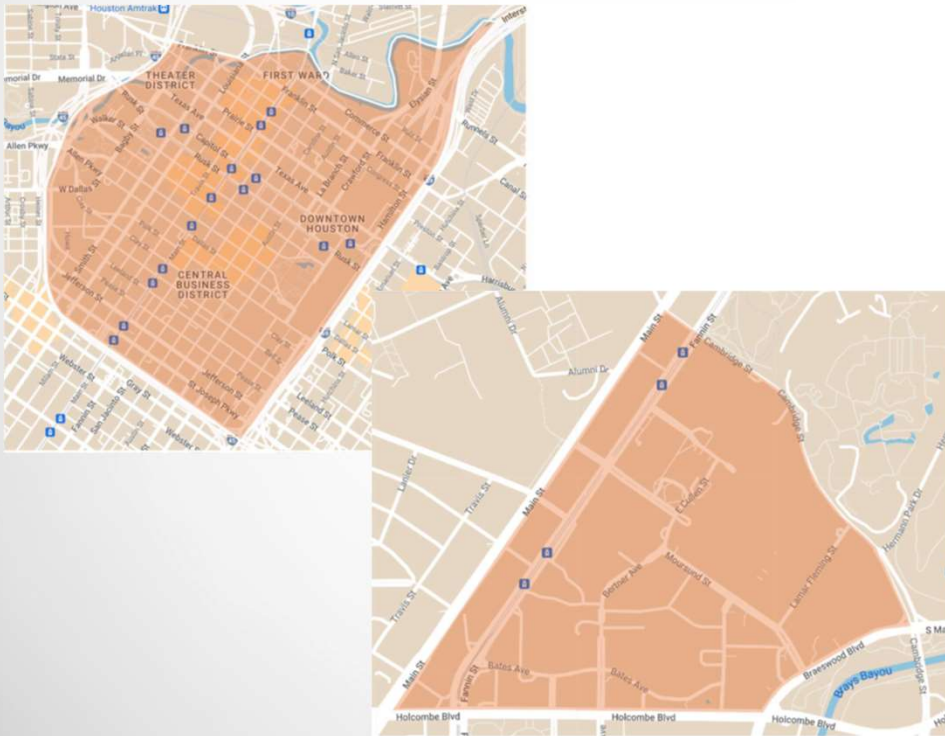
- Inspections performed during permitting process
- Enforcement is complaint-based
- 100 Inspectors across multiple shifts
- MFU complaints are not overwhelming
- No way to track MFU locations outside of special events
- Many complaints are competing MFUs

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Mobile Food Units

Districts of Limitation (Downtown/TMC)



10.3.7 Container Size – DOL No. 1 and No. 2.

The **maximum single LP-gas container size** allowed within DOL No. 1 and No. 2 will be limited to a **60-lb container**. **Two 30-lb containers** may be manifolded when equipment is approved in advance and in compliance with Section 10.3.4 above. When the project need is such that a greater amount of LP-gas is required for a specific appliance, **100-lb containers** may be used when approved in advance.

10.3.8 Container Size Outside DOL No. 1.

The maximum single LP-gas container size allowed **outside DOL No. 1** may be a **100-lb container when approved in advance**. The approval will be conditional, based on the projected need of gas for specific appliances and/or the presence of Standby Personnel.

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Mobile Food Units

Compliance Challenges

- Chief complaint –abandoned propane bottles
 - Confiscation not feasible
- If multiple MFUs create a violation, who receives the ticket?
- Data management – all complaints must be searched via address



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Mobile Food Units

Final Thoughts

- Complaints are manageable
- Low accountability of property owners for food truck parks
- More clear prohibitions on MFU density for daily operations

