

Handwashing Advice

for mobile caterers, market traders, and other mobile food vendors

Effective handwashing is extremely important to prevent harmful bacteria, viruses and other contaminants spreading from people's hands.

Food law requires that appropriate facilities are to be available to maintain adequate personal hygiene (including facilities for the hygienic washing and drying of hands, hygienic sanitary arrangements and changing facilities);



Pre-wrapped and low risk foods

Where only low risk open foods such as biscuits, sweets, olives etc are for sale and utensils are used for handling the food, or where the food is fully wrapped the food business maybe able to justify not having flowing water if they can show a sufficient supply of disposable gloves, utensils and the ability to wash their hands in a basin, filled with clean water from a flask.

However, there are now affordable, portable wash hand basins that provide flowing water and so businesses should look to purchase and use these.

Preparing and handling open high risk foods

This includes foods, such as raw & cooked meats, meat products, dairy products, cream cakes.

Where open and/or high-risk food is handled there must be good wash hand facilities. These should include a basin or sink with a supply of hot and cold (or appropriately mixed) running water, soap and hand drying facilities such as paper towels (reusable towels are not allowed).

Thermos flasks of hot water are not recommended as they do not hold enough water. Hand pump flasks are not suitable as you cannot rub hands together under a stream of water and you may contaminate the pump button, plus provide a contamination risk from dirty water being collected in an open bowl.



Handwashing Units

Small compact self-contained hand wash units that run off a vehicle's electrical system are available. Bowls that fold or clip away make it easy to use for the food business operator.

These may be available to hire. The water supply for hand washing must be separate from that used for making beverages. Larger stalls with several preparation areas and busy serveries may require multiple hand basins.

A simple web search for 'portable hand wash units' will produce a number of hits for various wash hand stations. Lancaster City Council cannot recommend or endorse any one brand or type of wash hand basin, food businesses must determine which units will be best for them, based on available facilities (power, plumbed or nearby water source etc) intended usage and demand for handwashing



Example wash hand basins, readily available to purchase or hire

These portable handwash units are ideal for mobile caterers that have no access to water or power supplies. They hold up to 9 litres of water and can keep water warm.

Currently retailing for under £200



This EAIN portable unit is foot operated with separate reservoirs for clean and dirty water. Currently retailing at under £100 on amazon.

These hand wash units can retail for several hundred pounds

