



Before You Buy That Food Truck

Eight things to check on the actual unit — before any money moves. Print this, take it to the viewing, and don't skip one. **These are common items first-time buyers miss. They are not a complete inspection.**

THE MOST EXPENSIVE MISUNDERSTANDING

A permit does not come with the truck. Your DSHS license is issued to you as the operator — it is not attached to the vehicle and it does not transfer with a sale. "It was permitted last year" tells you the truck passed somebody else's inspection under whatever rules applied then.

- 1**

Three-compartment sink
Bring your largest pan. Put it in.

Each compartment has to fully submerge your biggest utensil for wash, rinse, and sanitize. Compact sinks often won't take a full-size hotel pan. Don't eyeball it.

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Separate handwash sink
Its own sink. Hot water. Turn it on.

Not one of the three compartments. It has to reach handwashing temperature from the unit's own water heater, not a hose.

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- 3**

Wastewater tank vs. potable
Read both capacities off the tanks.

Wastewater must be larger than potable. Equal-size tanks are one of the most common problems on older builds and on trucks built for other states.

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Run every system on the unit
Own power. Own water. No shortcuts.

Fill the tank, run the pump, heat the water, cool the refrigeration. A truck parked on a fixed hookup for two years often has a pump nobody has tested since.

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- 5**

Screening at every opening
Check every vent.

Cheap to fix, and easy to miss. Missing screening can result in a failed inspection or a required correction — which means another trip through the scheduling queue.

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NOTES — WHAT YOU FOUND, WHAT IT'LL COST

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Interior surfaces

Smooth, cleanable, light-colored.

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Look for exposed wood, texture, dark paneling, anything porous. Custom builds and DIY conversions are the usual offenders. This one gets expensive fast.

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Is it actually movable?

No permanent utility connections.

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The unit must be operational and movable at inspection. If it's been hard-connected and parked for years, that's a real question — and possibly a different permitting path.

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Does it match your menu?

Your food sets your type. Not the truck.

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Preparing raw protein generally increases equipment and permitting requirements — your menu helps determine the applicable risk category. A unit built for snow cones won't get you there. Buy for your menu, not for the deal.

WHAT THIS LIST DOESN'T COVER

The eight items above are things you can check yourself in a parking lot. They're the ones that catch the most first-time buyers — but they're not the whole picture.

Electrical is where most buyers are guessing. Wiring, panel capacity, how the equipment is connected, and whatever the last owner modified. A truck can run fine on shore power and still have wiring or electrical modifications that deserve a closer look.

Propane deserves the same attention. Look for corrosion on the piping, the condition of connections, and how the lines are routed. If anything looks questionable, that's a system worth having evaluated before you buy, not after.

Also worth a real look: plumbing and water systems, the condition and capacity of cooking and refrigeration equipment, and the structural quality of the build itself — especially on conversions.

If you're looking at your first truck, you may not know what you're looking at. That's not a knock; most people don't. It's just worth knowing before the money moves.

ASK THE SELLER — BEFORE YOU TALK PRICE

- ☐ Was this unit ever licensed in Texas, and under which type?
- ☐ Do you have the last inspection report?
- ☐ Who built it, and when?
- ☐ What's been replaced or modified since?
- ☐ Can I run every system while I'm standing here?
- ☐ Why are you selling it?

WHAT YOU FIND IS ALSO WHAT YOU NEGOTIATE WITH

Every problem on this list is a number. A sink that has to be replaced, a tank that has to be upsized, surfaces that have to be redone — those are real quotes you can get in writing. That list is your negotiating position. Sellers who genuinely didn't know usually take it seriously. Sellers who did know usually stop arguing.

Not sure what you're looking at?

Send us the listing, photos, and a live video walkthrough before you pay. We'll tell you what that specific unit would need to become permitted in Texas — in writing, so you can price the work and take the number back to the seller.

(956) 592-2896

Call or text — a working Texas operator, not a call center.

Still shopping, no specific truck yet
30-Minute Consultation • \$49

Looking at one specific unit
Pre-Purchase Truck Audit • \$297