

# TRANSIENT MERCHANT PERMIT FACTS AND INFORMATION

Everyone who wishes to sell food, beverages, or merchandise in Des Moines from a vehicle, trailer, pushcart, or temporary structure must have a transient merchant license. Transient merchants may only be located on private properties which have a current Premise Permit. Premise permits and Transient Merchant licenses can both be acquired through the City Clerk's Office.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TRANSIENT MERCHANT LICENSE AND A MOBILE VENDOR LICENSE?

*Mobile vendors* can locate on properties with a current premise permit, but may also use a meter hood to park at meters on designated downtown streets. They may sell food and beverages for immediate consumption only. There are additional fees associated with the meter hoods. Applications are available from the City Clerk's Office. *Transient merchants* may only locate on properties with a current Premise Permit.

## HOW DO I GET A LICENSE?

Applications are available from the [City Clerk's Office](#). Applications will only be accepted with all the required documents and fees. Licenses are not transferrable.

You must apply at least three business days in advance of the license being issued.

All past due City fines or charges must be paid ([parking tickets](#), false alarms, etc.)

You will need to provide:

- Completed application
- All fees
- Any applicable state licenses ([mobile food unit license](#), etc.)
- Certificates of business and liability insurance
- Iowa Retail Sales Tax Permit ([Iowa Department of Revenue](#))
- Fire inspection form if required ([Des Moines Fire Department](#))
- Certified Food Protection Manager Certifications
- Copy of Driver's License

## WHEN IS A LICENSE NOT REQUIRED?

- Yard sales (twice a year)
- Selling raw fruits or vegetables
  - Must obtain property owner permission.
  - Contact Zoning (283-4182) for setup information.
- Selling natural Christmas trees during November and December
- Selling for a charitable organization for a limited time.
  - Contact the Clerk's Office (283-4209) for additional information.
- If you are part of a group with a street closure permit for a special event

## WHAT ARE THE FEES FOR A TRANSIENT MERCHANT LICENSE?

- Annual license - \$570
- 30-day license - \$220 (*consecutive days*)
- 3-day license - \$150 (*consecutive days*)
- Fire Inspection - \$100 (*subsequent inspections on the same vehicle are at no charge*)
- Cash Bond - \$200
  - The cash bond can be paid by check, cash, or credit card.
  - The bond is one-time fee, and can be refunded on request four months after sales stop if no claim has been made on the bond.

## I WANT TO:

- Park on the street
  - At meters in the four downtown mobile vendor zones - you will need a Mobile Vendor License. Contact the City Clerk's Office for information and maps of these zones.
  - Areas other than the downtown zones – parking on the street is prohibited. Contact the City Clerk's Office about acquiring a Premise Permit if there is a non-residential property you would like to sell from.
- Participate in a special event
  - If the street is closed for the event, contact the event coordinator. You will not need a transient merchant license if not required by the event, and there is a street closure permit for the event.
  - If the street is not closed, you may only park at a location which has a current premise permit, if you have a Transient Merchant license.
  - If the street is not closed but there are streets designated for mobile vendor parking nearby, ask about acquiring a Mobile Vendor license to park nearby.
- Park on a certain property
  - The property will need a current premise permit. Premise permits are not issued for residential properties.
- Sell from a sidewalk, alley, or driveway
  - Selling from these areas is prohibited
- Sell in a park
  - Certain parks allow mobile food vendors or transient merchants with a current license – contact the Park and Recreation Department at 237-1386 for requirements.
- Cater for a wedding, birthday, etc.
  - The vehicle must either be parked on a property with a current premise permit, or be a mobile vendor parked on a designated downtown street.

## HOW DO I GET A PREMISE PERMIT?

Premise permit applications are available from the City Clerk's Office and must be completed by the property owner. Contact the Zoning Department (283-4182) for assistance with getting a map, or with questions regarding locations.

- Annual licenses are \$100.
- A map showing the location of the vendor setup must be submitted with the application.
- Premise permits will only be issued in commercial and industrial zones – no residential areas.

## WHAT ARE THE RULES?

- The license and sales tax permit must be displayed so it is visible to the public during hours of operation.
- All equipment, temporary structures, garbage, trailers, and vehicles **must be removed** from the premises when the business is not open.
- You can have one sign, not more than 24 square feet in area, that is securely anchored. It must be located outside the required front yard setback area.
- You may only operate on a premise with a current premise permit, and only one transient merchant license holder may operate on premises at a time.
- Refer to the Acknowledgement Form on the application or the City ordinance for additional rules and regulations. You may contact the City Clerk's Office for information or questions.

## WHAT ACTIVITIES DOES THE LICENSE NOT COVER?

Selling from a sidewalk, street, alley, driveway access, or public way is prohibited – for instance, you cannot use a pushcart or bicycle to sell from these areas, you must be located on a licensed premise.

Transient merchants may not operate in a residential area.

## **WHO DO I NEED TO CONTACT?**

### **CITY CLERK'S OFFICE**

515-283-4209

400 Robert D. Ray Drive

8am-5pm Mon-Fri

cityclerk@dmgov.org

- Applications
- General questions

### **ZONING DIVISION**

515-283-4182

602 Robert D. Ray Drive

8am-5pm Mon-Fri

- Assistance with site plans
- Reviewing site plans
- Enforcement of violations

### **IOWA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE**

515-281-3114

<https://tax.iowa.gov/>

Hoover State Office Building, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

1305 E. Walnut

- Retail Sales Tax Permits

### **IOWA DEPARTMENT OF INSPECTIONS AND APPEALS**

515-281-6538

<https://dia.iowa.gov/>

Lucas State Office Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor

321 East 12<sup>th</sup> St

- Mobile Food Unit Licenses
- Food establishment licenses

### **DES MOINES FIRE DEPARTMENT**

515-283-4240

- Fire inspections

For information on where to acquire Certified Food Protection Manager certifications, please see the information sheet included with the application packet.