

## Module 8: Food Truck Maintenance

### Learning Objectives

- Establish a working relationship between student representatives from different CTE programs in the form of a Steering Committee;
- Ensure that protocols for the regular maintenance of the food truck are designed by automotive students and upheld by culinary students;
- Develop guidelines to maintain the health and safety of all employees and customers of the food truck.

### Resources

- National Fire Protection Association: Food truck safety [\[website\]](#)
- U.S. Department of Transportation: Food truck awareness flier [\[pdf\]](#)
- Why food truck maintenance is a priority [\[website\]](#)
- Keeping your food trucks clean and ready to serve [\[website\]](#)
- Beginner's guide to food truck maintenance [\[website\]](#)
- Foodtruckr: Truck maintenance [\[website\]](#)
- What is a commissary kitchen? [\[website\]](#)
- Occupational safety and health administration [\[website\]](#)

### Professional Development Topics:

- Food truck steering committee
  - Facilitating meetings between different programs
  - Establishing best practices for ways of working and collaborating between programs
  - Supporting student leadership and their growth and development
- Food truck maintenance
  - Fundamental practices for maintaining a food truck
  - Deep understanding of the maintenance and / or repairs look-fors, for both the interior and exterior of the truck
  - Emergency roadside repairs and assistance
- Kitchen safety and cleanliness
  - Deep understanding of inspection guidelines set out by local health agency
  - Occupational health and safety — ensuring that certifications are up to date
  - Cleaning protocols for the food truck, especially the equipment, to ensure longevity and functionality

This module will support teachers in setting up the working relationship between students in the culinary and automotive CTE programs. It is possible that the school that is running the food truck program doesn't have an automotive CTE program as part of the school or district. If this is the case, it is suggested that outreach be done to other schools within the area that have an automotive program to suggest a collaborative partnership between the two. This is a rich learning opportunity for students in both programs! The intention of this module is to complement the work that is being done in the automotive industry program and to ensure the smooth operation of the food truck.

## Food Truck Steering Committee

Throughout the Intuit food truck program, there are ample opportunities for students within different CTE programs to collaborate and make important decisions together. To support these partnerships, it is recommended that a [Food Truck Steering Committee](#) be developed to support healthy working relationships between students in the culinary, automotive, graphic design and agriculture programs.

The work that is outlined in Modules 8, 9 and 10 will all be supported by a steering committee.

Work Based Learning initiatives like the food truck program are most effective when the business is student-led. This means that all planning and strategic decisions are carried out by students, with the teacher(s) acting as support through a facilitator role. Similar to a business in the working world, there will be times where employees fail, make mistakes or make decisions that lead them down a different path. These things are also bound to happen to the food truck program participants; however, rather than being seen as a negative, these should be seen as learning opportunities for students to reflect, set new goals and identify the actions they need to take in order to meet those goals.

The purpose of the Steering Committee is to act as representatives from the different CTE programs, and be the liaison between their classmates and other programs involved in the food truck. The committee should consist of student and teacher representatives, including but not limited to:

- an administrator;
- the teacher from culinary, automotive, graphic design, business, marketing, agriculture, and any other program that is a part of the food truck business; and
- two student leaders from each of the CTE programs.

While administrators and teachers are part of the committee, it is important that any meetings are run by students, with teachers overseeing the process.

As teachers prepare to teach the next few modules, it is important that decisions be made where student representatives are chosen for the committee. This can be done in one of two ways: students can either apply for the position, explaining why they believe they would represent their program and classmates well; or the students themselves can use a democratic process to vote in two leaders.

Once the representatives are chosen for each program, it is important that an initial meeting be set with all committee members. This initial meeting will set the expectations and working norms for the committee, so that all meetings going forward are productive and are goal-oriented. In addition, it is suggested a collaborative calendar be created that includes all committee members, the dates of meetings going forward and the decisions that need to be made at each checkpoint.

## Initial Food Truck Steering Committee Meeting

### → Introductions

- Personal introductions and share a bit about what your program is excited about with respect to the food truck program

### → Establish working norms

- Determine what each representative will come to each meeting with
- Determine who will keep minutes of the meeting and how they will be shared
- Develop strategies for conflict resolution

### → Set calendar and expectations

- Create a joint calendar that is shared among all committee members
- Book all calendar meetings
  - Suggested cadence of meeting monthly at the outset of the program; as priorities change, these meetings can be spread out along a further timeline
- Set goals for each meeting
  - What reports will people bring to each meeting?
  - What decisions need to be made at each checkpoint?

### → Questions

- Establish a way to collect all questions in one place

Within the subsequent modules, the roles and expectations of the Steering Committee will be identified as students work towards accomplishing goals.

## Food truck maintenance and ensuring safety

The maintenance of the food truck is something that students from both the culinary and automotive CTE programs will be responsible for, and required to collaborate on. Students within the [culinary program](#) are expected to identify any issues or troubles they are experiencing with respect to the truck in good time so that any maintenance can be done in a timely manner. This ensures the truck — and all related equipment — remains in good working order. It is also the expectation that students within the [automotive program](#) set a calendar with regularly scheduled maintenance that the truck will need, and share that with the culinary students at the outset of the program. This will ensure that events, or scenarios where the food truck is in use, and scheduled maintenance do not overlap.

## Setting expectations and guidelines

Students within the automotive program are required to set the checklist and expectations that will support the maintenance of the food truck. They will need to consider what needs to be inspected before any event where the truck is in service, and ensure clarity of those expectations with culinary students.

This checklist should be comprehensive, with each step laid out clearly, and should include things like: checking tire pressure, oil levels, filling up the tank with gas, propane inventory for the cookware, washing/waxing the truck, filling reservoirs with fresh water, disposing of greywater, etc.

As experts in the field, automotive students should use this list as a starting point, and determine what additional checks are required and when to ensure the safety and longevity of the truck.

Students may develop a checklist that looks like the example below, or they may have another template to use. It is recommended that the checklist be made using digital tools, such as Google Forms or Microsoft Forms, to allow for easier collection, compilation and sharing of information. This, in turn, will help with developing a tracking system, where culinary students can log any potential issues they notice with the food truck and collaborate with the automotive students to develop a workback plan.

## Pre-event and / or daily maintenance checklist

*Complete all maintenance checks prior to the food truck going into service at an event. Note any questions or issues that come out of the check so they can be dealt with in a timely manner.*

| Student inspector's name | Date of inspection |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
|                          |                    |

| Safety check                                                                                                                                                             | Completion               | Notes / concerns |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| Confirm adequate tire pressure                                                                                                                                           | <input type="checkbox"/> |                  |
| Ensure no warning lights are visible / 'ON' on the dashboard                                                                                                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |                  |
| Confirm adequate oil level                                                                                                                                               | <input type="checkbox"/> |                  |
| Fill up gas tank                                                                                                                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |                  |
| Ensure enough propane is available to run all cookware                                                                                                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |                  |
| Wash / wax the truck                                                                                                                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |                  |
| Fill reservoirs with fresh water                                                                                                                                         | <input type="checkbox"/> |                  |
| Dispose of greywater                                                                                                                                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |                  |
| Ensure there is a roadside safety kit in the truck with all necessary equipment ( <i>first aid kit, fire extinguisher, jumper cables, flashlight, spare tire, jack</i> ) | <input type="checkbox"/> |                  |
| Ensure the exterior of the truck is up to standard (no chipped paint, visible rust, etc.)                                                                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |                  |
| Check for cracks in the windshield                                                                                                                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |                  |

In addition to creating the expectations and checks for daily maintenance and safety, students from both programs will need to collaborate to create schedules for ongoing, routine maintenance. Using a digital, collaborative calendar will ensure that students in both programs are aware of the expectations from their classmates and program to ensure that the truck remains in safe and good working order.

While maintenance students will work to develop a more comprehensive list, the preliminary basis for routine maintenance should include:

- the frequency for maintenance;
- the items to be inspected at each scheduled maintenance checkpoint;
  - *Check tire alignment and balance*
  - *Rotate tires*
  - *Check tire pressure*
  - *Change the oil (as needed) in both the truck and generator*
  - *Check and change filters (transmission, oil, air, fuel) as needed*
  - *Check all fluids (brake, power steering, transmission, windshield wiper, antifreeze)*
  - *Check the battery*
  - *Check the wipers*
  - *Check the belts and hoses (note any fraying, cracking or leaking)*
- the process by which repairs take place (i.e. who on the maintenance team is responsible for completing them, expected turnaround time, etc.);
- how often parts need to be replaced;
- and the processes for ordering/replacing parts.

The reports and updates will set the foundation for Steering Committee meetings, where representatives from each program will be responsible for bringing the following reports:

| Automotive students                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Culinary students                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ General maintenance report               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Any issues that came out of the last checklist</i></li> <li>• <i>Notes around what maintenance / repairs are upcoming, and what's been completed</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>→ Cost of fuel               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Reports from the latest month, and how this measures against previous months</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>→ Oil change schedules               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>When is the next schedule change?</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Schedule of upcoming events for the next month               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Dates</i></li> <li>• <i>Locations, including the estimated number of miles that will be driven</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>→ Notification of any mechanical issues with the food truck               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Summary of reports that have been generated from latest checklist completions, making note of needed repairs or issues</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

## Kitchen equipment maintenance and cleaning

In order to maintain health and safety standards for the food truck, students are required to ensure that the truck is clean and up to date with maintenance and repairs. Not only does this ensure the longevity of the truck, it also ensures that the food is prepared in a clean and safe working kitchen.

Each Intuit powered food truck will be outfitted with commercial grade equipment. All food trucks will have a refrigerator, freezer, charbroil grill, flat top griddle, deep fryer, steam table, two burner stove, exhaust hood, fire suppression system, water tank and greywater tank, hot water heater, sandwich table and cooler, generator or solar/battery system, electrical breaker panel, and propane system. Keeping a commercial kitchen clean is just as, if not more, important than keeping the kitchen in a home clean. Safe food handling and storage, in addition to maintaining cleanliness, will reduce the possibility of spreading food-borne illnesses and the prevalence of rodents or bugs. The layout of a food truck is especially unique when it comes to safety and cleanliness of the kitchen, as the food prep and service areas are located close to the equipment, resulting in greater risk of cross-contamination.

Culinary students will need to familiarize themselves with the health and safety standards set out by their local health department, as they will need to adhere to these standards in order to meet the criteria for passing any inspections. Students should know that healthy and safety inspections can be scheduled; however, they can also be unscheduled where a representative from the health department may show up unannounced to assess the condition of the kitchen.

To ensure that the food truck kitchen remains safe, healthy and in good working order, students will need to set a cleaning schedule that includes the frequency and expectations for each cleaning session. While students should be setting their own schedule and expectations, they may wish to use this information as a starting point:

### Daily cleaning

- ☐ Wipe & disinfect all dishes, pots, pans & utensils
- ☐ Properly store all food products
  - Use of airtight containers or shrink wrap to cover any food products to ensure freshness
- ☐ Dispose of any garbage and recycling (in the appropriate legal receptacles)
- ☐ Wipe down and disinfect all surfaces and food prep areas
- ☐ Clean all cooking equipment (i.e. emptying the grease in the fryer)
  - *Note: not only is this for health and safety reasons, it also is required for fire safety regulations*
- ☐ Clean hood grease filters
- ☐ Mop the floor

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Weekly cleaning  | <input type="checkbox"/> All daily cleaning steps<br><input type="checkbox"/> Get rid of expired food<br><input type="checkbox"/> Empty, wipe down and disinfect the interior of the fridge and freezer<br><input type="checkbox"/> Deep clean the interior & exterior of cooking equipment, such as ovens, charbroil grill, steam table, etc.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sharpen knives<br><input type="checkbox"/> Check for signs of pests and rodents                                                                                      |
| Monthly cleaning | <input type="checkbox"/> All daily and weekly cleaning steps<br><input type="checkbox"/> Wash behind the hotline ( <i>including stoves, ovens and fryers</i> )<br><input type="checkbox"/> Clean / disinfect fresh water tanks<br><input type="checkbox"/> Defrost and disinfect the freezer<br><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure maintenance of the truck is up to date ( <i>i.e. generator oil change, truck oil change, etc.</i> )<br><input type="checkbox"/> Wash the walls and ceiling, paying particular note to the removal of oil stains |

Students should recognize that daily cleaning allows them to better stay on top of maintenance, health and safety, as opposed to allowing the mess to accumulate over time. Maintaining a clean and organized food truck kitchen not only adheres to food safety guidelines, it also ensures the safe operation of the business by keeping the employees safe. Ensuring that everything has a designated spot in the kitchen (e.g. knives, dirty pots and pans, food containers, etc.) helps to prevent injuries, accidents and fires.

First impressions matter. Customers are more likely to order from a food truck that looks to be in good working condition and clean. Maintaining the exterior and interior of the food truck will support students in having successful customer engagements.

## Preparing for health inspections

As previously mentioned, students will need to follow strict health codes set in place by their local region. Students must always be prepared for a health inspection to occur, and therefore it is important for them to set protocols of what needs to be in place so that they are always prepared. Note that it is important for students to look up the health codes for their region, as there may be some variation between regions.

Students will use the cleaning schedule and expectations they designed earlier in this module as a starting point of being ready for inspections. Additional protocols to set may fall under these categories:

## Minimizing the risk of food-borne illness

*Inspectors may look for:*

- Proper hand hygiene and washing
- Food that is coming from approved sources (*i.e. food suppliers, farms, or through the school's agricultural program*)
- Safe food storing practices (*i.e. at the proper temperature*)
- Possible risks for where cross-contamination between raw and cooked food may occur

## Hazardous foods in terms of potential for spreading food-borne illnesses

*Inspectors may look for:*

- Food storage temperatures of all meat, poultry and seafood products to ensure they are kept at safe temperatures
- Cook time and internal temperatures of food to minimize risk of illness

## Proper storage and organization

*Inspectors may look for:*

- Food storage containers that are appropriately labeled (*minimizes the risk of cross-contamination or using the wrong food product in cooking*)
- Operator permit that is up to date and grants permission to operate your food truck business in the locations you are parked
- Meat thermometers that are properly calibrated
- Overall cleanliness and sanitation of the truck and its equipment

## Food safety knowledge

*Inspectors may look for:*

- Strong understanding and practice of safe food handling and preparation
- Information about what, if any, foods are prepared ahead of service, and if so, how they are cooled and reheated
- Employees' understanding of how foods are prepared from scratch and done in a way that is safe
- Handwashing and glove use policy
- Understanding who is in charge of pest control
- Process for training new employees
- Policies around employee health and reporting workplace injuries or illnesses

*All employees of a commercial kitchen are required to complete [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA) training. Doing so will support employees in preparing for this section of the inspection. Consider checking your state requirements to determine how often employees need to be trained.*

## Waste management

Like all commercial food establishments, food trucks must develop a waste management plan that adheres to specific guidelines and proper disposal practices. Knowing how to safely and *legally* dispose of waste will be important for culinary students to know in the food truck program. They will need to do some research of their local region to know what the appropriate protocols are. Ignoring these protocols put the food truck business at risk of getting written up or losing their operating license by local inspectors.

Within the food truck community, many businesses work with commissaries as they may be [legally bound to do](#). It is important that students check the requirements for their region as to whether working with a commissary is necessary. A food commissary is essentially a rentable, commercial grade kitchen, where small businesses, such as food trucks, can prepare and store food, in addition to safely disposing of grease, wastewater and solid waste. Commissaries will also provide food truck businesses with a place to dispose of waste. Since most commissaries are shared spaces, the amount of food waste has the potential to be minimized if businesses are willing to share food products with one another. This aligns with students' embracing a sustainability lens to the operations of their food truck business.

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A food commissary is a rentable, commercial grade kitchen. Many food trucks are required to use these spaces to safely prepare and store food, as well as disposing of grease and wastewater.

As a food truck moves around from place to place, it must be equipped with a proper waste management system where it can hold onto water waste, solid waste and used oil before making it back to the commissary to dispose of it entirely. This means the truck should be equipped with a wastewater tank that is big enough to hold the output of daily water and food particles. In addition, the food truck should have a hose that will connect the tank to an external disposal system. If this is not possible, students will need to empty the tank through buckets that will then be disposed of in the commissary or through another waste management system.

It is the responsibility of the culinary students to uphold the appropriate disposal practices to ensure that they are in alignment with their region's healthy and safety protocols.

To provide feedback on this module, please use this [form](#).

## 5 Key Things to Remember

In summary, the 5 key things to remember from this module are:

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Student representatives for each of the CTE programs represented in the Intuit food truck program will form part of the Food Truck Steering Committee, where they will act as a liaison between their classmates and the other programs involved in the business. |
| 2 | Students within the automotive program will collaborate with culinary students to set the standards for the ongoing maintenance and safety checks of the food truck, which they will uphold.                                                                      |
| 3 | Local health and safety inspectors have their own requirements and regulations that may vary by region. It is the responsibility of students to research and uphold these requirements for the safe operation of the food truck business.                         |
| 4 | Regular cleaning of the food truck will minimize the risk of food-borne illnesses and prevalence of rodents or pests.                                                                                                                                             |
| 5 | Like all commercially operating kitchens, a food truck is responsible for disposing of grease, wastewater and solid food waste in a way that upholds the standards set out by inspectors.                                                                         |