



Henrico Health Department

MOBILE FOOD UNIT OPERATION GUIDE

Guidelines for Food Service









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A summary of the Food Sanitation Rules relating to mobile food units

The Mobile Food Unit Guide is intended to help you set up and operate your mobile food unit in a sanitary and safe manner. By focusing on critical food safety practices, you will reduce the possibility of foodborne illness. While this guide provides some detailed information about operating a mobile food unit, it does not contain all the requirements for your unit. The Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Health Food Regulations 12 VAC 5-421 are available at http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/EnvironmentalHealth/Food/

Definitions

Approved water supply: A waterworks which has a valid waterworks operation permit from the department or a nonpublic water supply which is evaluated, tested, and if found in reasonable compliance with the construction standards of the Private Well Regulations (12 VAC 5-630) and the bacteriological water quality standards of the Virginia Waterworks Regulation (12 VAC 5-590), accepted and approved by the director or the director's designee.

Bottled Drinking Water: Water that is sealed in bottles, packages, or other containers and offered for sale for human consumption.

Commissary: Is a catering establishment, restaurant, or health department permitted facility to which a mobile food unit returns **daily** for such things as vehicle and equipment cleaning, discharging liquid or solid wastes, refilling water tanks and ice bins, and where food is kept, handled, prepared, packaged, or stored.

Consumer: A person who is a member of the public, takes possession of food, is not functioning in the capacity of an operator of a food establishment or food processing plant, and does not offer the food for resale.

Corrosion-resistant Materials: A material that maintains acceptable surface cleanability characteristics under prolonged influence of the food to be contacted, the normal use of cleaning compounds and sanitizing solutions, and other conditions of the environment.

Easily Cleanable: A non absorbent surface that allows effective removal of soil by normal cleaning methods.

Equipment: An article that is used in the operation of a food establishment. Includes, but is not limited to, items such as a freezer, grinder, hood, ice maker, meat block, mixer, oven, cooler, scale, sink, slicer, stove, table, thermometer, and vending machine.

Food-Contact Surface: A surface of equipment or a utensil with which food normally comes into contact with and from which may drain, drip, or splash into a food, or onto a surface normally in contact with food.

Hazard: A biological (microorganism), chemical (cleansers, pesticides), or physical (fingernail, plastic) property that may cause an unacceptable consumer health risk.

Mobile Food Unit: A vehicle-mounted food service establishment designed to be readily movable.

Packaged: Means bottled, canned, cartoned, securely bagged, or securely wrapped, whether packaged in a food establishment or a food processing plant.

Permit: License issued by regulatory authority that authorizes a person to operate a food establishment.

Plan Review: Conducted by the Environmental Health Specialist (EHS) by reviewing the menu, equipment list, and layout of the unit for several reasons: 1) To make sure the unit will be in compliance with the regulations, 2) to prevent any misunderstandings by the applicant/owner, and 3) to allow the EHS to become familiar with the operation and the owner, and 4) to identify potential future problems before the unit is permitted.

Potentially Hazardous Food: See Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food.

Pre-packaged Food: Means packaged or made up in advance in a container or wrapped and ready for offer to the consumer.

Pushcart: A non-self propelled vehicle or stand that is limited to serving non-potentially hazardous food, commissary covered food maintained at proper temperatures, or limited to the preparation and serving of plated, wrapped, or packaged frankfurter-like foods.

Ready-To-Eat Food: Food that is in a form that is edible without washing, cooking, or additional preparation. Examples are sandwiches, foods on a buffet, and sushi.

Sanitation: Reducing the number of bacteria to a safe level.

Self contained mobile food unit: A vehicle that meets the same requirements as a permanent facility where all the food preparation is done on the unit. As a minimum the unit must have: Mechanical holding units, gas or electric cooking equipment, water tanks, hand sinks, three compartment sinks, storage for all food, single service items, and cleaning supplies.

Service Area: An operating base location to which a mobile food establishment or transportation vehicle returns regularly for such things as vehicle and equipment

cleaning, discharging liquid or solid wastes, refilling water tanks and ice bins, and boarding food.

Temporary food establishment: Means a food establishment that operates for a period of no more than 14 consecutive days in conjunction with a single event or celebration.



Time/Temperature for Safety Control Food (hereafter referred to as TCS): A food that requires temperature control because it is capable of supporting the rapid growth of infectious or toxic microorganisms which can make people sick.



Utensil: A food-contact tool or container used in the storage, preparation, transportation, dispensing, sale, or service of food. Examples are tongs, ladles, gloves, thermometers, and deli paper.

Commissary Requirements

Mobile food units must operate from a commissary. A commissary is a licensed (permitted) restaurant or warehouse. A warehouse may be accepted if only prepackaged foods are sold and the facility is inspected by a regulatory agency.

The local health department in which the commissary is located will issue the permit to operate the mobile unit.

You shall report at least daily while your mobile unit is in use to your commissary for supplies, cleaning, and servicing.

A written agreement must be signed by the commissary operator and the mobile food unit operator with a copy provided to the Health Department. This agreement will give access to the service area to adequately meet all requirements in the regulations.

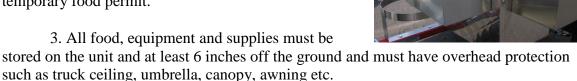
A self-contained mobile food unit may have the ability to operate without a commissary. Self-contained units must still use an approved Servicing Area. The decision will be made by the Environmental Health Specialist during the plan review.

You may use your own permitted restaurant or facility as your commissary.

What is a Mobile Food Unit?

Mobile food units are a type of restaurant and can operate year-round (kitchen on wheels). They vary in equipment and design, depending upon the type of food and service intended by the operator. The unit is a vehicle that is self-propelled, or can be pulled or pushed down a sidewalk, street, highway or waterway. Food may be prepared or processed on the vehicle which is used to sell and dispense food to the consumer. There is no size limit to mobile food units, but they must meet the following basic requirements:

- 1. A non-mobile unit or structure cannot be designated as a mobile unit. The intention is to be mobile and not a permanent fixture.
- 2. A permitted mobile food unit can serve at a temporary event without the issuance of a separate temporary food permit.



- 4. Additional insulated units (i.e. Igloo coolers) may **ONLY** be used to store bottled drinks and ice.
- 5. Cleaning supplies and soiled utensils may be stored in additional tubs or containers that are nonabsorbent, covered and stored in a manner as to prevent contamination or infestation.
- 6. A smooth and easily cleanable table may be assembled next to the unit **ONLY** for the purpose of serving condiments, napkins, and straws.
- 7. Mobile units **must** be positioned to keep the general public away from the food preparation and cooking areas of the unit.
- 8. Mobile units <u>do not</u> include automobiles, trucks, or vans not designed for food preparation (this includes the trunk of your car). No food products may be stored in your vehicle such as extra supplies of breads, packaged hot dogs in a cooler, or prepared foods stored in insulated units. You may be required to return to your commissary several times a day.
- 9. No crock pots or sterno type heating units may be used unless they fit on your unit.
 - 10. All grills, burners, and cooking equipment must be installed **on** or **to** your unit.

11. Cooling of hot TCS foods is not permitted on a mobile unit. Any cooling must be done at your commissary.

How is a Mobile Food Unit Classified?

There are four types of mobile food units. The mobile food unit classifications are based on the menu. A mobile unit can serve menu items within its classification number or below. For example a Class III unit may also sell items allowed in a Class II and Class I. Training and equipment requirements are located in Table 1.

Class I These units serve <u>only</u> non-TCS <u>commercially prepackaged</u> foods. No preparation or assembly is required and only bottled or canned drinks may be served. Examples include chips, crackers, cookies, soda, and sweets. These units **DO NOT** require a permit to operate.

Class II These units serve TCS and non-TCS <u>prepackaged</u> foods. No preparation or assembly on the unit is required. The food items may be prepared commercially or in a permitted restaurant. Examples: sandwiches, tossed salads, individually wrapped and cooked hot dogs/sausages.

Class III These units serve TCS and non-TCS unpackaged preassembled foods.

Self-service by customers of unpackaged food is not allowed. Preparation, assembly or cooking of raw foods is not allowed on this unit. Commercially prepared foods may be *reheated*. Examples: potato & macaroni salads, cole slaw, soups, hot dogs, chili, sauerkraut, cooked onions and peppers, shaved ice, and BBQ pork.

These units serve **TCS** and non-TCS foods that are prepared, cooked/reheated, and assembled on the unit using precooked and/or raw products. Examples: All meats, fish, poultry, plant foods, and dairy products.

Class II, III, and IV Units REQUIRE a permit to operate!

Class IV

Table 1: Mobile Food Unit General Requirements and Limitations

Requirements	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV
Plan Review	NO	YES	YES	YES
Commissary or	Commissary or Neither		Commissary or	Commissary or
Service Area		Service Area	Service Area	Service Area
Assembly or preparation allowed	NO	NO	Assembly only	YES
Cooking allowed	NO	NO	NO (Reheating ONLY)	YES
Cold holding facilities	NO	YES	YES	YES
Hot holding facilities	NO	YES	YES	YES
Water supply required hot & cold	NO	NO	YES	YES
Waste water tank	NO	NO	YES	YES
Handwashing sink required	NO	NO*	YES	YES
Dishwashing sinks required	NO	NO	YES**	YES**
Stove, hood, or vent fan	NO	NO	NO	YES
Examples	Snacks, sodas, cookies, chips, crackers	RTE's Prepackaged salads, hot dogs, sandwiches	Unpackaged hot dogs, chili, salads, corn on stick, soups	Menu to be reviewed

^{*}Hand sanitizer and/or towelettes required

^{**} Units with just a servicing area need a three compartment sink, however units that report to a commissary may not (to be determined at plan review by the Environmental Health Specialist).

Administrative Requirements

Licensing Your Mobile Food Unit

A Health Permit is required for Class II, III, and IV units. Before a Mobile Food Unit is licensed to operate, it must go through a plan review (menu and floor plan are required) with the local Environmental Health Department in the jurisdiction where the commissary is located. There may be other agencies from which you will be required to obtain approval. These include, but are not limited to planning (zoning), building codes, Fire Marshall, and other County authorities. Permits are valid for one year and <u>must be posted</u> in public view during all hours of operation. If a unit does not comply with the provisions of the regulations, such as returning to the service area on each day of operation, the permit for the unit may be suspended. Permits are non-transferable.

Fees are required for both the Annual Sate Food Permit and Plan Review.

Demonstration of Knowledge (DOK)

A Person in Charge (PIC) is required for all mobile food units. The PIC must successfully demonstrate knowledge of basic food safety principles by either passing a DOK test (written or verbal) or providing an accepted Certified Food Manager certificate.





Personal Hygiene Requirements

Employee Health Policy

The applicant/owner is required to have an employee health policy. Employees ill with diarrhea, fever, vomiting, jaundice, sore throat with fever, or discharge from the eyes, nose or mouth may not work with exposed food, clean equipment, utensils, linens or unwrapped single service items.

Handwashing Facilities (when required)

Handwashing is very important when working with food and drinks. Twenty (20) seconds of proper handwashing removes microorganisms that are known to cause illness.



Hand sinks must have warm running water (100°F), dispensed soap, paper towels, a handwashing sign, and wastebasket.

A Class II mobile unit may utilize hand sanitizer or wipes. A Class III and IV mobile unit must be plumbed to provide hot and cold running water.

No jewelry on the arms or hands shall be worn with the exception of a plain wedding band.

Clothing

Hair restraints and clean clothing are required when preparing food. An apron may be worn over daily clothing.

Cuts and sores

Cuts must be kept covered with an impermeable clean cover such as a finger cot or bandage and a single-use glove over the impermeable cover.



Gloves



Gloves are required to be worn when handling ready-to-eat food. It is always best to use utensils or deli sheets to handle all foods. Single use gloves shall be used for only one task such as working with ready-to-eat food or raw animal food, used for no other purpose, and discarded when damaged or soiled, or when interruptions occur during the operation.

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Food Sanitation Requirements

Food Source



All food products must be wholesome and free of spoilage, microorganisms, toxic chemicals, and other harmful substances that can make people sick. All food products must be prepared, stored, handled, or displayed so that it is safe for people to eat. Home canned or home processed foods are not allowed to be served to the public.

Food Safety Hand outs and training are available at the Henrico Health Department for additional information on proper food safety handling.

Water source



All water and ice used in the mobile food unit must be from an approved public water system. A mobile food unit may also use commercially bottled water.

The materials that are used in the construction of a mobile food unit water tank and accessories shall be safe, durable, corrosion resistant, nonabsorbent, and finished to have a smooth and easily cleanable surface.

Hoses used to fill potable water tanks shall be dedicated for that one task and shall be identified for that use to prevent contaminating the water. The hoses are usually white with a blue stripe or labeled by the manufacturer as "food grade".

Wastewater

A wastewater holding tank in a mobile food establishment shall be sized 15% larger in capacity than the water supply tank and sloped to a drain that is 1 inch in inner diameter or greater and equipped with a shut off valve.

Refer to 12 VAC 5-421-2360 through 12 VAC 5-421-2500 for additional regulation information in regards to water and wastewater tanks, backflow prevention, and grease trap requirements.

Cleaning and Sanitizing Requirements

Dishwashing

A three compartment sink with drainboards may be required on Class III and IV mobile food units.



Sanitizing

All food contact surfaces shall be cleaned and sanitized at least every four (4) hours.

Approved chemical sanitizers are Chlorine, Quaternary Ammonium Compounds (Quats), and Iodine. Surfaces may be sanitized using a spray bottle of sanitizer or clean wiping cloths stored in a sanitizing bucket.

Use test strips that are made for the sanitizer that you are using. The test strips will ensure that the sanitizer has been mixed according to the manufacturer's directions.





Do not use sponges to clean a food contact surface.



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General Food Protection

No food products are to be prepared or stored in private homes.

- > Store food and utensils at least six inches off the floor.
- > Store food only in food grade containers.
- ➤ Keep ready-to-eat foods away from raw food products.
- All mobile food units must have overhead protection (truck roof, umbrella, canvas, canopy)
- > Store chemicals such as detergents and sanitizers below and separate from the food and utensils.
- Properly label all chemical containers.
- ➤ Keep all garbage in a water tight container with lid.
- > Dispose of wastewater properly into a plumbed sanitary sewer.
- ➤ Protect food and equipment from insects, rodents, and other environmental contamination.
- ➤ The food storage and preparation areas of the mobile unit must be protected from public access.
- Condiments shall be dispensed in individual packets, squeeze bottles, or served by the employee.





Questions:

Please contact the Henrico Environmental Health Department office at (804) 501-4529 between the hours of 8:00AM and 4:30PM Monday through Friday if you have any questions on these requirements.

Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food:

TCS foods require FATTOM in order to survive and multiply. Foodborne illnesses can be prevented by removing one of these elements and monitoring time and temperature. FATTOM stands for:

F food (nutrients)

A acidity (pH >= 4.6)

T time (10-20 minutes)

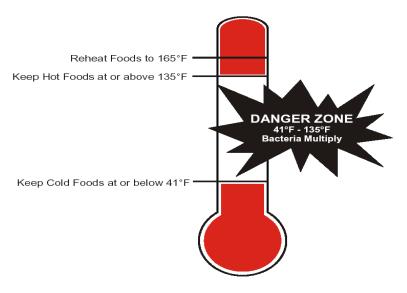
T temperature (food in TDZ, 4 hour rule)

O oxygen (aerobic, anaerobic, facultative)

M moisture (Aw >= .85)

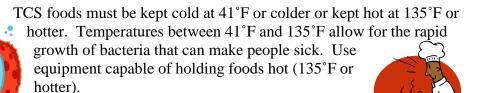
The following foods are identified by the FDA Model Food Code as TCS				
Milk and Milk Products	Shell eggs-except those heat	Meats-Beef, Pork, and		
	treated to eliminate	Lamb		
	salmonella app.			
Poultry	Fish	Shellfish and Crustacea		
Tofu	Garlic in Oil Mixtures	Sliced Melon		
Baked or Boiled Potatoes	Raw Sprouts and Seeds	Soy-Protein Foods		
Cooked Rice and Cooked	Sliced Tomatoes	Other Heat-Treated Plant		
Beans		Foods		

TEMPERATURE DANGER ZONE



WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

Hot and Cold Holding



Use refrigerators or ice to store food cold (41°F). The ice must be from an approved source. All containers used must allow for water to drain away as the ice melts (like an insulated cooler with a drain plug). Keep enough ice available to keep food surrounded by ice for the duration of the operation.

Date Marking

Date label ready-to-eat potentially hazardous foods that will be kept longer than 24 hours at 41°F or lower with a date of preparation or expiration to be discarded at 7 days from the day of preparation.

Thawing Foods

Foods shall be thawed under refrigeration, under cool running water, or in a microwave if it will be cooked immediately.

Cooling Foods

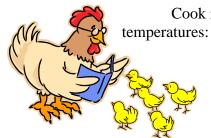


If food is cooked in advance, you must cool it from 135°F to 70°F within two hours and then the food must cool from 70°F to 41°F within the next four hours. If the food does not reach 70°F within two hours, you must reheat the food to 165°F within two hours and start the cooling process again or you may serve it immediately or hot hold the food until served. If the food takes longer than two hours to reheat to 165°F or takes longer than four hours to drop

from 70°F to 41°F it must be discarded.



Cooking

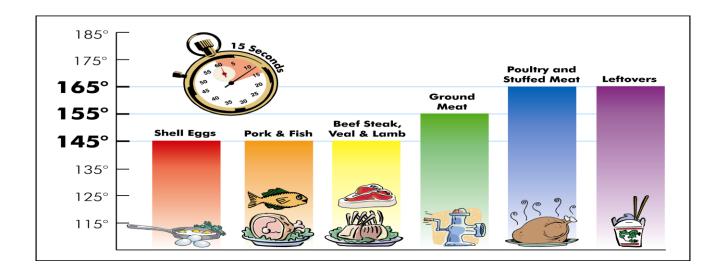


Cook raw animal products to the following internal atures:

Poultry, stuffed meats, stuffed fish, stuffed pasta 165°F (74°C) for 15 seconds

Ground beef and other ground meats 155°F (68°C) for 15 seconds

Beef steak, veal, lamb, pork, fish, shell eggs 145°F (63°C) for 15 seconds

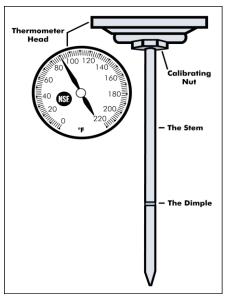


Reheating

All TCS foods that have been cooked, and cooled must be reheated to at least 165°F within two hours before being placed in hot holding. Commercially made products (precooked and canned items) reheated for hot holding must be reheated to at least 135°F.



Thermometers

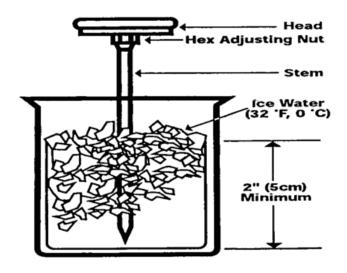


Metal-stem probe food thermometers with a temperature range of 0°F to 220°F are required to test food temperatures when holding foods hot, cold, or when cooking raw animal products. Clean and sanitize your thermometer after and before each use.





It is important to ensure that your thermometer is working properly. An easy way to check the calibration is to use ice water. Place ice (preferably crushed) into a container and add enough water to make it slushy. Put the thermometer into the slush and wait about 30 seconds until the dial stops moving. The dial should read 32°F. If it has a different reading, adjust the hex nut keeping the probe in the slush until it reads 32°F. For digital thermometers, follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to calibrate.



Regulations



Commonwealth of Virginia Board of Health Food Regulations 12 VAC 5-421 available for review and downloading at www.vdh.virginia.gov/EnvironmentalHealth/Food/

Virginia Food Regulations Mobile Food Establishment Matrix

Virginia Food Regulations Mobile Food Establishment Matrix Food Regulations Potentially Hazardous Menu Not Potentially					
Food Regulations	Potentially Ha	Not Potentially Hazardous Menu			
Areas/Part	Food Preparation	Prepackaged	Food Preparation		
Personnel	Applicable Sections	Applicable Sections	Applicable Sections		
	of sections 80-250	of sections 80-250	of sections 80-250		
	2230 (B)	2230 (B)	2230 (B)		
Food	260	260	260		
	270-320	270-320	280		
		530 (A)	390		
		610; 620	Applicable Sections		
		(Applicable to	of sections 450-690		
		Service Area or			
		Commissary)			
Temperature	390; Applicable	340	NONE		
Requirements	Sections of sections	820			
-	450-690				
	820				
	840 (A) & (C)				
Equipment	Applicable Sections	Applicable Sections	Applicable Sections		
Requirements	of Part IV and	of sections 960-	of sections 960-		
	sections 2590-2780	1440; 770-1870	1440; 1570-1870		
		2590-2780	2590-2780		
Water & Sewage	2160	2230 (B)	2160		
	2230 (A) & (B)		2230 (A) & (B)		
	Sections 2360-2490		Sections 2360-2490		
	2500		2500		
	2540-2560		2540-2560		
Physical Facility	2790; 2810	2790	2790; 2810		
	2800 (A) & (B)	2800 (A) & (B)	2800 (A) & (B)		
	2930; 3170	2930	2930; 3170		
	3180; 3270	3270	3180; 3270		
Toxic Materials	Applicable Sections	Applicable Sections	Applicable Sections		
	of Part VII	of Part VII	of Part VII		
Servicing	2960/ As necessary	2960/ As necessary	2960/ As necessary		
	to comply with the	to comply with the	to comply with the		
	Food Regulations	Food Regulations	Food Regulations		
Compliance &	Applicable Sections	Applicable Sections	Applicable Sections		
Enforcement	of Part VIII	of Part VIII	of Part VIII		

Employee Health Policy

The Person In Charge must inform employees to notify the manager when the employee is experiencing fever, sore throat, or gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, and nausea. Any person, who is infected with a communicable disease, has vomiting, abdominal cramps or diarrhea must NOT work in food service until the person is completely free of symptoms for 24 hours. Sores or cuts on employee hands must have a water-tight cover such as a finger cot that protects the lesion and a single use glove must be worn. 12 VAC 5-421-80 to 12 VAC-421-120

FOODSERVICE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES REGARDING EMPLOYEE HEALTH

<u>Report</u>	<u>Restrict</u>	<u>Release</u>
Train your employees to	Act to restrict or exclude	Release the restriction or
report to you:	them from food handling	exclusion from food
		handling.
When they experience the		
following symptoms:	Restrict the Food Handler	Remove the Restriction
		when:
✓ Diarrhea	-They may not work	
✓ Fever	with exposed food, clean	-They are free of the
✓ Vomiting	equipment, utensils, linens	symptoms that caused the
✓ Jaundice	or unwrapped single service	restriction and no foodborne
✓ Sore throat with	articles.	illnesses have occurred;
fever		-They present a written
✓ Discharges from		medical release stating that
eyes, nose or		their condition is not
mouth		infectious.
When they, or a family		
member, are diagnosed with	Exclude the Food Handler	Remove the Exclusion
the following diseases:		when:
	-They may not be	
✓ Shigellosis	present in the food	-They present a written
✓ E. Coli 0157	establishment;	medical release stating that
✓ Salmonella typhi	-Report it to the Health	their condition is no longer
✓ Norovirus	Department	infectious.
✓ Hepatitis A		

COMMISSARY LETTER

MAILING ADDRESS: Henrico Health Department 8600 Dixon Powers Drive P.O. Box 90775 Henrico, VA 23273-0775

Phone: 804-501-4529 Fax: 804-501-4983

This le	etter is to co	ertify that:				shall repo	rt at
least d	aily to my	commissary or	depot for	any n	ecessary food prepar	ation, food sto	rage,
					ecessary, the vehicle	, trailer, or car	t will
also be	e stored on	my premises d	uring non	ı-opera	ting hours.		
Vendo	or Check O	ne:					
	Vehicle	☐ Trailer	□ Ca	art	License Plate Numb	er:	
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Vendo							
					ility in my business a		
		_	•		health permit of my or will also be revoked	•	
ICVORC	d of suspe	naca, mai my p	CIIIII to (орстан	will also be revoked	i or suspended	•
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