What is a commissary?
A commissary, or base of operation, is an approved (licensed) food service establishment where food is stored, prepared, portioned, or packaged for service elsewhere. As with other food establishments, a commissary cannot be in a private residence.

Why do I need a commissary?
Certain food establishments, such as mobile food units and caterers, are required by the food code (WAC 246-215) to have and use an approved commissary as a part of their operation, in order to meet all the facility and equipment requirements of the food code.

Types of commissaries:
There are two types of commissaries, a “food preparation” commissary and a “storage-only” commissary.

A “food preparation” commissary, also known as a “commissary kitchen” is a commissary that is used to prepare foods, such as washing and cutting produce, marinating meats, assembling sandwiches, cooking, baking, or any other task that requires handling of exposed food.

A “food preparation” commissary must provide the following:
- A handwashing sink
- A three-compartment sink for dish and utensil washing
- A food preparation sink
- Means for cleaning and sanitizing the mobile unit
- An employee use restroom
- Designated space for storage of freezers and/or refrigeration units for cold holding potentially hazardous foods and/or cooling of hot foods if needed
- Equipment available for cooking by approved methods if needed
- Designated space for dry good and paper good storage
- Designated site for proper chemical storage
- Effective measures to prevent entrance and harborage of pests
- Designated parking site for the mobile unit when not in operation
- An approved water supply system
- An approved sewage disposal system
- An approved garbage disposal system

A “storage-only” commissary must provide a space for storage of packaged foods, paper goods, chemicals, extra equipment, etc. No handling of exposed foods is allowed. An example of a “storage-only” commissary is a room inside a business with shelves for dry good storage, a refrigerator and freezer.

Revised 2/17/15