

FoodRecovery.org Food Safety Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the safe handling, transportation, storage, and distribution of donated food to protect the health and well-being of the recipients of our food recovery program. We are committed to following food safety standards in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, food donors, delivery drivers, and partners involved in the recovery, handling, storage, and distribution of food donations to ensure safe practices are followed at all times.

Responsibilities

- **Executive Director:** Oversees the implementation of this policy and ensures compliance.
- **Staff and Volunteers:** Responsible for adhering to all food safety procedures as outlined. All of our employees are ServSafe Certified. Paid drivers are as well.
- **Food Donors:** Encouraged to follow proper [USDA food safety practices](#) when donating food to the organization. We only accept food donations from licensed businesses that are up to code with their Department of Health, not individuals from their homes.
- **Partner Agencies:** Must ensure that food received from the organization is handled safely in accordance with this policy.

Food Donations Accepted

- **Types of Food:** We accept a wide range of food donations, including fresh produce, dry goods, canned foods, prepared meals, and perishable items such as dairy, meats, and frozen products. All donated food must be wholesome, unspoiled, and safe for human consumption.
- **Donation Quantities:** We accept donations ranging from trays of catered meals to large palletized loads of food.
- **Prohibited Donations:** Food that is spoiled, contaminated, or damaged in a way that compromises its safety will not be accepted. **This includes food that has been left in the temperature danger zone (between 40°F and 140°F) for more than two hours.**
- **Past Date:** We do not guarantee that food donations that are past the labeled date will be claimed by partner organizations. Date labeling in the United States is not standardized, creating more waste than necessary. Unless it is baby formula, food donors are allowed to

donate food past the printed date. It is recommended that food is distributed before the printed date or organizations educate their clients that the food is still good if distributed post-date.

Receiving Donations

- **Inspection:** All incoming food donations will be inspected for signs of spoilage, contamination, or damage. This includes checking expiration dates, packaging integrity, and temperature control for perishable items.
- **Temperature Control:** Donations that require refrigeration or freezing will be checked with a thermometer to ensure they are at the proper temperature: refrigerated items must be at or below 34°F, and frozen items must be at or below 0°F.
- **Separation:** If any donation is suspected to be unsafe, it will be separated from other donations and disposed of appropriately.
- **Traceability:** We have the organization name, city, and state of each group that receives and distributes products.

Food Handling & Storage

- **Proper Storage:** All food will be stored in a clean, dry, pest-free environment.
 - **Dry Goods:** Stored off the ground and away from walls in a cool, dry area.
 - **Refrigerated Foods:** Stored in refrigerators at or below 34°F.
 - **Frozen Foods:** Stored in freezers at or below 0°F.
- **FIFO (First In, First Out):** We will use the First In, First Out system to ensure older food is distributed first to minimize the risk of spoilage.
- **Labeling:** All food must be labeled with the date it was received, the type of food, and its expiration or “best by” date. We can share ingredient lists by request.

Handling Prepared & Catered Foods

- **Time-Temperature Control:** Prepared and catered foods must be kept at the appropriate temperatures. Please reference the [FDA's food temperature guidelines here](#):
 - Hot foods must be held at 140°F or higher.
 - Cold foods must be held at 34°F or lower.
- **Handling:** All individuals handling prepared foods must wear gloves and use proper utensils to avoid direct contact with the food. Utensils should not be mixed between dishes to avoid allergen contamination.
- **Shelf Life:** Catered or prepared foods will be distributed as quickly as possible. Items older than 24 hours or without proper temperature control will not be accepted or distributed.

Transportation of Food Donations

- **Vehicles:** All vehicles used for food transportation must be clean, pest-free, and able to maintain the proper temperatures for perishable foods.
 - **Refrigerated Items:** Palletized donations must be transported in a temperature-controlled vehicle that maintains 34°F or below. Smaller donations (under 500 pounds) that are delivered with a local driver will have cooler bags to ensure food safety, and food is not in-transit for more than 45 minutes. Items will not be left at room temperature for more than 2 hours. [Review USDA guidelines here.](#)
 - **Frozen Items:** Palletized donations must be transported at -10°F or below. Smaller donations (under 500 pounds) that are delivered with a local driver will have cooler bags to ensure food safety, and food is not in-transit for more than 45 minutes. Items will not be left at room temperature for more than 2 hours. [Review USDA guidelines here.](#)
- **Separation:** Food must be transported separately from chemicals, cleaning products, or any other materials that could contaminate the food.

Unsafe Food: “When in doubt, throw it out”

1. **Recalls:** It is the company’s discretion to recall a product. If a product is voluntarily recalled, the Food Safety and Inspection Service will notify the public. [Recalls can be found here.](#) FoodRecovery.org will inform all nonprofit organizations receiving recalled products to immediately remove and discard items. The USDA has created resources for [retail, poultry and meat](#) processing facilities. An overview can be found [here.](#)
2. **Food Safety Hazard:** Food is deemed unsafe if it has a recall, outbreak, has not remained in safe internal temperatures, exposed to temperatures above 40 degrees fahrenheit for more than 2 hours or any of the other safety information provided by [foodsafety.gov](#)

Report unsafe food here: <https://w7nfi7yp.paperform.co/>