

Food Donation Giving Guide

Thank you for considering food donation as a way to support our community and reduce waste. It's important to know that businesses that donate perfectly good food are protected from liability from the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act, which was signed into law in 1996, and recently updated in 2022 (<https://chlp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Emerson-Fact-Sheet.pdf>).

This flyer provides information on which foods may or may not be acceptable for donation at your nearby meal site or food bank.

Donatable Foods

When donating food, it is important to only select items that are safe and suitable for human consumption. Here are some examples of acceptable foods. Always work with your food donation partner to determine what can and cannot be donated.

Donatable Non-Perishables



Examples:

- Canned vegetables, fruits, beans, soups, fish, and poultry
- Dry pasta, rice, beans and grains

**Note: Cans/packaging should be unopened and undamaged. Consult your local food rescue partner to see if they will take items past their Best By, Use By, and/or Sell By dates.*

Donatable Perishables



Examples:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables (check with your food donation partner if produce with minor bruising is OK!)
- Dairy products
- Deli meats and cheeses
- Bakery items (uncontaminated and mold-free)
- Frozen fruits and vegetables
- Frozen meats
- Packaged salads, soups, sandwiches, and wraps

**Notes:*

- Any items with packaging/seals should be intact and undamaged
- Check the Best By, Use By, and/or Sell By dates on the packaging, if applicable. Some meal sites may take food after its sell by date.
- Items can be stored, transported, and donated at the same temperature as they were sold, but also chilled or frozen within cooling parameters.

Certain hot bar or buffet items may be donatable. Check with your food rescue partner and/or health department to confirm.

Non Donatable Foods

Prescreening and excluding unsuitable food items can greatly benefit the recipients of food donations.

Non Donatable Non-Perishable Items



Examples:

- Goods with significantly dented cans and/or missing labels
- Items with damaged or opened packaging
- Home-canned goods


Non Donatable Perishable Items



Examples:

- Hot or cold foods not kept at temperature for greater than 2 hours
- Moldy items
- Stale items
- Overly bruised produce
- Items with damaged or opened packaging

Food banks and similar outlets may welcome slightly bruised produce. However, produce with significant bruising, exceeding the size of a quarter, should be directed towards composting, animal feed, or anaerobic digestion.

				
Keep on shelf	Donate/Repurpose	Donate/Repurpose	Redirect to Compost/Anaerobic Digestion	Redirect to Compost/Anaerobic Digestion

Food Handling Guidelines for Donating Food	Avoid TCS (Time/Temperature/Controlled Food for Safety) food that has been in the 41°F to 135°F danger zone for more than 2 hours.	Food Donation Partnership Agreement Outline	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exchange of Basic Information: Key contacts & anticipated donation frequency 2. Types of Foods to be Donated 3. Food Transport Arrangements 4. Qualifications of Key Staff & Staff Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hygiene, food safety, food defense, storage, & transport procedures 5. Communication 6. Resolution of Unsatisfactory Situations 	
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Packaged Foods</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelf-stable (boxed, canned foods): Cool & dry • Meat (fresh), dairy, perishable: Chilled at 41°F or below • Meat (frozen or unprocessed): Frozen at 0°F or below </td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fresh Produce</td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole: Cool & dry • Chopped: Chilled at 41°F or below </td> </tr> </table>			Packaged Foods
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