

# Retail Grocery & Foodservice Food Safety Guidelines

*Together, we can solve hunger™*



**A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR AGENCIES, VOLUNTEERS AND FOOD BANK STAFF**  
(RECOMMENDED TO BE USED IN CONJUNCTION WITH SERVSAFE FOOD HANDLER FOR FOOD BANKING)

## CONTENTS

I.	Introduction to Safe Foods.....	3
II.	Types of foods which are acceptable and safe.....	5
	a. Handling and Storage Conditions at Donor and Food Bank/Agency.....	5
	b. Acceptable Shelf Stable Products.....	7
	c. Acceptable Temperature Sensitive Products.....	8
	d. Acceptable Frozen Foods.....	10
III.	Labeling requirements.....	11
IV.	Preparing food for donation – Working with Donors.....	13
	a. Step 1 – Meet the donor .....	13
	b. Step 2 - Identify surplus food for donation .....	13
	c. Step 3 - Designate areas for safe food storage at the donor.....	13
	d. Step 4 – Determine labeling requirements.....	14
V.	Collection and Safe transportation of foods from the donor.....	15
	a. Collection of foods at the donor.....	15
	b. Safe Transportation of foods to Food Bank or Agency from Donors.....	15
	c. Training.....	16
VI.	How to outfit an agency to be ‘food-safe’ and ready.....	17
	a. Storage space.....	17
	b. Thermometers.....	17
	c. Other equipment.....	17
VII.	Matching agencies to food donors .....	18
VIII.	Appendices.....	19
	a. #1 Product Temperature Log and Rejection Log.....	19
	b. #2 Food bank/Agency Receiving and Temperature Log.....	20
	c. #3 Combined Food Bank/Agency Pickup and Delivery Log.....	21
	d. #4 Cooler and Freezer Temperature Log.....	22
	e. #5 Thermometer Weekly Calibration Log.....	23
	f. #6 Preparing food for donation: Donor Checklist.....	24
	g. #7 Drivers/Volunteers Checklist .....	25

## I. INTRODUCTION TO SAFE FOODS

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that each year 48 million people in the US become ill and 3000 people die annually after eating unsafe food. At the time these people ate the food there were no warning signs that the food was unsafe.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has identified 5 major reasons that cause foods to become unsafe to eat:

1. Food from unsafe sources. (Unsafe when obtained and cannot be made safe).
2. Improper holding temperatures. (Temperature abuse of the foods).
3. Inadequate cooking. (Not cooking foods to proper safe temperatures).
4. Contaminated equipment. (Poor cleanliness in the kitchen).
5. Poor personal hygiene. (Sick food handlers and those who do not wash their hands).

Food safety is an integral part of managing food donations and distributions and it is paramount to minimizing the risk of distributing or serving unsafe foods. The most vulnerable people who will become sick when eating unsafe foods are young children, the elderly, pregnant women and those whose immune systems are compromised, therefore weakened.

It is very important that you make sure the foods you are providing to your clients are safe to be consumed.

These guidelines are to help you to develop a thorough understanding, along with your donors, with regard to which foods you will be able to distribute and how they should be safely stored and packaged while awaiting pick up.

Guidelines are also provided to outline the conditions needed for the safe transportation of food from the donor to Food Bank/Agency and to the clients.

**Reminder:** Always work with state and local health officials when beginning new programs to ensure that they are in compliance with state and local health codes.

Your food safety program starts with knowing what foods you cannot accept so as to help ensure that the foods you do accept are safe for consumption.

Unsafe foods are those foods that cannot be made safe no matter what you do to them.

**Please note** that this is different from raw foods that are not safe to eat until prepared, usually by cooking, so as to make them safe to eat. These can be accepted.

Foods generally have dates on them that are based on quality. Accepting these foods after these dates is acceptable as the foods are still safe to eat.

**These dates are:**

- **“Sell by”** which is a date defined by the manufacturer or retailer as the last date on which their temperature sensitive foods should be sold;
- **“Use by”** which is a date that has a similar definition for temperature sensitive products but is also used on shelf stable products as a **quality** measurement.
- **“Best by”** which is a date generally used on shelf stable products and is **based on quality not food safety**.
- **“Expiration”** which is a date defined by the manufacturer or retailer and is **based on quality not food safety**.

Freezing foods allows you to keep the donations beyond their “Sell by”, “Use by” and “Best by” dates as shown in the Guidelines for storage times at the Food Bank/Agency below.

Please encourage your donors to freeze donated foods, if possible, so they are frozen solid when picked up.

**Guidelines for storage times at Food Bank/Agency:**

<b>Food type</b>	<b>Storage time recommendations (from date of pickup)</b>
Frozen prepared food	3 months.
Non-frozen prepared food	3 days maximum.
Produce	If whole within 7 days; if cut 48 hours.
Frozen meat	3 months.
Raw, shell eggs	7 days.
Dairy	7 days if does not smell bad.
Baked goods	3-5 days if not molding.
Pre-packaged foods- non-perishable	6 months. (Caution with grains, flours, pastas if not held refrigerated due to possible insect infestation).

## II. TYPES OF FOODS WHICH ARE ACCEPTABLE AND SAFE

### a) Handling and storage conditions at Donor and Food Bank/Agency

Type of foods	Temperature at pick up	Storage at Food Bank/Agency
<p>Meats, fish, and shellfish (raw and cooked; includes rotisserie chicken)            Prepared foods (off-site and on-site)            Ice cream</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frozen solid, at 0F or below.</li> <li>- Frozen on or before the “Sell by” or “Use by” dates.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 0F or below.</li> <li>- If frozen, can keep up to 3 months after receipt.</li> <li>- If product is not frozen, freeze immediately, can keep up to 3 months after receipt.</li> </ul>
<p>Dairy products.            (Milk, half and half, whipping cream, yogurt, cheeses, soy products, dips, butter, margarine, etc.).            Eggs and egg substitutes.            Bakery products.            Cut Produce and leafy greens and melons, cantaloupes, honeydews.            Individually packaged sandwiches.            Deli items.            (Potato salads, coleslaws, bean salads, macaroni salads, pork and beans, desserts, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 41F or lower.</li> <li>- <b>(Note: No more than 1 day past “Sell by” and “Use by” dates).</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 41F or below.</li> <li>- Use within recommended storage guidelines at the Food Bank.</li> <li>- If frozen, can be kept a maximum of 3 months.</li> <li>- Store allergens (Eggs, fish, milk, soy milk) separate from each other and away from other products.</li> <li>- <b>(Note: raw, whole eggs should not be frozen)</b></li> </ul>
<p>Shelf stable products.            Canned products.            Jarred products.            (Ketchup, mustard, BBQ sauce, Steak sauce, pickles, relishes, jams, jellies, preserves, salad dressings, salsas, mayonnaise, peanut butter, etc.)            Bakery items            (Bread, rolls, bagels, cakes, cookies, donuts, muffins).            Dry products.            (Flours, pastas, rice, grains, beans, lentils, etc.).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Room temperature.</li> <li>- Must be sealed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clean and dry storage rooms or warehouse.</li> <li>- Flours, pastas, dry beans, rice, grains, lentils should be refrigerated if not to be used in 3 months.</li> <li>- Store allergens (Peanuts, almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews) separate from each other and away from other products.</li> <li>- Bakery products should be frozen if not to be used within 48 hours.</li> </ul>

a) Handling and storage conditions at Donor and Food Bank/Agency –continued

Type of foods	Temperature at pick up	Storage at Food Bank/Agency
Non Foods. (Paper goods, etc. Healthy and Beauty aids. OTC medications, Vitamins, Cleaning chemicals).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Room temperature.</li> <li>- <b>(Note:</b> Chemicals should be transported separate from each other and away from other products).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clean and dry storage rooms or warehouse.</li> <li>- Store chemicals away from food products.</li> </ul>
Whole Produce. <b>(Note:</b> Not all whole produce needs to be kept under refrigeration.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Room temperature.</li> <li>- Chilled.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clean and dry storage rooms or warehouse.</li> <li>- Cooler.</li> </ul>

**b) Acceptable Shelf Stable products (Do not require refrigeration)**

Type of foods	Unacceptable	Acceptable
Canned goods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unlabeled.</li> <li>- Cannot read the label.</li> <li>- No Codes on can.</li> <li>- Severely dented.</li> <li>- Dented on rims.</li> <li>- Very rusty, cannot be wiped off.</li> <li>- Leaking cans.</li> <li>- Swollen or bulging cans.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Labeled so you can know what product it is, the weight, the distributor, the product name and the ingredients.</li> <li>- Coded so you can trace later if needed.</li> <li>- Small dents not on seal or rims</li> <li>- Rust can be wiped off.</li> </ul>
Jarred goods (Glass or plastic).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unlabeled.</li> <li>- Cannot read the label.</li> <li>- No Codes on container.</li> <li>- Leaking containers.</li> <li>- Tamperproof seal broken.</li> <li>- Not in original container.</li> <li>- Fractured/chipped jar.F</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Labeled so you can know what product it is, the weight, the distributor, the product name and the ingredients.</li> <li>- Coded so you can trace later if needed.</li> <li>- Package not damaged.</li> <li>- Tamperproof seal intact.</li> <li>- Original container.</li> <li>- Vacuum seal intact.</li> </ul>
Packaged dry goods (Manufactured).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unlabeled.</li> <li>- Cannot read the label.</li> <li>- No Codes on package.</li> <li>- Singularly package and package is open (ripped, torn, exposing product).</li> <li>- Double packaged - Inner package damaged, wet or stained.</li> <li>- Not in original package.</li> <li>- Product appearance is not good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Labeled so you can know what product it is, the weight, the distributor, the product name and the ingredients.</li> <li>- Coded so you can trace later if needed.</li> <li>- Singularly package which is intact and sealed with no tears, rips, stains, etc.</li> <li>- Doubly package with outer package damaged but internal package is in good condition.</li> <li>- In original package.</li> <li>- Product looks good - no mold, no bad odor, etc.</li> </ul>
Packaged dry goods (Made at donor). (Cookies, Donuts, Cakes, Muffins, Bread, Bagels, etc.).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No ingredient list or allergen disclaimer statement.</li> <li>- Not completely covered.</li> <li>- Not wrapped in food-grade packaging.</li> <li>- Packing damaged, wet, stained.</li> <li>- Product appearance is not good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- List of ingredients available or an allergen disclaimer statement.</li> <li>- Packaging not damaged.</li> <li>- Wrapped or packaged in approved food grade packaging.</li> <li>- Packaging not wet or stained.</li> <li>- Product looks and smells good – no visible mold, no bad odor, etc.</li> </ul>

**c) Acceptable Temperature Sensitive Products (Require refrigeration)**

Type of foods	Unacceptable	Acceptable
Prepared Foods (Manufactured).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not in original package.</li> <li>- Cannot read ingredient statement.</li> <li>- Singularly packaged and package is damaged, open, wet or stained.</li> <li>- Doubly packaged and internal package is damaged, wet or stained.</li> <li>- Not coded with "Use by" or "Sell by" date.</li> <li>- More than 1 day passed "Use by" or "Sell by" date and not frozen.</li> <li>- Over 41F.</li> <li>- Product, if visible, is moldy.</li> <li>- Product smells bad.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In original package.</li> <li>- Labeled so you can know what product it is, the weight, the distributor, the product name and the ingredients</li> <li>- Singularly package and package is intact and sealed with no tears, rips, stains, etc.</li> <li>- Doubly package with outer package damaged but internal package is in good condition.</li> <li>- Code readable as to the "Use by" or "Sell by" dates.</li> <li>- Not more than one day passed the "Use by" "Sell by" date.</li> <li>- At 41F or below.</li> <li>- Product, if visible, looks good and does not smell bad.</li> </ul>
Prepared Foods (Prepared at Donor).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not completely wrapped.</li> <li>- Not in approved food grade packaging.</li> <li>- Unlabeled and no ingredient statement or allergen disclaimer statement provided as required (See page 11).</li> <li>- Over 41F.</li> <li>- Not cooled down to 41F if previously held hot.</li> <li>- Wrapped sandwiches more than 1 day passed their "Sell by" date.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Completely wrapped in approved food grade packaging.</li> <li>- List of ingredients provided or allergen disclaimer statement.</li> <li>- Cooled quickly if previously held hot.</li> <li>- At 41F or below.</li> <li>- Sandwiches can be consumed up to 3 days after "Sell by" date but it is preferable to consume not more than 1 day past their "Sell by" date.</li> </ul>

c) Acceptable Temperature Sensitive Products (Require refrigeration) -continued

Type of foods	Unacceptable	Acceptable
Other Refrigerated Products (Ready to eat meats, Eggs, Liquid eggs, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not in original package.</li> <li>- Cannot read ingredient statement.</li> <li>- Singularly packaged and package is damaged, open, wet or stained.</li> <li>- Doubly packaged and internal package is damaged, wet or stained.</li> <li>- Not coded with "Use by" or "Sell by" date.</li> <li>- More than 1 day passed "Use by" or "Sell by" date and not frozen.</li> <li>- Over 41F.</li> <li>- Liquid eggs more than 72 hours past "Use by" date and not frozen.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In original package and labeled so you can know what product it is, the weight, the distributor, the product name and the ingredients.</li> <li>- Singularly packaged and package not torn, wet or stained.</li> <li>- Doubly packaged and internal package is not damaged, wet or stained.</li> <li>- Coded with "Use by" or "Sell by" date.</li> <li>- Within 1 day of "Use by" or "Sell by" date.</li> <li>- 41F or below.</li> <li>- Liquid eggs not more than 72 hours past "Use by" date.</li> <li>- Shell eggs can be used up to 7 days after "Sell by" date</li> </ul>
Produce (Whole). <b>Note:</b> Not all Produce needs to be kept under refrigeration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moldy.</li> <li>- Decayed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In good condition not moldy or decayed.</li> </ul>
Produce (Cut or sliced): Salads, diced tomatoes, coleslaws, fruit salads, etc. <b>(Note:</b> Produce that has been cut or sliced <u>requires</u> refrigeration.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Moldy or decayed.</li> <li>- Over 41F.</li> <li>- If used in salad bars.</li> <li>- More than 1 day passed "Sell by" date.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Under 41F.</li> <li>- In good condition not moldy or decayed or having bad odor.</li> </ul>

**d) Acceptable Frozen foods (Require a freezer).**

Type of foods	Unacceptable	Acceptable
Raw meats and fish. (Beef, Pork, Lamb, Chicken) (Fish)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not frozen solid.</li> <li>- Above 0F.</li> <li>- Not frozen by "Sell by" date.</li> <li>- Product shows signs of freezer burn (thawing and refreezing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Frozen solid.</li> <li>- 0F or below.</li> <li>- No freezer burn.</li> <li>- Fish packed separately.</li> <li>- Shellfish packed separately.</li> </ul>
Prepared Frozen Foods. (Manufactured).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not in original package.</li> <li>- Cannot read the package.</li> <li>- Singularly packaged and package is damaged, open, wet or stained.</li> <li>- Doubly packaged and internal package is damaged, wet or stained.</li> <li>- Not coded with "Use by" or "Sell by" date.</li> <li>- More than 1 day passed "Use by" or "Sell by" date.</li> <li>- Not frozen solid.</li> <li>- Above 0F.</li> <li>- Product shows signs of freezer burn (thawing and refreezing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In original package.</li> <li>- Package readable.</li> <li>- Singularly package and package is intact and sealed with no tears, rips, stains, etc.</li> <li>- Doubly package with outer package damaged but internal package is in good condition.</li> <li>- Code readable as to the "Use by" or "Sell by" dates.</li> <li>- Not more than one day passed the "Use by" "Sell by" date.</li> <li>- At 0F or below.</li> <li>- No signs of freezer burn.</li> </ul>
Prepared Foods. (Prepared by Donor).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unlabeled.</li> <li>- Cannot read the label.</li> <li>- No Codes on package.</li> <li>- Packaging is damaged.</li> <li>- Not packaged in approved food contact packaging.</li> <li>- Product appearance is not good.</li> <li>- Product shows signs of freezer burn (thawing and re-freezing)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Labeled so you can know what the product is and the ingredients or have an allergen disclaimer statement.</li> <li>- Dated so you can trace later if needed.</li> <li>- Wrapped well in approved packaging materials to prevent freezer burn.</li> <li>- Product looks good - no mold, no bad odor, etc.</li> <li>- No signs of freezer burn.</li> </ul>

### III. LABELING REQUIREMENTS

The Fair Packaging and Labeling Act (FPLA) spells out the necessary labeling requirements for most foods.

#### *Allergens*

As some people are allergic to certain food ingredients, called allergens, all foods containing more than one ingredient either have to be properly labeled on the package or come with a list of ingredients clearly listing the allergens contained within the product.

People who are allergic to these food ingredients will have major reactions to eating them; this reaction can lead to death.

There are 8 major allergens listed by the FDA:

1. Wheat
2. Soy
3. Eggs
4. Dairy (Milk and milk containing products)
5. Peanuts
6. Tree Nuts (Almonds, Walnuts, Pecans, Coconut, etc.)
7. Fish
8. Shellfish (Shrimp, Lobster, Crab)

Therefore, these products need to be stored separately, when not frozen, from other products.

You cannot accept any products that are not clearly labeled as to their contents unless the donor can provide you with a list of ingredients or an allergen statement.

If a donor is only donating commercially packaged foods, additional steps for labeling will not be necessary. However, if a donor is donating foods they prepared then the foods will need to be safely packaged (refer to handling and storage requirements Pages 4-10) and labeled with the following five components deemed to meet Feeding America's food safety standards:

1. The name and location of food bank.
2. The name and location of donor.
3. The food description.
4. The date of donation.
5. Allergen disclaimer statement.

Feeding America recommends that the donor use pre-printed labels with blanks for the food description and donation date.

The table below outlines labeling requirements for each food type:

	Prepared Foods	Packaged Foods	Fresh Produce
<b>Sources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hotels</li> <li>- Restaurants</li> <li>- Commissaries</li> <li>- Foodservice Facilities</li> <li>- Bakeries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National and local donors</li> <li>- National and local vendors</li> <li>- Retail store donations</li> <li>- Reclaim and food drives</li> </ul>	Any donor or vendor of fresh produce
<b>Examples of foods</b>	Prepared meat, poultry entrees, pasta, pizza, vegetables, chilled foods, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Canned, boxed, or packaged foods</li> <li>- Bagged cut produce</li> <li>- Dairy</li> <li>- Raw shell eggs</li> <li>- Meat, poultry, and fish (fresh and frozen)</li> <li>- Packaged/bagged produce</li> </ul>	Whole produce in bins and bags
<b>Label requirement</b>	Fair Packaging and Labeling Act (FPLA) does <b>not</b> apply.	Fair Packaging and Labeling Act (FPLA) applies.	Fair Packaging and Labeling Act (FPLA) does <b>not</b> apply.
<b>Feeding America compliance requires the label to state</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The name and location of food bank (pre-printed)</li> <li>2. The name and location of donor</li> <li>3. The food description</li> <li>4. The date of donation</li> <li>5. Allergen disclaimer statement (pre-printed)</li> </ol> <p><b>WARNING!</b> <i>This container holds rescued food! This food may contain, have come into contact with, or have been produced in a facility which also produces milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts (walnuts, almonds, pecans, hazelnuts/filberts, pistachios, cashews, coconuts, pine nuts, macadamia nuts, and/or Brazil nuts), fish, shellfish (crab, crawfish, lobster, shrimp, mussels, and/or oysters), wheat, soybeans, and/or sesame seeds</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The common or usual name of the product</li> <li>2. The name and place of business of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor</li> <li>3. The net quantity (weight) of the contents</li> <li>4. The common or usual name of each ingredient, listed in descending order of prominence</li> </ol>	No label required
<b>Comments</b>	Label is applied to all containers.	These products are assumed to have the proper retail label already on the packaged product when they are received by the member.	

## IV. PREPARING FOOD FOR DONATION – WORKING WITH DONORS

It is in your best interest to help educate donors to ensure the food being picked up is safe and can be used to serve your clients.

### *Step 1. Meet the donor.*

At its core, this program is run on relationships. Essential to the program's success is the relationship that will develop between the food bank or agency partner and the local donor. Make time to meet with the donor to discuss each other's expectations for the program, prior to the start of pick-ups. This starts with working together with the donor to identify surplus food for donation.

Also, Feeding America would recommend **keeping the door for communication open** once pick-ups begin. This will help with logistics, in case there is no product to donate or an agency's truck broke down and cannot come for the scheduled pick-up.

### *Step 2. Identify surplus food for donation.*

Feeding America, along with member food banks and affiliated agencies, is happy to accept any and all foods that are safe to eat. Use this guide as a reference to help donors determine what food is available for safe donation.

Once a list of foods available for donation is determined, donor should ensure each type of food identified can be packaged safely for transportation to the Agency.

In the case of donated foods that were prepared at the donor, additional resources may be needed, such as food-safe plastic bags (not garbage bags) or food-grade tins or totes to pack the products in.

For help in determining necessary packing requirements, please reach out to Feeding America for guidance.

### *Step 3. Designate areas for safe food storage at the donor.*

Once the donor determines the types of food that will likely be donated from their location, it will be necessary to identify areas at the donor's facility to store the foods collected for donation safely.

Three types of locations are likely to be needed:

- (1) Dry storage
- (2) Refrigerated storage
- (3) Freezer storage

Based on the relevance of each type of storage, the donor should place a food grade bin or tote, in the designated storage area and identify this area with signage indicating, "For Food Bank/Agency".

At times, the agency or food bank who is partnered with the donor will provide the bin / tote.

At other times, the donor will be expected to provide the storage containers.

Local program partners will need to determine who will provide storage containers during conversations prior to beginning product pick-ups.

***Step 4. Determine labeling requirements per Feeding America's Food safety guidelines and established labeling process at the donor site.***

## V. COLLECTION AND SAFE TRANSPORTATION OF FOODS FROM THE DONOR

### a. Collection of foods at the donors.

Keeping foods out of the temperature danger zone, the temperature range between 41F – 135F, will prevent temperature abuse. Holding, transporting and distributing foods in the temperature zone allows harmful bacteria to grow and cause the food to become unsafe.

Temperature abuse of foods, having foods out of the cooler or freezer too long, can cause them to become unsafe in short periods of time. It is very important that you have the correct tools to ensure food is kept cold during pick-up and transportation, which include:

- an accurate, calibrated thermometer;
  - refrigerated truck
- or
- an accurate, calibrated thermometer;
  - sufficient thermal blankets to cover all of the cold foods;
  - or coolers with ice packs

Food that is not at a safe temperature can be an indication that it may not be safe to eat, so it is essential that you have an accurate thermometer with you when making pick-ups allowing you to take and record the refrigerated food temperatures.

Record the product temperature taken on the accepting log (see Appendix #1), so you have records for your Food Bank/Agency.

If you are not sure about the safety of a food item then it should not be accepted at pick up.

Food previously served on an unattended buffet line or self-service are **not acceptable** for donation. (This is due to exposure to the general public while it is available on the buffet line.)

Foods that have been cooked and reheated by the donor are **not acceptable** for donation.

### b. Safe transportation of foods to Food Bank or Agency from Donors.

When transporting foods from your donors, and when distributing to your Clients, the food needs to be kept at 41F or below. Temperatures of refrigerated foods **must be taken** when the food reaches the Food Bank/Agency and recorded on the Receiving Form (see Appendix #2).

**Requirements for the safe transportation of food to the Food Bank/Agency.**

FROZEN PRODUCTS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Covered with thermal blankets or in coolers with ice packs at all times.</li> </ul>
REFRIGERATED PRODUCTS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Covered with thermal blankets unless the vehicle has a refrigeration unit capable of keeping the vehicle below 41F at all times.</li> <li>- Do not store allergens (Milk, eggs, etc.) over other products.</li> <li>- Do not store raw products (fish, meat, poultry, shell eggs) over the top of ready-to-eat products.</li> </ul>
SHELF STABLE PRODUCTS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No temperature requirements.</li> <li>- Do not store allergens over other products. (Peanuts, tree nuts, flour, dry milk, etc.)</li> </ul>
NON FOOD PRODUCTS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No temperature requirements.</li> <li>- Do not store chemicals with food products.</li> </ul>

Driving times to the food bank or agency from donors should be kept to no more than **30 minutes** unless you have a refrigerated vehicle so as to minimize potential temperature abuse of the food.

When transporting foods, it is important not to cross-contaminate foods with other products so try to not store any foods over other foods. If that is not possible due to limited room, always place frozen items over refrigerated items to prevent any drips and spills.

**c. Training**

Lack of understanding by people transporting the donated foods can lead to those foods becoming unsafe. It is essential that you train your drivers/volunteers, who pick up and transport the food, in food safety so they can differentiate between safe and unsafe food by temperature or appearance. They should also be trained in the importance of using thermometers and thermal blankets/coolers with ice packs (where applicable) and equipped accordingly.

Your volunteers are the first people to see the foods being donated. The information they provide and record, can be used, on an on-going basis, to help educate your donors on how foods should be prepared for donation and how these foods should be stored awaiting collection.

**See Appendix #7 for guidelines to be used at pick-up.**

## VI. HOW TO OUTFIT AN AGENCY TO BE “FOOD SAFE” AND READY

### a. Storage space

An Agency has to have sufficient storage space to store foods safely based on maximum anticipated output.

- All frozen foods need to be in freezers at 0F or below.
- All refrigerated foods need to be in coolers at 41F or below.
- All shelf stable foods and packaging products stored in clean, pest free rooms.
- All cleaning supplies stored away from food storage areas.

### b. Thermometers

An Agency needs to have an adequate supply of thermometers to use when picking up and when receiving foods.

As temperature control of foods is very important in keeping them safe, the instruments which are used to measure the temperature of a food (infrared or digital thermometers) need to be accurate at all times. If utilizing a probe thermometer, please use care as there can be a risk to puncturing packages.

These thermometers need to be checked for accuracy at least weekly and records of calibration need to be kept on file (See Appendix #5 Thermometer Calibration Record).

For an Infrared thermometer it should read 32F when pointed at ice/water bath.

### c. Other equipment

Each agency should ideally be equipped with:

- A vehicle; best practice is refrigerated vehicle
- Food grade tubs or boxes
- At least one scale
- Thermal blankets, commercial grade ice chests, and / or temperature-control devices that can maintain the food-safety guideline temperatures.
- Pans
- Transport bags

## VII. MATCHING AGENCIES TO FOOD DONORS

For a variety of reasons some agencies may not be able to accept all foods being donated if they cannot meet all of the requirements as shown in these guidelines.

Description of food	Example channels	Agency requirements
Bakery, produce, dairy, raw and ready-to-eat meats, canned goods, deli, and manufactured prepared food items.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grocery stores</li> <li>- Bakeries (i.e. Panera)</li> <li>- Convenience stores</li> <li>- Sandwich / snack cart</li> </ul>	Acceptable at all agencies that have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate storage space for dry, refrigerated, and frozen products.</li> <li>- Ability to maintain the cold chain throughout transport—i.e. refrigerated trucks, coolers with ice packs, thermal blankets.</li> <li>- Distribution frequency that allows for max. of 2 additional days on product before reaching client. Sandwiches must be consumed within 72 hours at on-site feeding agencies.</li> <li>- Lead staff on hand at an Agency needs to have attended ServSafe or equivalent training.</li> </ul>
Prepared foods / entrees pre-packaged to individual or family servings on-site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Convenience stores with on-site prepared ready-to-eat products.</li> <li>- Quick-service restaurants.</li> <li>- Hospitality donors (hotels, restaurants, foodservice, catering) willing to individually package donations on-site.</li> </ul>	Acceptable at all agencies that have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate storage space for dry, refrigerated, and frozen products.</li> <li>- Ability to maintain the cold chain throughout transport—i.e. refrigerated trucks, coolers with ice packs, thermal blankets, etc.</li> <li>- Distribution frequency that can move these products quickly within 2 additional days.</li> <li>- <b><u>Can guarantee that product will be re-distributed to clients within 3 days if refrigerated; if not possible, freeze.</u></b></li> <li>- Lead staff on hand at an Agency needs to have attended ServSafe or equivalent training.</li> </ul>
Prepared foods / entrees <i>kept in bulk, hotel-sized pans</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hospitality donors (hotels, restaurants, foodservice, catering).</li> </ul>	Acceptable at on-site feeding agencies (i.e. soup kitchens, hot meal sites) only and have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appropriate storage space for dry, refrigerated, and frozen products.</li> <li>- Ability to maintain the cold chain throughout transport—i.e. refrigerated trucks, coolers with ice packs, thermal blankets.</li> <li>- Consumed within 24 hours at on-site feeding agencies only.</li> <li>- Lead staff on hand at an Agency needs to have attended ServSafe or equivalent training.</li> </ul>







## APPENDIX 4

### REFRIGERATED STORAGE DAILY TEMPERATURE LOG

Cooler/Freezer Number \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Date.	Temperature F	Taken by.	Date	Temperature F	Taken by.
1			17		
2			18		
3			19		
4			20		
5			21		
6			22		
7			23		
8			24		
9			25		
10			26		
11			27		
12			28		
13			29		
14			30		
15			31		
16					

Use a different log for each freezer and for each cooler.

- 1) "Temp. Taken by" use the initials of the person taking the temperatures.
- 2) Temperatures need to be taken daily if Agency is open; when not write in space "Closed".
- 3) Do not take daily temperatures when the unit is in defrost cycle or constantly being opened.
- 4) Records should have no blanks and need to be done in ink with no white out used. If mistake is made neatly cross out wrong number and write correct number beside it so both numbers are readable.
- 5) Record Corrective Actions taken when freezer is over 0F and Cooler is over 41F on the back of this recording form.
- 6) Keep these records for 2 years.



## APPENDIX 6

### PREPARING FOOD FOR DONATION: DONOR CHECKLIST

- ✓ Identify surplus food for donation.
  - Place food to be donated in food grade bags or food grade containers.
  - Immediately store food under refrigeration or freezers, per food handling temperatures per Feeding America Food Safety guidelines.
- ✓ Determine storage requirements for each donate-able product-type per Feeding America guidelines
  - Designate cool, dry storage area with signage, if applicable.
  - Designate refrigerated storage area with signage, if applicable.
  - Designate freezer storage space with signage, if applicable.
- ✓ Determine labeling requirements per Feeding America Food Safety guidelines and establish labeling process.
  - Make pre-printed labels available for employees packaging prepared foods.
  - All donated food must be labeled; a label should be attached to each donated bag or container.
- ✓ Determine the type of carry boxes you prefer so they are sturdy, clean, dry and have handles for easy of carrying. (Do not use boxes previously used for refrigerated meat or fish).
- ✓ Confirm the days and times you will be picking up at their location.

## APPENDIX 7

### DRIVERS/VOLUNTEERS CHECKLIST

- Take thermometers to every food pick up.
- Take sufficient thermal blankets or coolers with ice packs to each pick up, where applicable.
- Temperature sensitive foods should be at 41F or less.
- Frozen foods should be stored at 0F or less.
- Foods should be properly labeled unless it is obvious what they are (Whole produce).
- Foods should be well wrapped and free of mold, rot or other signs of decomposition.
- Foods need to be clearly labeled as to their contents or the donor needs to supply an ingredient statement or allergen disclaimer statement, if the food is made at the donor's facility.
- Foods need dates or codes on them to aid in traceability later, when required.
- Chemicals must be stored away from food products.
- Food after pick-up needs to be taken to the Food Bank/Agency from the donor within 30 minutes.
- Damaged packages of food cannot be accepted.
  - Singly packaged and the package is torn, ripped, open, wet, stained.
  - Double packaged and the inner packaged is torn, rip, open, wet, stained.
  - Cans are bulging on ends, very rusty, dented on ends or seams.
  - Container has been opened as tamperproof seal is broken or missing.