BC Centre for Disease Control
Provincial Health Services Authority

Providing Nutritious and Safe Food: Guidelines for Food Distribution Organizations with Grocery or Meal Programs

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In association with:
Food Banks BC, Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society, Interior Health Authority and the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

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Acknowledgements and document history

The Food Safety Guidelines for Food Distribution Organizations with Grocery or Meal Programs is a revision of 2006 guides: Food Safety Guidelines for Soup Kitchens and Food Safety Guidelines for Food Banks. This guide is the result of revisions by BC Centre for Disease Control with input from Food Banks BC, the Greater Vancouver Food Bank, the Ministry of Health, Dietitian Services at Health Link BC, Fraser Health Authority, Interior Health Authority and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority.

These guidelines for food distribution organizations were revised in conjunction with the development of the Industry Food Donation Guidelines, which aim to help food industry members donate safe and healthy food items, also found here: http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/professional-resources/food-donation-guidelines .

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Introduction

Since the Food Safety Guidelines for Soup Kitchens and Food Banks were first published in 2006, the work of food distribution organizations (FDOs) has diversified. In addition to provision of foods via food banks and soup kitchens, many FDOs now offer a range of programs including community kitchens, cooking demonstrations, food skills training, after-school and breakfast programs, food banks/grocery programs, and meal programs. This updated guide provides additional information to reflect the diversity of services offered. Guidelines for Food Distribution Organizations with Grocery or Meal Programs include:

1. Food access
2. Inspections and liability
3. Nutrition
4. Donor relations
5. Evaluating foods for safety
6. Safe food handling and training
7. Food storage, traceability, and transportation
8. Food waste reduction and disposal
9. Building maintenance and safety

The guide addresses the unique informational needs of FDOs. Food distributed by FDOs may be the same quality as food found on grocery stores shelves, or it may have a range of irregularities such as cosmetic flaws or damaged packaging. FDO clients (customers) can face a variety of health concerns including immunodeficiency disorders, under-nourishment, diabetes, addiction, and poor oral health. Nutritious, healthy, fresh food that has been handled safely is important. New to this guide is a focus on how FDOs communicate with industry, with their volunteers, and with each other. We address inspection requirements for FDOs in BC, explain liability issues, and discuss the challenges associated with food waste reduction and food recovery programs.

The materials contained in this guide are designed to be used as a resource for training staff and volunteers. Feel free to:

- Copy and distribute all or any part of this guideline, such as posters or tip sheets (e.g., post on wall, include in reference binder, laminate, etc.).
- Incorporate into staff/volunteer training or refresher programs.

If you do use all or any part of this guideline in your own documents, please cite this source as suggested on page 2.

Visit the BCCDC website for supporting documents referred to in this guide (www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/professional-resources/food-donation-guidelines).[1]

Your local health authority will be available to provide advice on the facilities, equipment, and safe food handling. FDOs will find it beneficial to work closely with an EHO from their local health authority prior to establishing new meal and grocery programs or while maintaining existing programs.

Guidelines for Food Distribution Organizations with Grocery or Meal Programs

March 2019

1 Responsible Food Distribution

Part 1 of 2

2 Providing Safe Foods For Donations

Part I. Responsible Food Distribution

Section 1. Food Access

FDOs were established to provide supplementary food to people who don't have sufficient means to acquire it themselves. Because many people, including children, rely on FDOs for a significant portion of their food,[2] nutrition and food quality are increasingly important aspects of the services they provide.

In addition to providing food, FDOs can create a sense of community, offer hope, and reduce isolation. They teach valuable life skills, prepare people for employment, and provide opportunities for sharing and socializing around food.

In BC, limited access to food is due to poverty and inequity, the root causes of which are complex and beyond the scope of this guide. This guide and the *Industry Food Donation Guidelines* are intended to raise awareness of inequitable access to food, increase the quality of donated food, and support the development of positive working relationships between FDOs and food businesses.

"Process" means to make raw food ready to eat and includes washing, rinsing, cooking, smoking, salting, canning, freezing, pasteurizing and reprocessing of previously processed food.[4]

Section 2. Approvals, Inspections, and Liability

Does your FDO require approval by your local health authority?

Your FDO activities and services will determine whether an approval from the local health authority and environmental health officer (EHO) are required. Some food premises will require a plan approval for their building design and construction. Some types of food premises will also require a permit and inspections.[3] Food premises operating as food banks are exempt under the Food Premises Regulation,[4] and do not require an approval (or permit); FDOs operating as food service establishments offering meals and services where food is prepared and served for immediate service on-site, such as soup kitchens, require approvals and an annual permit. All food premises have an obligation to ensure they act in a manner that will not cause a health hazard per the Public Health Act.[5]

The Food Premises Regulation defines food banks as non-profit organizations that operate with the exclusive intent of feeding the hungry. Their activities include:

- receiving
- holding
- packaging
- repackaging
- distributing food to be consumed off the premises
- NO processing of food

Food premises engaged in a processing activity shown in the box require approval by their local health authority for their processes and building construction plan. Food premises serving and preparing foods on-site also require an annual permit. Some exceptions include premises selling only whole fruits and vegetables or pre-packaged non-potentially hazardous foods, or premises where volunteers prepare foods to serve to their own members (e.g., church suppers).

The types of FDOs requiring approval and a permit include:

- meal programs, e.g., soup kitchens offering meals prepared and served on-site to the public
- community kitchens, where food is prepared and served on-site to the public
- social enterprises, e.g., non-profit restaurants, culinary training/cooking classes where food is prepared and served to the public on-site or catered and served to the public off-site
- any premises engaged in processing, where food is prepared and served on-site to the public

Note: no permit would be required for foods prepared for personal consumption, e.g., food prepared in a community kitchen to be eaten at home.

Food banks and premises can consult their local health authority about food safety issues. If you have any questions about whether your FDO should be inspected, contact your local health authority (http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/socsec/contacts.html).

Liability Concerns for FDOs

Donor concerns about the potential for liability if illness or death were to result from the consumption of donated food can negatively affect food donations. The Food Donor Encouragement Act[6] (FDEA) was passed to provide protection to food donors, and those distributing donated food, from liability for damages from injuries or death caused by consuming donated food.[6,8]

Food Donor Encouragement Act (1997)[6]

Available from: http://www.bclaws.ca/Recon/document/ID/freeside/00_97008_01

Liability of donor

1. A person who donates food, or who distributes donated food, to another person is not liable for damages resulting from injuries or death caused by the consumption of the food unless
   a) the food was adulterated, rotten or otherwise unfit for human consumption, and
   b) in donating or distributing the food, the person intended to injure or to cause the death of any person who consumed the food or acted in reckless disregard for the safety of others.

Liability of director, agent, etc.

2. A director, agent or employee of a corporation, or a volunteer who provides services or assistance to a corporation, that donates food or that distributes donated food is not liable for damages resulting from injuries or death caused by the consumption of the food unless

a) the food was adulterated, rotten or otherwise unfit for human consumption, and

b) in donating or distributing the food, the director, agent, employee or volunteer intended to injure or to cause the death of any person who consumed the food or acted with reckless disregard for the safety of others.

Application of Act

3. This Act does not apply to a person who distributes donated food for profit.

The following interpretation of FDO liability concerns was provided by Mary Childs, Ethos Law Group LLP.

This discussion is intended to provide general information about the law and is not legal advice. If you need advice about your situation, please consult a lawyer.

Food Donor Encouragement Act

In BC, the FDEA protects corporations (including non-profits) and their directors, agents, volunteers, and employees from liability when donating food or distributing donated food. As long as the food was not rotten or unfit for consumption, and the food was not donated or distributed with reckless disregard for safety, the FDEA provides protection from liability. The FDEA is shown in full on the following page.

How the BC Food Donor Encouragement Act applies to FDOs

The FDEA applies to FDOs and to any corporation or individual who donates food or distributes donated food. Similar legislation exists in almost every Canadian province and territory. A complete listing of legislation across Canada can be found on the National Zero Waste Council.[7]

In BC, illnesses caused by foods can lead to legal liability in two ways: (1) through the tort of negligence, or (2) through contract. The FDEA reduces the scope for lawsuits based on either approach, as long as the lawsuit concerns donated food. The FDEA doesn't apply if the food was sold at a reduced price; to be protected by the FDEA a donor or distributor must have been dealing with food which was given to the FDO without charge (this would include situations in which the donor paid the costs of taking the food away). That doesn't mean the donor of the distributor of the food is automatically liable to compensate anyone who becomes ill; it just means that the ordinary rules apply to them, and they cannot rely on the extra protection of the FDEA. Similarly, the FDEA does not apply to those who distribute food for profit (the meaning of this term is discussed below).

Liability based on negligence arises when foreseeable harm is caused by someone acting (or failing to act) in a way which falls below the standard of reasonable care. The defendant's intention or knowledge of risk isn't required for them to be liable—all that matters is whether they failed to take reasonable care. The FDEA modifies the law by adding two requirements.

First, there will be no liability unless the donated food was adulterated, rotten, or otherwise unfit for human consumption. Second, for a negligence claim to succeed the person being sued must have acted *intending* to cause death or injury, or *recklessly* (not caring whether the food harms others). If they were negligent but acted in good faith, the FDEA will protect them from liability.

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Contract claims may apply where someone is made ill by the food they purchased. Whenever food is sold, a contract is formed between the seller and the buyer. Under the *Sale of Goods Act*, every contract for the sale of food to a consumer contains an implied promise that the food is reasonably fit for its intended purpose (i.e., consumption). If the food isn't suitable for consumption the seller could be sued for breach of contract, regardless of whether the seller knew that the food wasn't of the required standard. The seller's state of mind is irrelevant. Contract liability only arises if there is a sale of the food, not a gift. So a group selling low-priced food could be sued for breach of contract if the food caused illness, but a breach of contract claim wouldn't apply if the consumer got the food for free (because a gift isn't a contract). The FDEA would protect the seller, as in a tort claim, unless the seller was *intending* to cause death or injury, or *reckless* (not caring whether the food harmed others).

In Canada, no reported court decision has ever imposed liability on industry, FDOs or any person for problems caused by donated food.

No reported court decisions in Canada or the USA involve lawsuits against FDOs or food donors due to claims arising from illness caused by donated foods.

This indicates that lawsuits arising from food donation and distribution are not a significant problem.

As noted above, the FDEA does not apply to those who distribute food for profit. But the FDEA doesn't define that term, and it hasn't been interpreted in any Canadian court decisions. It seems reasonable to expect that a court would interpret this in a generous way to allow organisations to rely on the FDEA if they sold donated food at reduced prices to cover their overhead expenses but not to generate profit. We can't be certain unless a court has to decide the matter, but it seems probable that the Act will apply to protect not only any person or group which donates food or distributes food free of charge, but also any FDO which sells donated food on a cost recovery basis.

The following interpretation of FDO liability concerns was provided by Mary Childs, Ethos Law Group LLP.

This discussion is intended to provide general information about the law and is not legal advice. If you need advice about your situation, please consult a lawyer.

How the FDEA, the law of negligence and contract law can be applied to five different hypothetical FDO scenarios is set out below:

A. A food donor "MeatCo" donates ingredients to an FDO "NoCost" who makes them into meals, and then distributes them free of charge to clients.

Because there is no sale, the only possible claim could be for negligence if the donor or FDO caused harm by failing to take reasonable care. The FDEA applies to protect both donor and FDO unless the party being sued, when donating or distributing the food, acted recklessly or with intent to harm. And even if one of those parties acted recklessly, the other party could still rely on the FDEA unless it had also acted recklessly or with intent to harm.

B. The FDO "LoCost" buys food at reduced cost from a business "MeatCo"; and the FDO "LoCost" resells at a reduced price to clients. "LoCost" is operating on a break even basis, prices are determined by amounts needed to cover expenses.

The FDEA would not apply in this situation because the food is being sold, rather than donated. Both "MeatCo" and "LoCost" may have liability in contract (MeatCo could be sued by LoCost, and LoCost could be sued by food purchasers) and in negligence.

C. As described in B. but the FDO "LoCost" receives donated foods from "MeatCo" and sells them at a reduced price.

The FDEA would apply to the food donor, "MeatCo" and the FDO food distributor "LoCost", if the FDO is not making a profit from the sale of the food.

D. As described in C. but the FDO has a social enterprise catering activity where foods are sold to customers at market rates to generate surplus for the charity's other projects.

The FDEA would apply to the food donor, so its only liability might be in negligence if it had acted recklessly or intending to cause harm. The FDO, however, may not rely on the protection afforded by the FDEA.

E. FDOs charge businesses to remove un-sellable foods (foods that are a mix of recoverable food and food scraps). The service provided by the FDO may involve de-packaging the food into organics and packaging recycling. At the same time the FDO will determine if any of this food is recoverable for food donation purposes.

As the FDO is not being paid for the food, it could be considered a donation, and the FDEA would apply to the food donor. How the recovered food is handled by the FDO, as outlined in A. (given free of charge), C. (sold at a cost-recovery price rather than for profit), and D. (sold at market price) would determine the extent of protection, if any, given by the FDEA.

Section 3. Healthy Foods and Beverages for Clients of FDOs

Many clients of FDOs receive a significant portion of their nutrient intake through charitable sources. While all foods may play a role in helping mitigate immediate hunger, healthy foods provide important nutrients for good health and well-being. Fresh, uncut fruit and vegetables provide better choices for all clients, particularly those with health-related dietary requirements (e.g., snack foods that are high in sugar are a risk for clients with diabetes, heart disease, or dental problems). Food choices must also reflect cultural values, religious beliefs (e.g., kosher, halal foods), or lifestyle choices (e.g., veganism).

Food and Beverages Most Suitable for Donations are Healthy and In Demand

FDOs are better able to meet the needs of their clients if they have healthy food and beverage items to provide. Food and beverage donations help feed children, seniors, and adults in need. Healthy eating is important for everyone in order to optimize health, support healthy growth in children, prevent disease, and manage chronic conditions.

The following guidance for healthy food and beverage donations is based on *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* and provincial food and beverage guidelines.

Healthy food and beverage donations include whole foods and minimally refined and processed foods and beverages, which contain:

- little or no added sugar
- little sodium
  (for packaged products, <15% Daily Value sodium)
- little saturated fat
  (for packaged products, <15% Daily Value saturated fat)
- little or no trans-fat

% Daily Value (%DV)[9]

The % DV is a guide to help you choose healthier foods. The % DV shows you if a specific amount of food has a little or a lot of a nutrient. The %DV for some nutrients is listed on the Nutrition Facts table of packaged food and beverages.

- *5% DV or less is a little*
- *15% DV or more is a lot*

www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/dailyvalue

In BC, FDOs with a permit to operate a food service establishment cannot accept foods that do not comply with the Public Health Impediments Regulation. The regulation restricts trans-fat in all foods used to: 2% trans-fat or less of total fat content for all soft spreadable margarine and oil; and 5% trans-fat or less of total fat content for all other foods. Visit www.restricttransfat.ca for more information.

WHAT ABOUT INFANT FORMULA?

Health Canada recognizes breastfeeding as the optimal method of infant feeding. Breastfeeding exclusively for the first six months, and sustained for up to two years or longer with appropriate complementary feeding, is recommended for the nutrition, immunologic protection, growth, and development of infants and toddlers. However, breastfeeding is not always an option for the mother. Infant formula should only be offered upon request.

If you accept donated infant formula, products MUST NOT exceed the expiry date.

The following table can help you identify healthy food and beverages for food organizations and their clients.

Table 1 – Healthy foods and beverages for grocery and meal programs

Healthy, in-demand donations	What makes a food or beverage healthy?
Vegetables and Fruit • Fresh vegetables and fruit • Canned vegetables and fruit, including unsweetened sauces and purees • Frozen vegetables and fruit • Dried vegetables and fruit • 100% fruit or vegetable juice	• Prepackaged products listing a vegetable or fruit (not sugar) as the first ingredient • Canned fruit packed in water or 100% juice • Canned vegetables and 100% vegetable juices with little or no added sodium (<15% Daily Value) • 100% vegetable and fruit juices with no added sugar
Grain Products • Whole grains (e.g., rolled oats, pot barley, millet, brown basmati rice, wild rice, quinoa) • Noodles or pasta, especially whole grain • Hot and cold cereals, especially whole grain with little or no sugar added (e.g., oatmeal) • Bread, especially whole grain • Crackers, especially whole grain • Gluten free options	• Prepackaged products listing a grain, especially a whole grain, as the first ingredient • All products meets the restriction of 5% trans-fat or less of total fat content*
Meat and Other High Protein Foods • Fresh or frozen meat • Fresh or frozen poultry • Fresh or frozen fish or seafood • Canned chunked poultry, especially chicken or turkey • Canned fish or seafood • Eggs • Dried or canned beans, peas, and lentils • Nuts and seeds and nut and seed butters (e.g., peanut butter, almond butter) • Soy products (e.g., tofu, tempeh)	• Lean or extra lean meats and poultry • Pre-packaged meat, poultry, fish, and seafood with little or no added sodium (<15% Daily Value) • Nut and seed butters with little or no added sugar and sodium (<15% Daily Value) • Nut and seeds with little or no added sugar and sodium (<15% Daily Value)
Milk and Alternatives • Milk, including powdered, canned (evaporated) and shelf-stable UHT • Fortified soy beverages • Yogurt • Cheese	• Plain or unsweetened milk and milk alternatives
Cooking and Baking Ingredients • Unsaturated vegetable oils (e.g., olive, canola, soybean, safflower) • Non-hydrogenated margarine • Grain flour, especially whole grain (e.g., whole wheat flour), including gluten-free options • Baking powder and baking soda • Spices and herbs; sauces and dressings	• All soft spreadable margarine and oil meets the restriction of 2% trans-fat or less of total fat content • All other food meets the restriction of 5% trans-fat or less of total fat content* • Sauces and dressings with little or no added sugar and sodium (<15% Daily Value)

* Visit www.restricttransfat.ca/trans_fat_calculator.html to calculate trans-fat content of your product.

What about other food and beverages?

Food and beverages high in fat, sugar, or sodium are less healthy choices. FDOs may still choose to accept and distribute food and beverage items with low nutritional quality. The following table includes examples of less healthy foods and beverages.

Table 2 – Less healthy food and beverage donations

Less healthy food and beverage donations	Examples
Sugary drinks (beverages with added sugar or sugar syrups)	• soft drinks • sweetened specialty coffee and tea drinks • sugary drink powders or concentrates • energy drinks • fruit-flavored drinks • sports drinks • vitamin-enhanced waters
Foods high in sodium, sugar, and fat	• chocolate bars • candies • gelatin desserts • chips • cookies •cakes and pastries doughnuts

CAUTIONARY ADVICE ON VITAMINS AND NATURAL HEALTH PRODUCTS

Food Banks BC does not recommend that its members distribute vitamins or natural health products. However, if your organization chooses to distribute these products, please take the following precautions:

- Do not use opened bottles or products exceeding either their expiry date or best before date.
- Include the label instruction when dispensing smaller portions of vitamins and natural health products to clients.
- Do not offer advice on the use of these products outside of the guidance on the label.
- Advise clients to use and consume products under the care and direction of their doctor or dial 8-1-1 to consult with a pharmacist, dietitian, or nurse.

NEED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HEALTHY FOOD CHOICES AND NUTRITION FOR YOUR CLIENTS?

Connect with a registered dietitian at HealthLink BC by dialing 8-1-1, or send an email via their website at: https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating/email-healthlinkbc-dietitian.

Section 4. Relationships with Food Donors, Volunteers, and Other FDOs

Establishing a Working Relationship with New and Existing Food Donors

Forming working relationships with industrial food donors will go a long way toward securing long-term, reliable food donations. Direct engagement between the FDO manager and the manager of the donor business or organization helps to formalize the relationship and build trust. Below are some approaches to develop and maintain positive relationships between FDOs and food donors. Many of these involve written agreements. Although the paperwork may seem onerous at first, it can help streamline the donation process, prevent future problems from arising, and help strengthen ongoing relationships.

- Discuss the Food Donor Encouragement Act to help industry donors feel more comfortable. Provide them with a written copy and share the scenarios provided in Section 2 of this guideline. Fear of potential liability is one of the main reasons why potential donors are reluctant to donate food.
- Make a presentation to food donor managers and staff about how their food will be used in your programs and how your food programming benefits the community. Introduce the Food Donor Encouragement Act and address any concerns about liability.
- Learn if the food donor also donates to other FDOs. It is important to respect pre-existing arrangements with other FDOs as well as your agreed-upon schedule with the donor. Communication between FDOs about food donation issues contributes to a functional food donation network.
- Discuss the range and quality of foods your FDO is willing to receive. Specify the types of foods your FDO would prefer, and specify any foods your FDO will not accept (e.g., alcohol or candy). Recovered foods are often damaged. What is your capacity to recycle damaged packaging and compost inedible foods? Provide a clear picture of how unusable food or packaging impacts your FDO.
- Provide the food donor with all the contact information necessary to easily reach your FDO, including primary contacts and backups. Remember, you want to make it easy for a food donor to contact you. Consider preparing a short information sheet that can be handed out or emailed, with important information about your donation program along with contact information.
- Create a Food Donor Registration Form to capture the relevant information about the donor, the kinds of food they have to offer, and their preferred method of transferring food.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the food donor is a valuable way to clarify mutual expectations. This agreement will also allow the food donor to decide how the food they donate can be used (see Table 3).
- Legal agreements: Some donors and FDOs may wish for additional clarity regarding liability and responsibility beyond the Food Donor Encouragement Act and the forms listed above. In these cases a legal agreement may be required that articulates warranties, mutual indemnity, and mutual release. Sample wording for such clauses is provided (see Table 3) for further review with a lawyer. These samples should in no way take the place of legal counsel.

Once the relationship is established (preferably in writing), most contact will be through staff or volunteers that pick-up or receive the donated foods. Donor relations can be challenging but are critical to maintain reliable donation sources. Volunteer drivers may cancel at the last minute, while businesses like the regularity of scheduled pick-ups. Good communication and consistency are essential. Staff and volunteers must be suited to their assigned tasks (dependable, responsible, and personable) and should receive adequate training and orientation to carry out those tasks in a professional manner.

Table 3 – Templates and forms for agreements and MOUs

Food donor registration form	PDF version (fillable)	Word version (fillable)
MOU between a food donor and an FDO	PDF version (fillable)	Word version (editable)
Application for FDO to receive foods from another FDO	PDF version (fillable)	Word version (fillable)
Food rescue labels (Avery 05164)	PDF version (fillable)	
Sample clauses for food donor relationships	PDF version	Word version (editable)
Sample clauses for FDO relationships	PDF version	Word version (editable)

Templates and forms that you can fill in or adapt to your needs, along with example clauses that can be used when forming relationships with industry and other FDOs, are available on the BCCDC Food Security webpage.[1] A description of available templates and forms are shown in Table 3.

Working with Food Donors

As the relationship develops, you will identify ways to streamline the donation process with your various donors. Below are some strategies that can be helpful.

- Ask the food donor to identify where food will be placed for pick-up. This should be on a cart or in a place that has easy access for the driver.
- Ask the food donor to provide reusable laminated signs to clearly identify boxes for pick-up for each FDO they donate food to. This will help your drivers know which foods to pick up without having to locate a knowledgeable staff person.
- Ask the food donor to include an ingredients list in cases where ingredients are not marked on the packaging (e.g., allergen warnings: "this box has a granola with peanuts") should be written out and attached to the food.
- A schedule for pickup and delivery will benefit you and the food donor. If the food donor also donates to other FDOs, it is important to respect pre-existing schedules with other FDOs as well as adhering to your agreed-upon schedule with the donor
- Should the donor request to change the pick-up time, ask them to provide at least one business day notice (or whatever time is required by you as the FDO) to make new arrangements with your drivers for the new pick-up time.
- Encourage the manager of the donating business to be the champion of the food donation program. Staff turnover can be high, and food donations may not continue if they are not embedded in the culture of the donating business. Where managers also move on regularly, often the best liaison will be a senior cashier or staff member who is committed to the program and will remain a long-term employee.
- Tell the food donors that they should not release food to FDO drivers if they aren't equipped to handle it safely, e.g., if they don't have a cooler for perishable foods in their vehicle. This helps ensure safe food handling and reassures the donor that you will always handle their donated food products with care and integrity.
- Many donors prefer FDO staff who provide an ID or a letter from the recipient FDO agency to identify themselves to avoid pick-up theft by persons pretending to be from the food bank or another FDO.
- Ask the manager to speak with the FDO contact identified in the Donor Agreement should there be any concerns or questions.

Training Staff and Volunteers

Food requires special handling so it is important to provide drivers and receivers that handle food with the resources to do the job. All FDOs engage volunteers in their organization to some extent. Provide them with sufficient materials and training to do the job safely and well, and consider individuals' abilities and capacity when assigning roles. While larger FDOs often have trained staff to transport and store food donations, many rely on volunteers who may be young and inexperienced, seniors with physical limitations, or vulnerable individuals learning new skills. These staff or volunteers are the ambassadors of your organization and they have the ability to build or erode your relationship with the donor. Make sure that they are fully trained to handle problems, complaints, and issues that may arise during pick-ups.

- All new volunteers should receive an orientation. One great training opportunity is to pair new workforce entry volunteers with experienced volunteers, to help them learn a new role, e.g., pick-up and delivery drivers ("swampers") and benefit from seasoned volunteers.
- Food is heavy. Consider workplace health and safety and ensure that no one lifts or moves heavy objects beyond their capacity. Everyone should know how to lift objects safely to minimize risk of injury. While there is no specified lifting weight limit in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation; the FDO may set a limit, such as to not lift any boxes or containers over 18 kg (40 lbs).[10]
- FOODSAFE Level 1 food safety training (or equivalent) is recommended for receivers of food who work alone and make food safety decisions (warehouse personnel, drivers, or front-line clerks in contact with the public). Drivers will need to decide whether or not they are equipped to transport potentially hazardous foods that would need to be kept refrigerated or frozen (are they using their own car without a cooler?). Basic food safety courses such as "*Caring about food safety*" may be an economical option for volunteers.[11]
- Volunteers should return their identification badges at the end of each shift. This protects the FDO's identity from potential misuse.

Things to Tell Staff and Volunteers

Recognize that the staff and volunteers who interface with donors are the face of your FDO. FDO managers are unlikely to see every food donor regularly, but your drivers do.

The following tips can protect your FDO, the food donor, and your staff and volunteers:

- Be professional and keep a business-like attitude.
- Drivers should strive to be on time, according to the schedule arranged with the food donor.
- Do not ask staff from the donor business to help load food into vehicles. If they offer, ensure that they have their manager's permission to assist you with loading.
- Do not solicit additional donations or take up valuable time from the industry donor during the pick-up visit. For the food donor, time is money. They will not tolerate transactions that impede with their business and customers. Any messages from food donors given to FDO drivers should be passed on to the FDO office for follow-up.
- Maintain confidentiality of all the food donor businesses you visit. Do not gossip about business practices or reveal information about a business. There are many business reasons for wanting, or not wanting, to share information about food donation practices.
- Customers come first for the food donor. FDO drivers should wait to be assisted. If necessary, stand in line with other customers to avoid any appearance of being "served" out of turn.
- Staff and volunteers picking up food should wear identification badges so they can be easily recognized by the industry food donors' staff. If the FDO can supply a safety vest or jacket with a recognizable badge, this will greatly assist the food donor in recognizing volunteers or staff.

- Equip all vehicles with safety equipment. Orange traffic cones and reflective clothing are particularly helpful when parking near traffic to do a pick-up.
- Provide labels for drivers to attach to unlabeled food when critical information needs to be recorded, such as allergens, lot codes, or best before dates. When labels don't stick to cold or damp packaging and can't be stapled, create a delivery receipt that notes this information. See Table 3 for a food rescue label template.
- Always use a clear bag or open box to collect foods so the donor can easily verify that only the agreed-upon food is being picked up.
- If offered additional items during pickup, make sure that these are items your FDO is able to distribute, e.g., products that are nutritious and that you have the capacity to store and distribute. If you are unable to accept the item, make sure to decline the offer in a way that does not offend the donor.
- Greenhouses often do not permit used boxes or other containers to be brought into their space. This is to reduce the spread of potential contaminants in a warm moist environment. Talk to your greenhouse donor to learn what works best for them.

Relationships with Other FDOs

It is also important to be respectful and mindful of other FDOs. A single donor may provide food to more than one FDO. It is important to communicate with the other FDOs in your community about food donation issues as they arise. Relationships with other FDOs may be as important as relationships with donors. Rather than competing, build a network to share skills or help use large donations of perishable items.

- When one FDO is providing food to another FDO, ensure that the receiving FDO is up to date on any food safety alerts or warnings from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA). FDOs who provide food to other FDOs need to be responsible donors and keep adequate records of where the food came from and who it was delivered to.
- In the event that a scheduled FDO cannot make a pick-up from a food donor, the donor may contact another FDO to fill in and take the food. Be respectful of the other FDO. If your FDO is called to fill in, find out if this is a one-time event, or if the other FDO is unable to take food for a specified period of time. Phone them to find out and make respectful arrangements. Never "poach" donations from other FDO.
- Just as it is important not to share information about donor businesses, it is important not to share information about other FDOs.
- Food donor staff may not distinguish between FDOs, so it is important to stick to the schedule developed between your FDO and the food donor to ensure you are picking up the food that was intended for you.

Similar to the MOU with food donors, an MOU with the FDO you are providing food to, or receiving food from, is a valuable way to clarify mutual expectations (see Table 3 for sample MOU).

Guidelines for Food Distribution Organizations with Grocery or Meal Programs

March 2019

1 Responsible Food Distribution

2 Providing Safe Foods For Donations

Part 2 of 2

Part II. Providing Safe Foods For Donation

Section 5. Evaluating Foods for Safety

The objective of offering the safest food possible may at times conflict with the objective of providing the most food, or the most nutritious food possible. The following guidelines are intended to assist FDOs to optimize recovery of excess food without compromising food safety.

Food Categories

Decisions by the FDO manager or operator as to whether to accept donated food, and to minimize the risk of distributing unsafe food, depend on a number of factors. The following categories can help FDO operators determine the relative risks associated with various kinds of food, and provide guidance on what precautions should be taken. Category 1 food is viewed as having the lowest risk. Categories 2, 3, and 4 have progressively higher relative risks. It is important to remember that any food—even lower risk foods—may become higher risk. The two most important ways to keep foods lower risk are cleanliness and temperature control. Leaving food on the floor can create uncontrolled hazards—gravel from dirty pallets (physical hazard), spilled floor cleaner soaking into boxes (chemical hazard), or spoilage and growth of bacteria from temperature abuse (biological hazard) all increase risk to the food.

Risk: likelihood of a food safety issue or associated illness

Hazard: source or type of risk (i.e., physical, chemical or biological)

Figure 1 – Food risk categories

CATEGORY 1: LOWEST RISK NO-PERISHABLE FOODS

This category includes non-perishable foods (items that do not require refrigeration), e.g. unrefrigerated pre-packed foods, canned or bottled products, and dry goods such as flour, sugar, pasta, breads, and pastries without cream fillings). Take the following precautions when accepting category 1 foods:

a) Sort and identify cans or jars that may not be safe for consumption.

b) Ensure that labelling is in place when bulk packages are broken down into smaller quantities or repackaged.

c) Evaluate best before dates (covered in more detail in next section).

Large bags or containers of dry goods (flour, sugar, salt, dry cereal, etc.) may be repackaged. Repackaging should be done in proper facilities by people who have received some basic training in sanitation and food handling. Access to a hand sink and hand-washing are minimum requirements for this activity. If the safety of donated cans or jars is in question, contact your local health authority for advice.

CATEGORY 2: LOW RISK PERISHABLE FOODS

Category 2 foods include perishable foods such as raw fruit and vegetables. Whole, intact raw fruits and vegetables are lower risk than sliced fruits and vegetables, which are also in this category. Take the following precautions when accepting category 2 foods:

a) Ensure refrigeration facilities are available for perishable foods.

b) Evaluate best before dates on items such as commercially sliced raw fruits and vegetables.

c) Refrigerate sliced fruits and vegetables or any produce with the natural coating (peel) removed at 4°C (40°F) or colder.

Some FDOs, such as food banks, can accept low risk perishable foods without refrigeration when they are given out or used within a short time period such as fresh produce that is picked up early in the morning and given out that day.

CATEGORY 3: HIGH RISK POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS (PHF)

This category includes PHF (e.g., dairy products, eggs and egg products, tofu products, meat and meat products) from a commercial processor or retailer or a licensed restaurant, and may involve minor repackaging. This category does not include home processed foods or un-inspected wild game. Precautions to be taken when accepting category 3 foods include:

a) PHF must be kept at 4°C (40°F) or colder.

b) Cooked vegetables and grain products must be hot-held at 60°C (140°F) or hotter, or properly cooled and held refrigerated at 4°C (40°F) or colder (or frozen).

c) Milk and milk products (including cream and cream products, ice cream, frozen desserts, yogurt, and similar foods) must be pasteurized, held either refrigerated at 4°C (40°F) or colder or frozen at −18°C (0°F) or colder, and distributed in their original unopened containers.

d) Meat and meat products should be held at 4°C (40°F) or colder or frozen at −18°C (0°F) or colder, and distributed in their original unopened packages. However, if large pieces of meat have been donated and further packaging such as cutting into smaller portions takes place, use appropriate equipment (e.g., stainless steel equipment, large sinks for washing and sanitizing, hand wash basins) and work areas.

e) Repackaging should take place in a separate work area to prevent cross-contamination of finished, ready-to-eat food products.

f) Meat and poultry may only be donated from an approved source, properly dressed, and if there has been no temperature abuse during storage or transportation.

g) Culled game meat that complies with the BCCDC guideline *Standards for the Donation of Culled Game Meat* may be donated.[12]

h) Poultry and poultry products: if large birds are donated and cutting is necessary, use appropriate equipment and work areas as described above for meat products, due to cross-contamination concerns with bacteria such as *Salmonella*.

i) Packaging materials used for the finished product should be made of a material that will not contaminate the food product. New packaging should be used for foods that can be eaten without washing, e.g., fruit, vegetables (including salad), and bread products.

j) Vacuum packaged or re-packaged PHF must be kept refrigerated or frozen, depending on the product.

k) Personnel responsible for further processing (e.g., cutting of meat and poultry or how to handle mouldy cheese products) must be trained.

l) Eggs and egg products should be refrigerated. Only graded eggs should be used. Visibly cracked eggs should be discarded, unless the eggs are used in foods heated to an internal temperature of 74°C (165°F) or hotter.

m) Entrées and soups made in an inspected kitchen can be recovered from caterers, hotels, and other food businesses as long as the food has been cooled to 4°C or below using food safe methods, has not been served at a public buffet, and is packaged and handled so it does not leak. To reduce food waste at a buffet, restaurants and caterers can reserve food in the kitchen and replenish the public buffet as required.

CATEGORY 4: HIGHEST RISK FOODS

This category includes food that has been processed in the home environment, opened foods, or partially used foods from any source. These foods are viewed as being at highest risk because you cannot tell to what extent partially consumed food has been contaminated or (in the case of home-processed foods) under what conditions the food was originally processed and stored. FDO managers making the decision to handle and distribute these types of food must be aware that these foods carry a higher risk.

NOTE: HOME CANNED FOODS—PARTICULARLY MEAT, FISH, VEGETABLES, AND COMBINATION FOODS (e.g., ANTIPASTO)—SHOULD NOT BE ACCEPTED FROM DONORS DUE TO THE RISK OF BOTULISM POISONING.

Depending on the community context, an FDO may feel compelled to draw from this source of food. If the decision is made to handle these highest risk foods, the following precautions should be taken:

a) Home preserves (jams, jellies, and other high sugar-content type foods) may be accepted and distributed, as long as the product is labelled, unopened (properly sealed with a snap top lid), and contained in a proper container.

b) Home canned fruit may be accepted and distributed, as long as the product is labelled, unopened (properly sealed with a snap top lid), contained in a proper container, has a pH 4.6 or less, and complies with requirements for lower risk food as defined in the *Temporary Food Market Guidelines*.[13]

c) Home preserves and canned fruit canned in a classroom setting by clients who learn this processing on-site in the FDO may be taken home for personal consumption.

d) Unpasteurized juices (not heat-treated) must be boiled before serving.

e) Freezers full of food donated to food banks, e.g., when family members donate food from a deceased person's estate, should be used with extreme caution. If the client understands that the food they are receiving is from an unknown source and is willing to take special precautions (i.e., thorough cooking), then the FDO may decide to distribute. Food products that are not identifiable should not be distributed. Food Banks BC does not recommend accepting this type of product. These foods should not be used for meal programs, or in commercial kitchens.

The following foods are considered the highest risk and must never be accepted for distribution:

a) unpasteurized dairy products
b) home-canned vegetables
c) home-canned meat/fish products or combination products, e.g., antipasto
d) uninspected wild game, due to the uncertainty of the health of the animal before its death
e) partially consumed foods, regardless of source
f) foods that have been on display in a public buffet

Not sure if your food is from an approved source? Section 11 of the Food Premises Regulation says foods on premises must be obtained from approved sources.

An approved source is defined in the Food Premises Regulation[4] as:

"a source that is approved by the government of Canada, the Provincial government, the government of another province or territory, or, an official agency of any of those governments under whose authority food safety standards are established and enforced."

Local officials may use discretion to approve foods on a case-by-case basis to fit the needs of their community.

Food Risk and Vulnerable Clients

Many clients who use the services of FDOs have health concerns that affect their immune systems, making them especially vulnerable to foodborne diseases from pathogens like *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, or Hepatitis A. We do not recommend offering higher risk foods, such as those in category 4, to vulnerable clients. Other vulnerable clients might include the elderly, pregnant women and young children.

Interpreting Food Packaging Dates for Safety

There are several terms used to describe food packaging dates. Expiry dates provide a limit for safe product use, i.e., the product must not be used after the expiry date. All other dates—best before dates (BBD), durable dates, and use by dates—address quality (not safety) of the food.

See Appendix 1 for guidance on giving out foods past their BBD.

Best Before Dates and Durable Dates

Best before dates (BBD) and durable (life) dates are equivalent terms. Regulatory agencies tend to use the latter term, while consumers are more familiar with BBD. BBD must accompany foods with a BBD of 90 days or less.

Best before dates MUST be written in the Year/Month/Day format. The description may be entirely numerical, or using a two character month code.[14] For example 2014-04-06 may be written as 2014 AL 06, as 04/06, or as AL 06 (note the year is optional, unless the BBD runs into the next calendar year). The acceptable character formatting for month codes is:

January JA	May MA	September SE
February FE	June JN	October OC
March MR	July JL	November NO
April AL	August AU	December DE

In Canada, the best before date must be written in both official languages (*meilleur avant*).[14] Storage instructions, e.g., whether foods should be refrigerated, must also accompany the BBD on the food label. Another method of labelling may include the "packaged on" date that includes how long the food will retain freshness, e.g., "packaged on AL 04, consume within 30 days."

BBD only apply to unopened foods. Once food packaging is opened, the BBD date cannot be used as a guide. The most important issue to recognize is that the BBD is NOT an indicator of food safety. A BBD is only an indicator of food quality, meaning foods properly stored and handled should retain their nutritional and sensory (taste, smell, texture) qualities. FDOs may receive food past the BBD if the product has been frozen prior to the BBD and the FDO is assured the donor used proper conditions to maintain and assure product safety. For example, yogurt, held refrigerated, may be used up to two weeks past the BBD (Food Banks Canada; see Appendix 1).[15]

Types of foods that may be acceptable to use past their BBD include:

- jams
- condiments
- yogurts and cheese dairy products
- frozen meats and meals
- room temperature stable Tetra Pak® juices
- refrigerated Tetra Pak® juices
- ketchup, mustard
- salsa, tomato sauce
- salad dressing
- breads
- low-risk baked goods

Safety-related expiry dates on baby food products and adult nutritional supplements should never be exceeded.

Best before dates relate to product quality issues and may be exceeded.
These foods will need to be evaluated on a case by case basis.

BBD are not regulated by the Government of Canada, and companies are responsible for placing realistic dates on their food products.[14] A BBD takes into account the length of time and conditions of storage at retail and in the consumer home. Generally, food companies apply a BBD that is approximately 20% shorter than the true date after which food quality is expected to deteriorate.[16] Commercial food processors and manufacturers usually have toll free numbers that can be contacted for advice when best before dates have been exceeded. Food tests for quality and safety for donations nearing or past their BBD can be requested from industry suppliers or undertaken by the FDO. As a general rule, potentially hazardous foods exceeding their best before date should not be distributed, while individual judgments should be made for non-PHF.

If in doubt, throw it out!

Expiry Dates

Expiry dates must be placed onto certain categories of foods that are specifically designed to meet nutritional needs.[14] These include baby or infant formula (human milk substitutes), nutritional supplements, meal replacements, low energy diet foods (prescribed), and formulated liquid diets. Do not use any of these products past the labelled expiry dates or if the expiry date is removed or not visible. The nutritional quality of these foods (vitamin content) may be compromised and harm the clients consuming them.

Use by Dates

The use by date (*employez avant*) is placed onto certain food ingredients, such as yeast. Companies use these dates to let consumers know the date to which effectiveness of the product is assured. It is perfectly acceptable to use foods, such as yeasts, after the use by date. (Note: yeast can be "proofed" to test effectiveness and avoid potential product losses due to yeast failure.)

Assessing Refrigerated and Frozen Perishable Foods

Many foods received by FDOs arrive in conditions that require staff and volunteers to make judgements about their suitability for their clients. The foods need to be assessed for safety and quality. Perishable foods may be either PHF or non-PHF. Assess safety and quality by checking:

(1) the donor's information and history of the product prior to donation
(2) the temperature of the food on arrival
(3) how the food looks (in terms of packaging and sensory aspects)
(4) how long the food has been held at temperatures above and below refrigeration temperatures 4°C (40°F) (if possible)

The two perishable food decision trees on the next pages can be used as a guide to determine whether a food is suitable for further storage, should be served immediately, or must be discarded. These figures are based on perishable food decision tables in the first version of these guidelines, originally sourced from the Purdue Extension program[17] and Foodsafety.gov website.[18]

Food Donations from Restaurants, Catering Functions, Events, and Other Retail Operations Offering Ready-To-Eat Foods

FDOs that have arrangements with restaurants, caterers, or other retail operations that are offering to donate hot-held ready-to-eat (RTE) foods should only accept foods that meet the following criteria:

HOT RTE FOODS

1. RTE foods must be hot-held at temperatures of 60°C (140°F) or hotter, **and...**
2. RTE foods must not have been exposed or offered to the public, e.g., in a buffet; acceptable RTE foods would be held hot in the kitchen in covered containers without being offered for service, or
3. Foods not being held hot are acceptable only if the total time held below 60°C to the time of serving is less than two hours; after two hours, foods must be discarded.

COLD RTE FOODS

1. RTE foods must be held refrigerated at temperatures at 4°C (40°F) or colder; **and...**
2. RTE foods must not have been exposed or offered to the public, e.g., in a buffet; acceptable RTE foods would be held refrigerated in the kitchen in covered containers without being offered for service, or
3. RTE foods held at temperatures above 4°C (40°F) are served within two hours, replaced under refrigeration within two hours, or discarded after two hours.

FRIGERATED OR FROZEN FOODS

These foods should be transported under appropriate temperature conditions. FDOs should review all perishable foods according to Figures 2 and 3.

Recovered Foods

Some foods may be recovered (previously known as salvaged) from homes or businesses after a flood, fire, or closure. Visibly damaged foods are NOT appropriate for hampers, as it is not dignified to receive foods that appear to have been discarded or might be harmful if consumed. If a food is not good enough for someone else to eat, it is not good enough to give to FDO clients. However, foods with visible damage to packaging (but not the contents) may be suitable for use in meal programs or teaching kitchens, where foods are removed from the packaging and prepared in a kitchen. It can be very difficult to determine the damage to the food by looking at it. Any foods with visible damage or noticeable odour, e.g., soaked through with an unknown liquid or packaging that smells of smoke, should be discarded. Tips for evaluating packaging are provided in the next section. Should you have any questions, make sure that you contact your local health authority for advice.

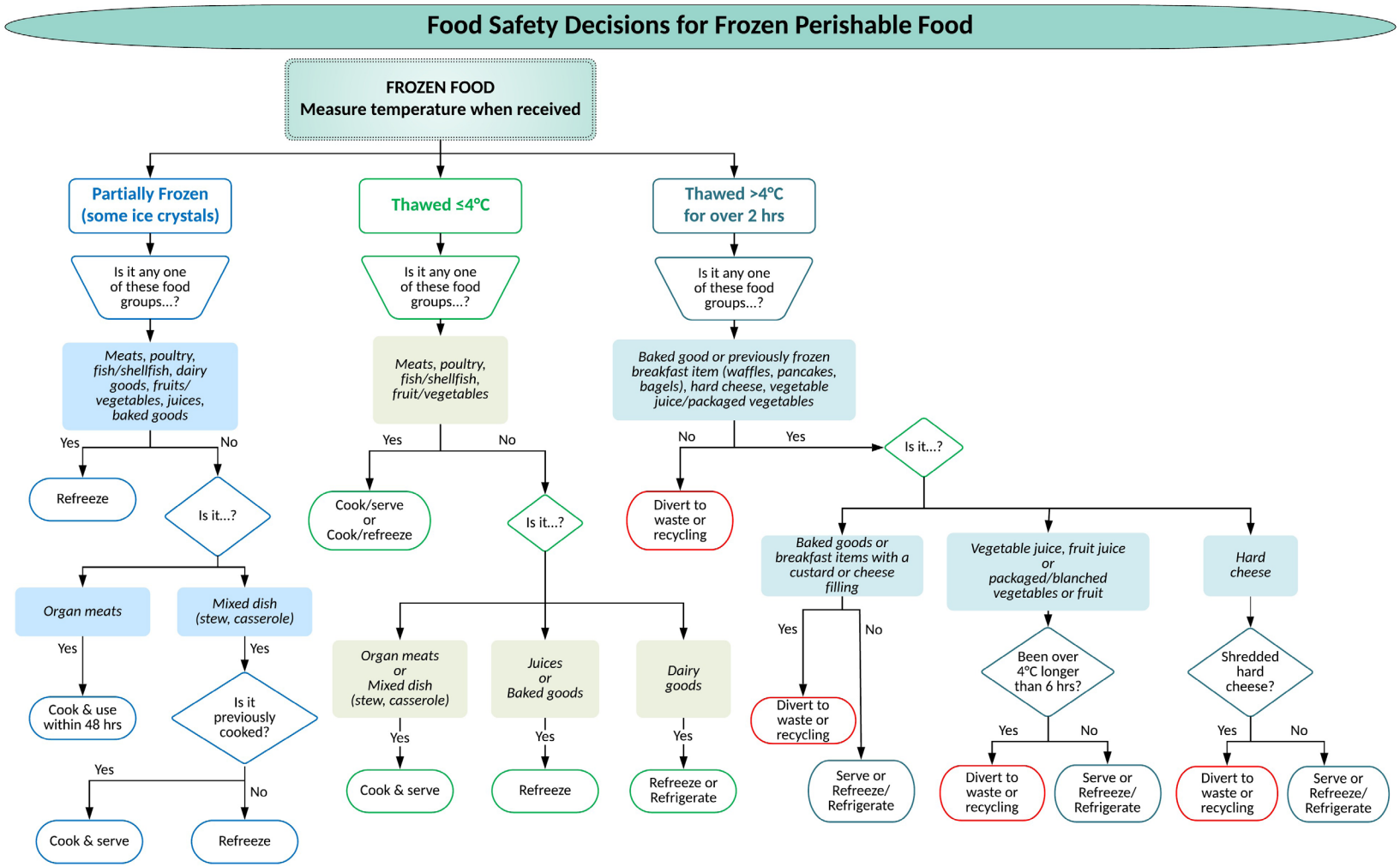


Figure 2 – Frozen perishable food decision tree

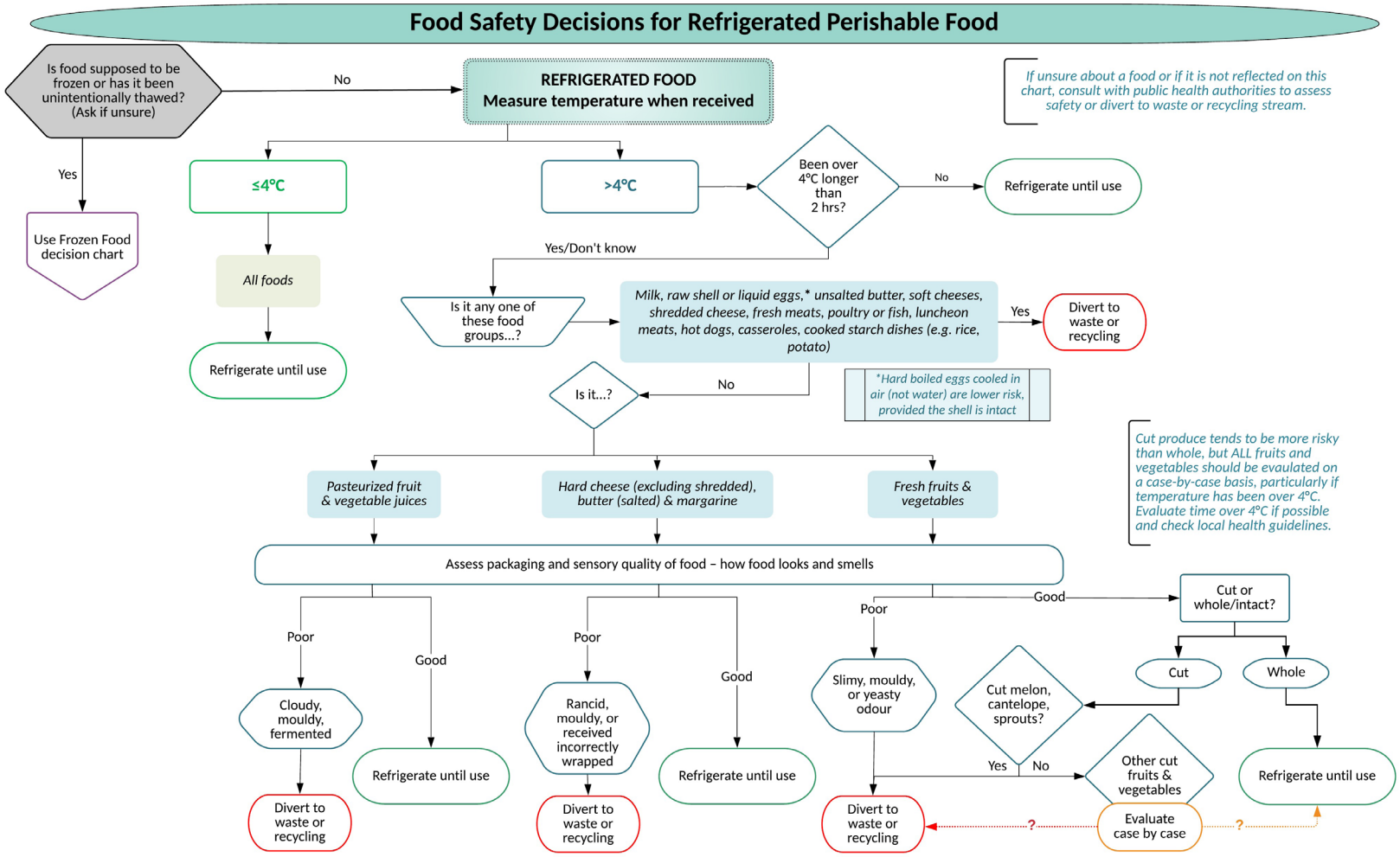


Figure 3 – Refrigerated perishable food decision tree

Evaluating Packaging

Food distribution organizations receiving packaged foods will need to make some judgements on the acceptability of the food. Possible reasons for rejecting donated food include:

(1) damage to packaging affecting the safety or suitability of the contents
(2) expiry dates on packages are exceeded
(3) the donated food product has been subject to a recall
(4) food has been mishandled (e.g., poor temperature control, exposed to spills or infestation) and is no longer safe for human consumption

For example, excessive damage to packaging so that the internal contents are leaking or exposed, such as the muffin mix or salad dressing shown in Table 4, would be considered unacceptable packaging damage. Damage to packaging can occur in many ways: physical mishandling, insect and rodent damage, signs of spills or stains of unknown origin, if the label itself has been damaged so that the contents are unknown, or if crucial information about the product (e.g., ingredients, allergens, BBD) is unknown. Note: products with missing labels may be accepted when the donor provides documentation of the product and its contents (i.e., ingredients, allergens, BBD), and/or the FDO labels the product with information received by from the donor.

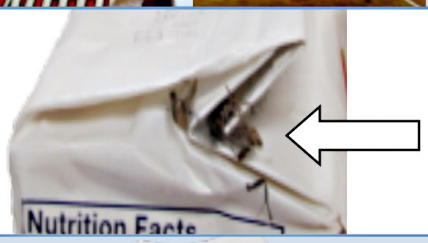
1. Rips, tears, punctures, holes • leaking • imperfect seals • moldy or foreign objects inside • contents contaminated	
2. Insect damage • bugs in seams of package • bore holes • movements or spots in products • insect skins (or chaff in bottom of container)	
3. Rodent damage • droppings • urine stains (use black light to detect) • gnaw marks	
4. Spill or stains from unknown contaminant • unknown contaminant • flood or fire damage	
5. Label damage • label is missing • label is unreadable/illegible • ingredients are unknown • BBD, use by, or expiry date is unknown	

Table 4 – Categories and examples of unacceptable packaging damage

SERIOUS DEFECTS TO CANS

Defects occur when the canning process is flawed and a proper seal does not occur, from damage (dents) to the exterior of the can from rough handling, from the contents of the can, from environmental conditions, or from any combination of factors that compromise the can's integrity. Some types of can defects include: (1) sharp dents or dents in the seam; (2) corrosion marks, pitting, rusting, or leaking from the can; (3) swollen or bulging cans; (4) damage to the can ends; (5) score marks on the can that may affect the integrity of the metal; and (6) cut seams, punctures, or damage to the scoreline (for pull-tab type cans) that may result in pinholes or leakage. Examples of seriously compromised cans received at the Vancouver Food Bank are shown below (Figure 4). Other examples of cans that would not be acceptable are shown in Appendix 2. Moderate dents that do not compromise the seams are acceptable if not past the FDO's policy on best before dates.

These cans of food were received on August 10, 2014. The date stamped on the can is 2008/01/07, and are not acceptable for two reasons: (1) the best before date is more than two years past the stamp on the can, exceeding the policies from Food Banks Canada (can accept cans up to one year past best before date) and the Vancouver Food Bank (can accept cans up to two years past best before date); and (2) the cans are clearly bulging, indicating gas formation from bacterial activity.

These cans of food were received on Aug 14, 2014. Although the photo at right shows the best before date is Aug 4, 2016, the dents in both these cans are too severe to accept. Dents that may affect seams or place pinholes in the can destroy the can integrity, and may allow intrusion of bacteria.

Figure 4 – Cans donated to the Vancouver Food Bank that were rejected and discarded

Signs of Insects or Rodents on Packaging

Donated and recovered foods are not useable if there are signs of insect and rodent damage. Rodent droppings and feces may carry diseases that could be transferred by touching packaging as well as eating foods. Personnel handling foods should practice regular hand-washing, including before and after wearing gloves, if these are used, to protect themselves and others. Note: due to pest/infestation problems with donated pet foods in the past, Food Banks BC recommends that pet foods not be shipped together with foods meant for human consumption.

Signs that insects or rodents have contaminated foods include:

- signs of rodent droppings on packages or in boxes of donated foods
- urine marks either visible to the eye or visible under black light (UV light)
- casings or webs left behind by insects on packaging
- damage to packaging caused by rodents

If the outer box or wrapping of foods are found to be damaged by rodents or insects, discard this packaging. If the interior packaging remains intact with no visible signs of damage, this should be relabelled for use. To assess foods for rodent droppings, including urine, you may also use a UV light. An example of packaging compromised by rodents and insects is shown in Figure 5.

More information about controlling pests in the FDO can be found in section 8.

Other Packaging Damage

Water damage during thawing of foods, spills from unknown materials onto packaging, or damage caused by floods or fires (including smoke and heat damage) may also occur. Excess soil or debris on packaging or mishandling of cartons of foods, such as cut marks in packaging, may be aesthetic only or may affect the integrity of the packaging and jeopardize the safety of the food. These foods will need to be assessed individually based on the extent of the damage to the interior packaging and the labels. If the only visible damage is external, and the interior packaging is intact, then these foods may be acceptable for donation.

Packaging damage can sometimes be managed if the inner contents are not damaged or exposed. Examples of packaging damage from a box cutter with packaged soup and arrowroot biscuits are shown on Figure 6.

Further examples of acceptable and unacceptable packaging damage is shown in Table 5, and evaluating boxes is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 5 – Rodent damage to packaging

Figure 6 – Acceptable and unacceptable packaging for foods damaged by a box cutter

In each of the photo groups, a cut into the outer box has occurred (A).

TOP: The soup packages labelled B are acceptable. The name of the food and the date code markings are stamped onto the internal packages. These can be given out without further modification. The inner packages marked as C should not be accepted. The soup package shown in C has been damaged; the box cutter has sliced into this package and contents are leaking out.

BOTTOM: None of the arrowroot cookies shown can be given out. The cookies inside the package marked C are individually wrapped but are not labelled. Unlabelled cookies are not acceptable, even when there is no packaging damage. The cookies in B are labelled with the name of the product and the BBD, allergen information is missing. These cookies contain wheat, a priority allergen that must be noted on the package. Labelling all food products is important for traceability and safety. Traceability, in case there is a recall by the company, is addressed with the name of the product and BBD (note: the source or manufacturer of the food, Christie, does not need be on the food label, as long as the FDO has a record of what was dispersed). Safety includes allergens, which much be noted on the label.

Acceptable packaging damage	Unacceptable packaging damage
Scoring damage to bag of flour. Tape is used to cover tear.	Scoring damage to apple juice Tetra Pak®. Tape is used to cover tear.
Plastic bags of carrots or potatoes with rips or tears with no visible soiling of the product.	Plastic bags of carrots or potatoes with rips or tears with visible soiling of the product.
Unidentified petroleum odour and stain on outer boxed carton of eggs. Inside the carton, eggs are housed in individual boxes of 12 eggs each. Visible stain on interior of outer box, but no visible stain on the individual egg cartons.	Unidentified petroleum odour and stain on outer boxed carton of eggs. Inside the carton, eggs are housed on open cardboard flats, but not wrapped in plastic or otherwise protected. Visible stain on interior of outer box.
Shrink-wrapped pallet of lettuce and greens. Road gravel and dirt is splattered onto plastic.	Pallet of lettuce and greens with no covering. Road gravel and dirt are splattered directly onto produce.
Soup stock Tetra Paks® exposed to smoke.	Soup stock Tetra Paks® exposed to heat, causing warping of the packaging.

Table 5 – Examples of acceptable and unacceptable packaging damage

Evaluating Boxes

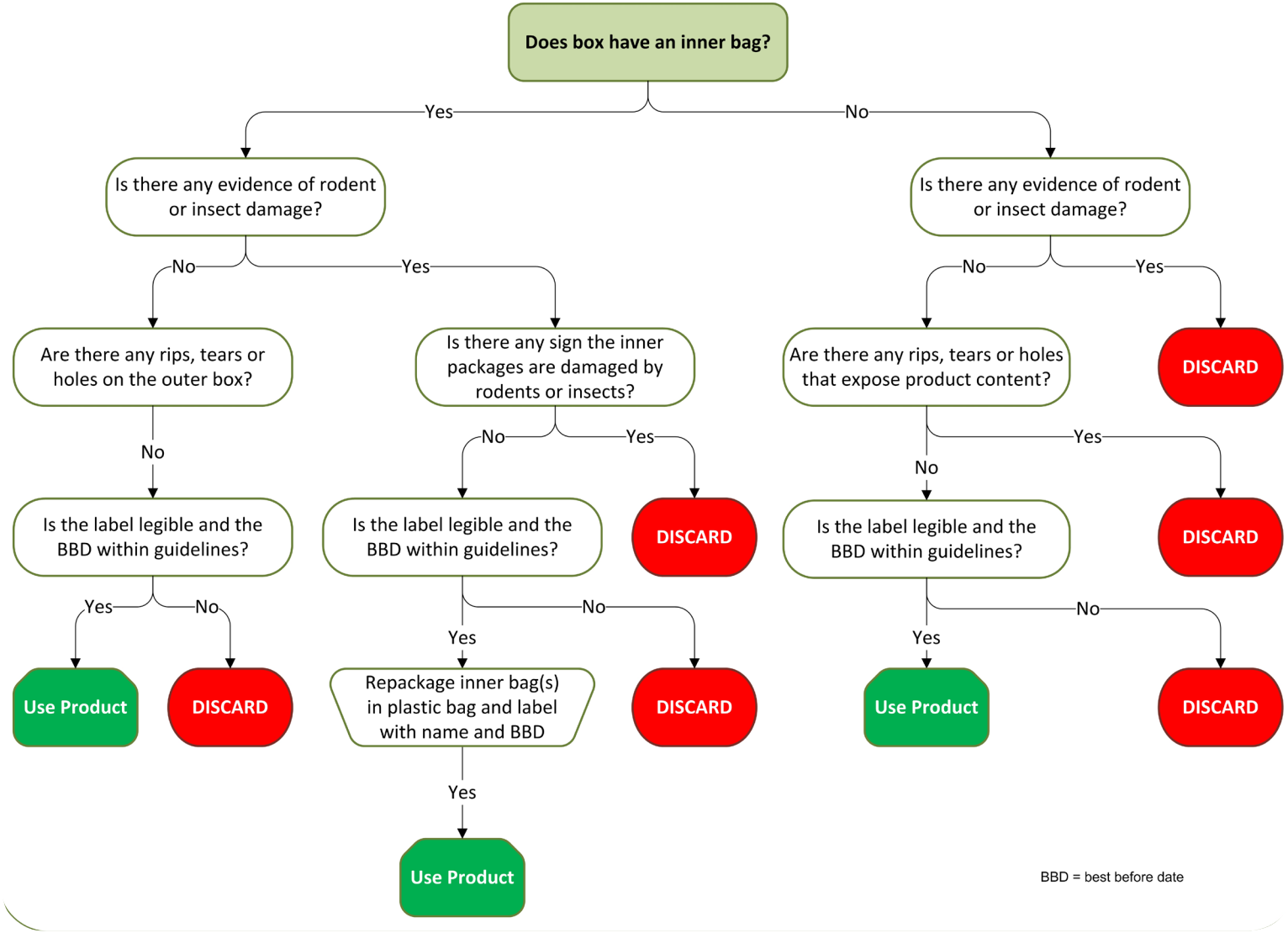


Figure 7 – Flow chart to evaluate box packaging

Section 6. Training and Safe Food Handling

Personal Hygiene

All operators, employees, and volunteers that work in direct contact with food (e.g., repackaging) should:

- maintain a high degree of personal cleanliness
- wear clean outer garments and some form of hair restraint
- wash their hands and exposed portions of their arms thoroughly in an adequate hand-washing facility:
  - before starting work
  - after visiting the toilet
  - after smoking
  - after eating
  - after handling raw meat or poultry
  - after handling foods containing allergens
  - as often as necessary
- avoid eating food, drinking beverages, or using tobacco in any form in areas where food is exposed or in areas used for washing equipment or utensils
- never work in the FDO while ill with a disease that is communicable through food (e.g., Hepatitis A). (Managers of FDOs should be particularly vigilant with regard to persons with symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, jaundice, or infected cuts/boils)
- comply with the Food Premises Regulations requirements if foods are processed or served at the facility (section 21, Employee hygiene and section 22, Communicable disease)[4]

Operator, Employee, and Volunteer Training

To minimize the risk of distributing unsafe or inappropriate foods, it is very important that FDO operators, employees, and volunteers, especially those involved in the critical aspects of the operations, are properly trained. This would include someone making decisions as to which foods are safe for receiving and/or distributing; someone handling potentially hazardous foods; someone involved in repackaging of foods; or someone making decisions about what kinds of foods clients should receive to meet their nutritional needs. Staff trainers should have experience in the FDO, food processing, or retail food industry, or draw on staff from your local health authority.

The FOODSAFE course is strongly recommended for anyone working/volunteering in a food bank, and is a requirement for FDO meal programs that process and offer ready-to-eat foods on the premises. At a minimum, the manager and/or operator, permanent employees, and volunteers who are present on a regular basis should be encouraged to complete the FOODSAFE Level 1 program or an equivalent food safety training program. The Food Premises Regulation stipulates that every operator of a food premises must hold a FOODSAFE certificate or its equivalent and, if the operator is away, at least one employee at the premises must also have food safety training.[4] FOODSAFE certificates expiry after five years. Contact www.foodsafe.ca or your local EHO for information about courses in your area. Food Banks BC may be able to assist and provide free FOODSAFE training; contact them at info@foodbanksbc.com.

FDO Training Documentation

We recommend that FDOs keep track of food safety training for all employees and volunteers. This will enable persons responsible for employees and volunteers to ensure there is always a trained person on site. Periodic retraining of some personnel may also be required to ensure that food safety training is up to date.

Temperature and Time Control of Foods

All potentially hazardous foods (PHF) must be maintained at a safe temperature to prevent growth of bacteria and their toxins. Refrigerated foods must be held at 4°C (40°F) or colder. Foods that have been cooked must be hot-held at 60°C (140°F) or hotter. To ensure PHF are not temperature-abused, the following temperatures must be maintained:

a) Frozen food: –18°C (0°F) or colder
b) Refrigerated storage: 4°C (40°F) or colder
c) Hot-holding of cooked foods: 60°C (140°F) or hotter
d) Reheating of cooled foods: 74°C (165°F) or hotter

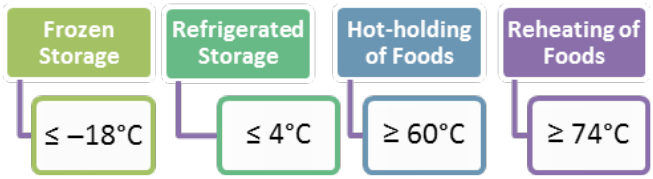


Figure 8 – Temperature controls for foods

The "Danger Zone" refers to temperatures for food safety between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F). Bacteria can grow at these temperatures. That is why PHF must not be held in the danger zone for more than two hours.

While most bacteria will not grow at refrigeration temperatures (4°C or lower), some bacteria are tolerant to cold conditions. These can include spoilage bacteria and sometimes harmful bacteria. To maintain optimal food quality, always keep PHF cold.

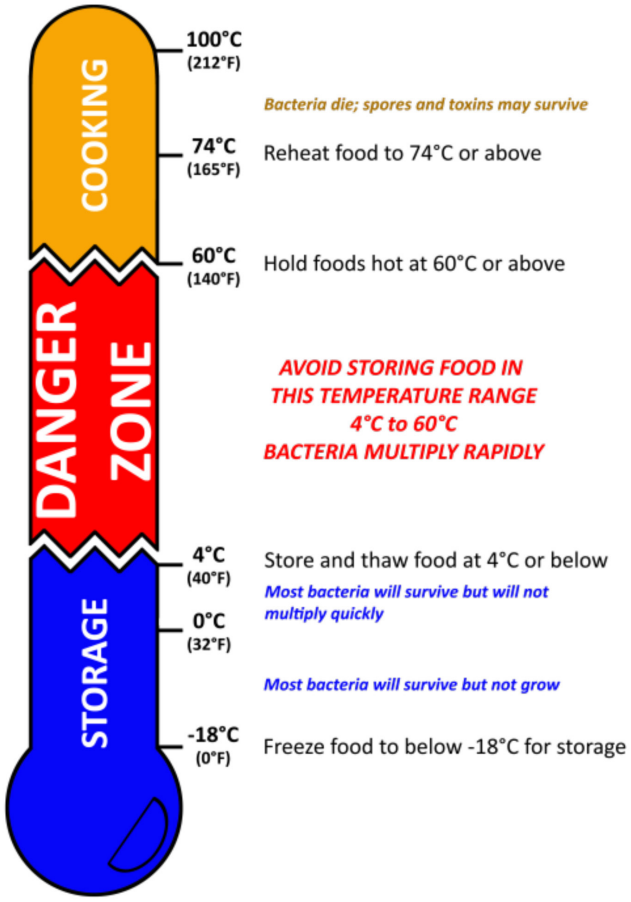


Figure 9 – Temperature danger zone

When cooling foods, minimize the time food spends in the Danger Zone to control bacterial growth.

To cool a pot of soup, for example, allow the temperature to drop below 60°C, chill the soup to 20°C within two hours, then chill to 4°C or colder within the next four hours.

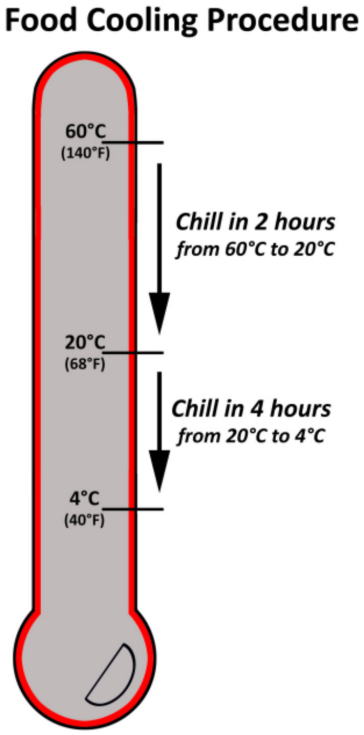


Figure 10 – Food cooling procedure

There are many methods to rapidly cool large pots of soups, stews, or other foods like chili. Here are a few examples:

1. Put foods into several smaller containers (e.g., 5 L instead of 20 L containers).
2. Put foods into shallow containers (e.g., 10 cm depth instead of large pot).
3. Use a frozen ice-wand to stir and cool foods.
4. Put large pots into sinks filled with cold water and ice and stir to cool.

Cooling foods rapidly will help prevent bacterial growth and bacterial toxin formation in the danger zone temperatures. Do not put a large pot into a refrigerator and expect this to cool down fast enough. Warm temperatures have been maintained in the centre of the pot for more than 24 hours, leading to conditions that can cause food poisoning.

Recommended Food Storage Times

In general, food products can be stored for the following times:

Food products	Hold in refrigeration temperatures of ≤4°C (40°F)
Raw meats (beef, poultry, pork and sausage)	2 to 4 days
Raw fish and shellfish	1 to 2 days
Luncheon meats and hot-dogs	opened: up to 1 week unopened: up to 2 weeks
Opened dairy products (yogurt, milk, cottage cheese, liquid eggs)	2 to 3 days
Unopened dairy products	check the BBD, generally 2 or more weeks
Cheeses	soft varieties: 1 to 2 weeks hard varieties: up to several months
Fresh vegetables	1 to 2 weeks
Leftovers	3 to 4 days

Consult Appendix 1 for use of foods exceeding the BBD.

There are several websites that offer extensive information on how long fresh, frozen and dry goods should be stored. These links are provided in the following table.[19-24]

https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/general-food-safety-tips/safe-food-storage.html
https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/keep-food-safe-food-safety-basics/ct_index
https://food.unl.edu/food-storage-chart-cupboardpantry-refrigerator-and-freezer
http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/
https://www.fda.gov/downloads/food/resourcesforyou/healtheducators/ucm109315.pdf
http://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/nutrition-food-safety-health/?target=publications#storage

Table 6 – Food storage time web links

Frozen goods should be held at temperatures at or below −18°C (≤0°F). Optimal freezer storage for proteins most at risk of deterioration, such as fish, are at lower temperatures of −26°C (−15°F).[25] Food storage will depend on the quality, seal, and type of packaging. General times and guidance for frozen goods range from one month for foods such as cottage cheese, leftover casseroles and milk, to up to one year for products such as whole roasts, canned juices, and vegetables. Many fresh products, such as milk, cheese, or tofu, can be frozen for use at a later date.

Watch out for food rancidity and freezer burn (e.g., when meat proteins have white marks on the edges). Fats can go rancid from prolonged freezer storage (due to lipid oxidation, a type of chemical spoilage that makes the fish flesh appear yellow). Poor packaging and/or storage can also cause freezer burn. An example of freezer burn and rancid fish is shown in Figure 11. Dry goods can be stored at room temperature for one or more years.

Figure 11 – Freezer burn and rancidity of fish

In the photo, you can see the build-up of ice crystals inside the package, likely caused by a combination of a poor packaging seal and the storage temperature not being cold enough. This fish would not be palatable or suitable for consumption.[26]

Food Traceability and Labelling

FOOD LABELS

Food labels are required for products that are broken down into smaller units or repackaged. The information required for safety and traceability includes:

(1) Product name
(2) Ingredients with allergens declared
(3) BBD/expiry date /use by date
(4) Source of food

There are 10 priority allergens identified by Health Canada:[28]

1. *Eggs*
2. *Milk*
3. *Mustard*
4. *Peanuts*
5. *Seafood*
6. *Sesame*
7. *Soy*
8. *Sulphites*
9. *Tree nuts*
10. *Wheat*

Source of food may be indicated by a code or description that is created by the FDO. This information must be traceable back to the supplier of the food. Further information provided on the original packaging that is used to describe the lot or batch of food should be recorded so that it can be identified in case of illness or recall. This level of detail does not need to be contained on the label for the repackaged foods, but should be available in some other form, such as a log sheet or computer file.

If the product being repackaged has a BBD or expiry date, this information must be transferred or copied onto the repackaged item. Sometimes industry will donate foods that have been improperly packaged or labelled. There is nothing wrong with the food, but it was put into the wrong packaging, e.g., a granola bar with nuts was incorrectly placed into a granola bar with raisins package. If the donated food contains an allergen that is not declared on the container or packaging, this information must be communicated by affixing a new label to the packaging. Allergens and food sensitivities can cause very serious adverse health effects (hives, anaphylaxis, sometimes death).

When foods are picked up, the driver may need to place a label on the food to relay important information. This might include food pallets that are unlabelled, foods that are donated because they have been mislabelled, or any other information relayed by the food donor about the food that does not appear on the box of food. In these cases, the driver should create and affix a food rescue label onto the foods in question. Ensure that drivers have materials to create and affix labels. Food rescue label templates are provided in Table 3.

TRACKING FOOD

FDOs are one pathway through which food reaches the consumer (Figure 12). If a problem is discovered in a food that the FDO has accepted, they will be asked to provide information about who they received the food from and who, where, and when the food has been distributed to. This can also be described as a "one up and one back" traceability system.[27] (Another way of describing this is "where did you get it and where did it go?").

What this means is that FDOs need to record two sets of information:
(1) who supplied the food, with enough information about the food that traceability is possible

(2) who the food was delivered to

Bulk items need to be recorded for traceability. FDOs are not expected to trace each individual can of food donated or given out during a food drive, or to record which clients received the foods. However, there are some instances when the FDO should record where foods were distributed, such as if a bulk food item was sent to another FDO that prepares meals or operates a retail function. For example, if a company called "*Cheese Please*" donated a large shipment of bagged shredded cheese to a food bank, and the food bank sent the cheese to another FDO, called "*Dinners Ready*," to be used in a meal program, the food bank is responsible to keep a record of the supplier and recipient of the cheese (i.e., *Cheese Please*

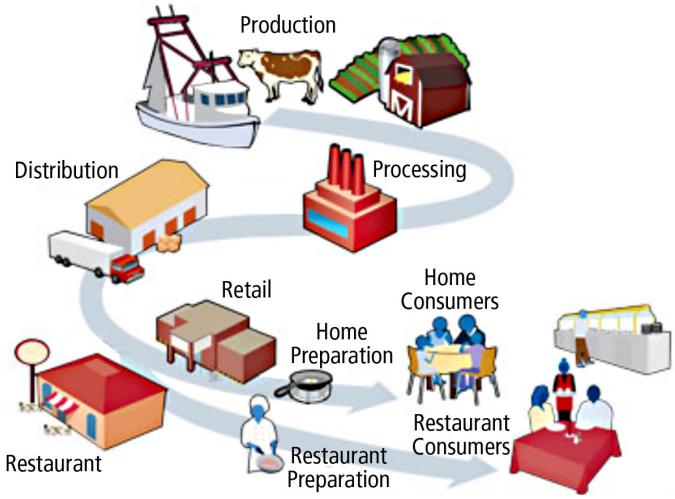


Figure 12 – Food production chain[29]

Food processing and distribution companies partnering with FDOs are also expected to call other FDOs when they are informed that a product they have distributed is under a recall. These businesses are also tasked with maintaining records that will allow them to contact all their customers (including FDO customers) when a food is being recalled.

FOOD RECALLS

Food recalls are necessary when foods already in the distribution system are discovered to present a health risk to the public. Figure 12 describes the basic flow of food in the food production chain.

FDOs may receive foods directly from anyone in the food production chain: producers, processors, distributors, restaurants, retailers, and the public. This presents unique challenges to FDOs to record and track where the food came from, and to archive this information in case of a food recall.

FDOs are recommended to record the following information for foods they receive:

(1) date received
(2) food product name and description (lot code)
(3) supplier or company providing the food
(4) date used by
(5) where the food was sent (other FDOs)
(6) date delivered (to other FDO)

Example of a food recall situation:

Canned pasta sauce was discovered to have been improperly processed, and poses a risk of botulism. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) has issued a recall to the manufacturer. The manufacturer and distributor conduct a voluntary recall at CFIA's request. The records at the distributor indicate that one pallet of the canned pasta sauce went to your FDO. You are now asked to pull this product from your inventory and throw it out. Your records indicate that you gave half of it to a training kitchen, and the other half to a retail FDO. You call them to let them know to discard the product.

Food Transportation and Vehicles

On average, food travels over 3200 km (2000 miles) before it gets put into a refrigerator in the U.S.[30] Foods that are potentially hazardous and require refrigeration are vulnerable to temperature abuse. This may occur when truck drivers save fuel costs by turning off refrigeration units until needed. This increases the risks for food safety hazards and for spoilage. Foods may also be exposed to chemicals and other adulterants during back-haul operations by trucking companies.

There are some preventative controls that FDOs can take while food is in their care during transport. These controls are taken from Dr. John Ryan's *Guide to Food Safety and Quality During Transportation*[30]:

- appropriate temperature control during transport
- sanitation controls that include:
  - monitoring and ensuring sanitation of the vehicle
  - pest control
  - sanitation during loading and unloading procedures
- appropriate packaging and packing of food products (good quality pallets)
- good communication between shippers, transporters, and receivers
- employee awareness and training

Ensure appropriate temperatures are maintained: perishable foods should be transported in vehicles with mechanical refrigeration or transported in chilled chest coolers. Vehicles used to transport food should be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition to protect food from contamination. A regular vehicle cleaning and sanitation schedule is recommended. For example, a vehicle that has been used for transporting trash must not be used to transport food until it has been thoroughly cleaned. Foods in vehicles should be kept covered at all times to protect them from dust, insects, and other sources of contaminants.

Clean containers, cooler chests, and packaging for transporting foods should be used (e.g., boxes for canned food). Reusable containers should likewise be regularly cleaned and sanitized. Loading areas and docks should be kept clean and free of debris so that incoming foods do not become contaminated. Incoming foods should be temperature checked and put away as soon as possible to get them back under (refrigerated or frozen) temperature control.

Section 7. Disposal and Waste Reduction

Food surplus or spoilage is often unavoidable. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides guidance on the best uses for surplus food and food waste (Figure 13).[31] Donors and FDOs should work together to understand how best to use surplus food.

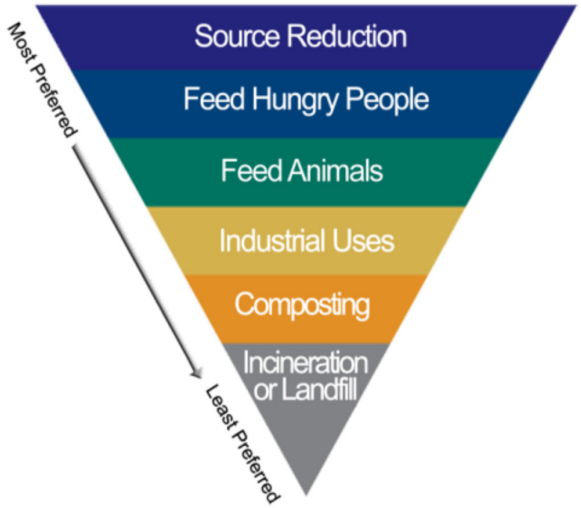


Figure 13 – Food recovery hierarchy

FEED PEOPLE. After source reduction (reducing the volume of food waste generated), the best option is to donate healthy edible food and ingredients to organizations that can redistribute foods to people in need. Food that cannot be sold or donated must still be managed.

To manage surplus food and food waste, consider feeding animals, donating to industry, or composting. Consult the BCCDC web page food scraps recovery options ("Donation guidelines" tab) for example businesses who use food scraps.

FEED ANIMALS. A relationship with a livestock farmer or an animal rescue agency can help you divert fresh/raw foods. Some businesses convert food scraps into animal food products.

INDUSTRIAL USES. Fat, oil, and grease can be rendered into raw material for making biodiesel, soaps, cosmetics, and other products. Anaerobic digestion of food scraps and waste oils produces biogas that can generate heat and electricity, fiber that can be used as a nutrient-rich soil conditioner, and liquid that can be used for fertilizers.

Starting in 2015, the Metro Vancouver region does not allow organics (e.g., food or food scraps) in regular garbage. Healthy edible food can be donated, and waste or scraps should be collected for compost or biofuel.

COMPOSTING. Ask your hauler or municipality for information about organics recycling programs.

Other Resources

Closing the Loop With Organics Recycling: A practical guide for restaurants and food service operators[32]: http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/solid-waste/SolidWastePublications/ClosingtheLoop.pdf

Metro Vancouver Food Scraps Recycling[33]: http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/solid-waste/food-scraps-recycling/Pages/default.aspx

LOVE FOOD hate waste[34]: http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/

WRAP UK[35]: http://www.wrap.org.uk/

Section 8. Building Premises Construction, Maintenance, and Safety

Construction/Maintenance of Physical Facilities

General criteria for physical facilities at FDOs intending food service is shown below. Consult your regional health authority for specific requirements in your area[36]:

(1) For new operations, the physical facility should be designed for the intended food preparation, service, and display. A floor plan drawing should be provided and reviewed with the local environmental health officer (EHO) to ensure safe handling of food.
(2) The facility must be connected to a source of potable water with hot and cold running water, and a waste disposal system operating in compliance with the local government.
(3) Floors, walls, and ceilings where food is prepared should be smooth, crack-free, washable, and impervious. Fixtures, counters, shelves, etc. should be of good quality.
(4) Storage must be adequate for the size and operational demands, and include mechanical refrigeration space and equipment if needed for operations (i.e., if foods require refrigerated temperature control for safety).
(5) Hand-washing sinks equipped with liquid soap and paper towel dispensers must be provided in food preparation areas.
(6) Food preparation sinks must be protected from activities occurring in other sinks, or adjacent to the food preparation sink to prevent food contamination.
(7) A dedicated janitorial/mop sink must be available.
(8) Lighting should be adequate in hand-washing areas, toilet rooms, in areas where food or food ingredients are examined, sorted, or stored, and where utensils are cleaned. Shielded lights should be used to protect against broken glass falling onto unpackaged food.
(9) Buildings should be ventilated well enough that condensation does not form and drip onto food or food preparation surfaces. Food should not be stored under plumbing pipes or other pipes that could leak their contents or condensation onto food or food preparation surfaces.

To optimize dry goods storage for quality, safety, and nutrition, a food safety expert offers seven basic rules[37]:

(1) Rotate stock frequently (FIFO: first in, first out).
(2) Keep store rooms cool, dry and well-ventilated.
(3) Keep humidity below 15%.
(4) Store foods out of direct sunlight (some vitamins are light sensitive).
(5) Store foods at least 15 cm (6") off of the ground and 45 cm (18") away from walls.
(6) Prevent pests from entering the storeroom.
(7) Provide a dry-good storage area of adequate size (see the full article for more information and formula for calculating how much area is required).

Equipment and Utensils, Cleaning and Sanitation

Equipment and utensils used for handling and storing food, and all surfaces that come into contact with food (e.g., counter tops) should be made of non-toxic, non-corrosive materials and should be easy to clean. Equipment should be installed and maintained to facilitate cleaning and be kept in good repair. Utensils and food contact surfaces should be thoroughly cleaned and, where necessary, sanitized before use.

In general, surfaces and equipment should be clean, be handled in a manner that protects them from contamination, and all single-service articles (disposable paper/plastic cutlery, etc.) should be used only once because they cannot be adequately sanitized.

For dishwashing by hand, a 3-sink process should be used:

(1) hot-water
(2) rinse
(3) sanitize

To properly clean equipment and dishware follow this basic procedure (Figure 14):

(1) prepare the equipment for cleaning
(2) scrape off excess food (optional)
(3) pre-rinse (optional)
(4) wash dishware in hot water and detergent
(5) rinse
(6) sanitize
(7) air dry

Note that some equipment must be dismantled in order to be properly cleaned and sanitized. Wash equipment and dishware with hot water (at least 45°C) and a commercial detergent. For dish and surface sanitizing, we recommend a minimum of 100 ppm bleach solution, up to the ideal maximum of 200 ppm bleach solution.

How to make a 200 ppm no rinse sanitizing solution of bleach (make fresh solution each day):

- Mix 15 mL (1 tablespoon) of household bleach into 4 litres (1 gallon) of water; or mix 5 mL (1 teaspoon) of household bleach into 1 litre (4 cups) of water.
- Allow the sanitizer to contact the surface or utensil for at least 1 minute before wiping off with a clean paper towel or allowing it to air dry.

Use B.C.'s FOODSAFE Chlorine Dilution Calculator tool to make up the proper sanitizer strength based on the concentration of your bleach product[38]:

http://www.foodsafe.ca/dilution-calculator.html.

Caution: Mixing bleach with products that contain acid or ammonia makes toxic gas that causes serious breathing problems, chocking and potentially death.

Figure 14 – Five basic steps for cleaning equipment and utensils

FOODSAFE recommendations for sanitizing dishes during manual dishwashing is to use 28 ml bleach in 4.5 L of water, and is consistent with the advice above, to use a minimum of 100 ppm.[39] At the lower 3.25% concentration, 28 mL in 4.5 L is equivalent to ~200 ppm, and at 5% concentration is equivalent to ~300 ppm. For dishware and utensils being cleaned using mechanical dishwashing, consult the BCCDC Commercial dishwashing specifications - Guideline for mechanical warewashing in food service establishments,[40] also available at http://www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/professional-resources/food-premises-guidelines.

Food contact surface sanitation with bleach should be no more than 200 ppm. At higher concentrations, rinse the surface after sanitation with clean potable water to remove residue. EHOs can supply additional information regarding the different methods of sanitizing and measuring sanitizer concentrations. Generally, quaternary ammonium compounds (quats) should be used at minimum concentrations of 200 ppm and iodine at 12.5 ppm. Use test strip paper to ensure sanitizers are made to the correct concentrations; these are available for purchase from detergent suppliers. Poisonous and toxic materials (including cleaning chemicals) should be identified and handled under conditions that will not contaminate food or constitute a hazard to employees or volunteers.

A sanitation plan for your FDO should include equipment, utensils, and facilities and include answers to the four basic questions shown in Figure 15:

1. "What is cleaned?" within the FDO can be categorized into five areas, (1) food contact surfaces, (2) equipment, (3) attached equipment, (4) structures, and (5) rooms.

2. "When to clean?" asks if the cleaning is best done before the shift, at the closing of the shift, or at some other time period. Before answering this question, consider which times will minimize chances of cross-contamination with ready-to-eat foods, reduce microbial loads, and fit the schedule of the premises.

3. "How often to clean?" depends on what is cleaned. A grease trap may require annual cleaning, the dry storage room monthly cleaning, and the hoods above the fry-grill area daily cleaning.

4. "How to clean?" also depends on what is cleaned. Grease traps: open trap and scrape out all solid grease, flush with hot-water hose and soap. Dry room area: sweep and wash floors, wipe down all shelving areas. Hoods: dry-wipe all grease off the hood, followed by disinfectant spray cleaning.

The cleaning and sanitation schedule should be written down in an easy to understand procedure for all staff and volunteers to follow.

Sanitation plans are required for food service establishments under the Food Premises Regulation, and will be required by FDOs who serve food to clients on site.

Figure 15 – Four questions to answer to create a cleaning and sanitation schedule

Insect, Rodent, and Animal Control

Rodents, insects, pets, and other animals must be prevented from entering the FDO. Seal gaps and entry points, and when possible cover and protect all foodstuffs in closed containers. Keep window openings screened to limit insect entry, and use sticky paper or other measures to trap insects. We highly recommend pest control companies be contracted to set up and check pest control traps. Signs of rodent entry into the FDO may not be easily identified, and experts can assist in finding solutions.

Examples of common rodents and how to identify them by their droppings are depicted below.

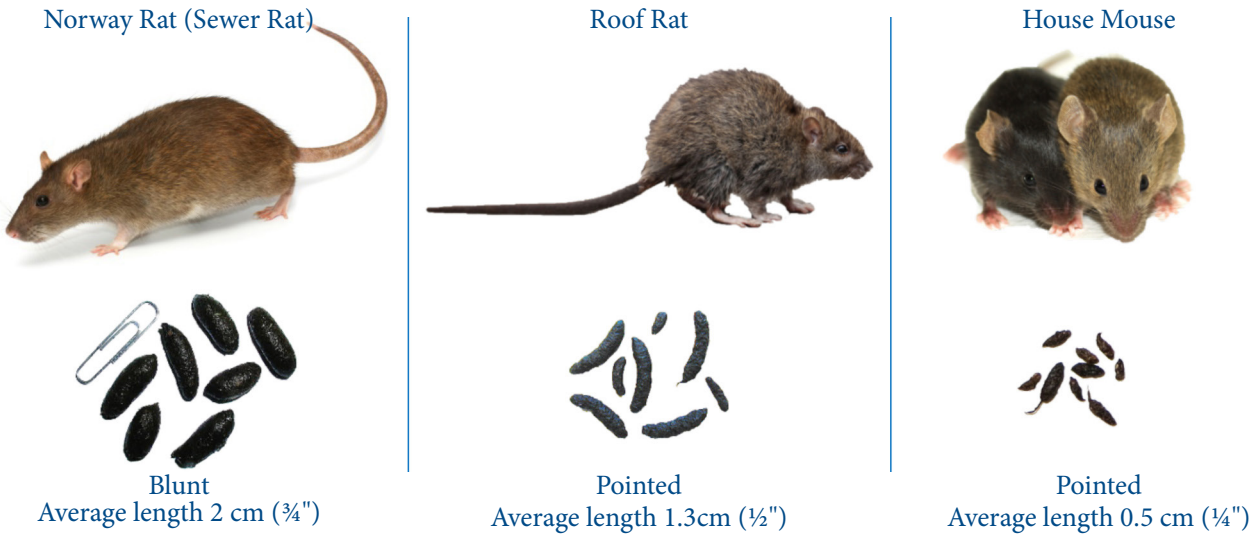


Figure 16 – Rodents and their droppings

Sanitary Facilities and Controls

Toilet facilities, including rooms and fixtures, should be kept clean and in good repair at all times. These rooms should not open directly into an area where unpackaged food is handled or stored. FDOs should have adequate, conveniently located hand-washing facilities equipped with liquid soap in a dispenser and single-service towelling or other effective hand-drying devices. Reusable hand towels are not acceptable.

Garbage and Trash

All trash should be kept in leak-proof, non-absorbent containers, which should be kept covered with tight-fitting lids when stored or not in continuous use. Each trash container room or storage area should be thoroughly cleaned after the emptying or removal of trash. All trash should be disposed of often enough to prevent contamination of the salvaged food product and surrounding processing areas.

Partially spoiled produce can cause serious odour and fly problems if not handled promptly. Garbage should be stored in covered containers and removed frequently.

Definitions

Best before date (BBD): also known as the durable date. BBD are an indicator of food quality, meaning foods properly stored and handled should retain their nutritional and sensory (taste, smell, texture) qualities by this date. A BBD makes no claims on the safety of the food. BBD are intended as guides for the consumer.

Charitable tax receipts: official donation receipts for gifts received from individuals and corporations. They are issued by organizations registered as charities with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). Receipts can also be issued by one registered charity to another. Note: receipting policies vary between FDOs, check with the FDO before making a donation.

Charity: an organization registered with CRA as operating exclusively for charitable purposes. Registered charities are income tax exempt, have a charitable registration number, and can issue tax receipts to donors.[41] A charity is defined by falling into one of 4 groups:

1. relief of poverty
2. advancement of religion
3. advancement of education
4. other purposes of a charitable nature beneficial to the community

Organizations other than registered charities that can issue charitable tax receipts to donors, as well as receive donations, are defined as "qualified donees." These include registered organizations like amateur sport associations, municipalities, public bodies performing government functions, and others. For a full list of qualified donees go to the CRA website[42]: https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/list-charities/list-charities-other-qualified-donees.html.

Donor: any individual, organization, or business who gives food to an FDO without requesting financial compensation.

Durable date: see best before date

Expiry date: used on specific categories of nutritional food products, such as infant formula and meal replacements. These food products must not be used once they exceed their expiry date, as nutritional components in the foods may not be stable.

Food bank: grocery hamper or food pantry program. Food banks are non-profit organizations that operate with the intent of feeding the hungry. Food banks perform a number of functions including receiving, holding, storing, packaging, repackaging and distributing food to be consumed off the premises, but do not process food. If the organization is a member of Food Banks BC, it will have charity status (i.e., registered with CRA). Other food banks may or may not be registered charities or societies.

Food distribution organizations (FDO): are recipients of food donations who distribute foods to clients in need via a variety of methods. FDO categories are described as:

1. Food banks or other agencies with food pantries: for distribution to clients
2. Meal programs (e.g., soup kitchens): food premises for food service directly to clients. A non-profit organization that:
   (a) operates with the exclusive intent of feeding the hungry
   (b) receives, holds, and processes food to be consumed on the premises
3. Retail outlets: for at cost and reduced cost food sales to clients
4. Social enterprises: for culinary training schools, non-profit restaurants, or school activities
5. Community kitchens: facilitate a group of individuals that cook, and often eat, healthy, nutritious meals together

Food donation: foods provided to FDOs by individuals, organizations, or businesses. Food donations may be purchased and donated, surplus or imperfect items that will not be sold, or recovered food that is suitable for consumption but deemed not suitable for retail sale.

Food drives: a common way for the public to donate to food banks and other agencies. Food donated by schools, churches, or grocery store customers is purchased, retail quality food. Most often it is shelf stable food that doesn't require refrigeration and so is easily distributed by agencies. These donated foods are the same quality as what would be found on store shelves.

Food processing: makes food ready to eat. This includes cooking, reheating, and reprocessing of previously processed food.

Food recovery or Food rescue: reclaimed foods sourced through industrial donors. These foods are no longer considered suitable for sale to the public because they are flawed, damaged, or near their best before dates, yet are still safe to eat.

Non-profit organizations: groups that are defined by CRA as operating for social welfare, civic improvement, pleasure, sport, recreation, or any other purpose except profit. They are not registered for income tax purposes, are not issued a charitable registration number, cannot issue donation receipts for income tax purposes, and are not registered charities.[41]

Potentially hazardous food (PHF): foods that are considered PHF are defined classically as those foods with a pH >4.6 and an A_w (water activity) >0.85. Foods that contain proteins, such as meats, fish, poultry, eggs, dairy products, are often PHF. Cut vegetables and cooked, moist grains (e.g., rice) may also be PHF.

Retail quality: foods preferred for sale to consumers that are unbruised, unblemished, and of the highest quality. The designation of quality does not infer any claims to safety of the food products.

Temperature abuse of food: the storage of perishable or potentially hazardous foods at incorrect temperatures, i.e., in the danger zone between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F).

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Appendix 1 – Giving out foods past the BBD (source: Food Banks Canada)

Food Banks Canada / Banques alimentaires Canada — Guideline for Distributing Food-Past the Best Before Date

	CATEGORIES													
Time Frame Past Best Before	**Fruit / Vegetables**	**Fruit / Vegetable Juices**	**Bread**	**Grains & Cereals**	**Meat uncooked**	**Meat cooked**	**Deli Meats**	**Dairy-Pasteurized**	**Dairy-Sterilized**	**Fats**	**Combination Foods**	**Soups/Stews**	**Non-Food**	**Infant Formula and Nutritinal Supplements**
	Categories Explained													
Product Descriptions	Fresh Produce	Juices and Drinks-Tetra Pak, Bottled (Not requiring refrigeration prior to opening)	Loaves, Rolls, Bagels, Muffins	Granola, Flours, Rices, Dry Pastas, Cookies, Crackers	Packaged and Bulk	Examples: Prepared Food from Food Service Providers. Canned Tuna, Salmon	Deli Meats, Sausages	Milk (Fresh, Powdered, Canned)	Tetra-Pak Milk (UHT)	Butter, Margarines	May contain Popcorn, Condiments, Tomato Sauces, Canned Pastas, Cooking Oils	Soups, Stews, Gravies. Could be Food Service Packaged or in Larger Quantities	Laundry Detergent, Mixed Product Pallets, Body Washes, Deodorants, Diapers, Infant Wipes	**Note: These products do not conatain Best Before Dates, only Expiry Dates**
Room Temperature	**Fresh** 2-7 days	1 Month (Tetra Pak)	1 Week	NA	less than 2 hours	less than 2 hours	less than 2 hours	< 2 hours (after open)	< 2 hours (after open)	1 Week	NA	less than 2 hours	NA	Do Not Distribute Past Expiry Date
Refrigerated	**Fresh** 1-4 Weeks (depending on produce)	3-6 Months (Tetra Pak)	2 Week	NA	3-4 Days	Fish and Shellfish 1-2 days other 3 Days	5-7 days	2 Weeks (after open/ reconstituted)	2 Weeks (after open/ reconstituted)	3 Months	NA	2-3 Days	NA	
Frozen	1 Year	1 Year	1 Month	NA	beef, lamb pork, veal, whole poultry 12 months, poultry pieces 6 months, ground meat 2-3 months, fish 2-6 Months, and shellfish 2-4 months	beef, lamb pork, veal, 3 months whole poultry 2 months, food mixtures 3 months	2-3 months	6 months	NA	6 Months	3 Months	3 Months	NA	
Canned/Jarred	1 Year	1 Year	NA	NA	NA	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year	NA	NA	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year	
Boxed/Bagged	NA	NA	1 Week	6-12 Months	NA	NA	NA	Varies*	6 months	NA	6 Months	1 Year	1 Year	

***Milk powder** Temperature is a critical quality factor for milk powder. Keep milk powder cool.

Best Before Date- This gives consumers information as to when the product is at its best - with sensory qualities as acceptable as the day it was made when stored under appropriate conditions and packaging is intact. Best Before dates indicate the shelf life of foods. They are not indicators of food safety.

Expiry Date- Tells consumers that the product may not be providing them with the nutrients expected of the product and they should no longer consume it after that date.

Products with Expiry Dates must never be shared past the date on the packaging.

Products Include **-Infant Formula** (Canned or Boxed, Liquid or Powdered), **Baby Foods** (Canned or Boxed, Liquid or Powdered), **Nutrional Supplements and Meal Replacements** (Canned, Boxed, or Ready to Use, Liquid or Powdered)

Food Products and their ability to be shared should always be based on:

1) Ensuring the product has been handled safely (ie. Chilled product is kept chilled)
2) Assessing all cans for integrity (i.e., dents, creases, etc.) based on Food Banks Canada Safe Food H.andling Standards
3) That the product is at a level of quality (e.g., taste and smell) that is still worth sharing
4) That the Manufacturer's Branding will not be compromised if the product is shared

Note This information is to be used as a guide only. It was developed based on general knowledge, industry practices and the understanding that best before dates are about sensory quality.

For reference:

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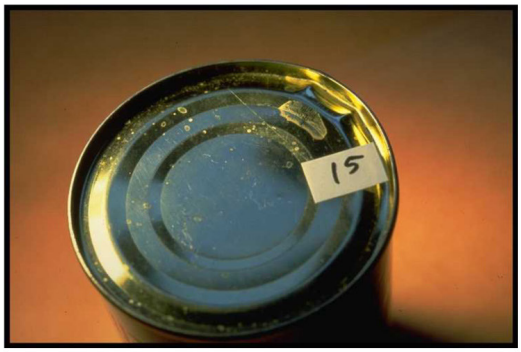
INFORMATION: Contact Craig McGurn, Manager National Food Sharing, Food Banks Canada

Created: January 2011 Updated: July 2013

Appendix 2 – Unacceptable food can damage

Swelling

Panelling



Peaked can/buckling

Cut seam

Crushed cans

Damage to score-line (rusting from leakage)

Scored

Corrosion

Photo source[43]: Peters T. Unacceptable food can damage [photo from "Canning defects presentation"].

Notes

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