



Retail Store

Donations

4. Agency Sorting and Storage

4.1. Why It Is Important

Thorough review of donation guidelines with store contacts during start up meetings and then periodic review throughout the life of the program will reduce the amount of waste generated once the product reaches the agency facility. Regardless of the thoroughness of the store's inspection, participating agencies need to inspect all products at the agency's facility.

4.2. Product Arrival at Agency

Follow the steps listed below to inspect product that has arrived at the agency.

Step:	Action:
1.	Unload product and segregate by product category. If loaded by category at the store this process should be quick and easy.
2.	Inspect all perishables products based on the Perishable Donation Handling and Storage Guidelines.
3.	Store all perishable product based on the Perishable Donation Handling and Storage Guidelines.
4.	Inspect all non-perishable products based on the Non-Perishable Salvage Sorting Guidelines.

4.3. Perishable Donation Handling and Storage Guidelines

Follow the guidelines listed below for perishable donation handling and storage guidelines.

Meat, Poultry, Fish		
Acceptable condition:	Handling and storage:	Non-acceptable condition:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product should be in original packaging. Food grade packaging in direct contact with food. Securely closed and separated by category (e.g., beef, pork, poultry) to avoid cross contamination. Labeled and dated as appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product should be frozen on or before the expiration date. Product should be stored at 0° F or less while awaiting pickup. Under no circumstances can the product be stored in excess of 41° F. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food kept in the danger zone more than two hours. Non-food grade packaging in direct contact with food. Damaged or compromised packaging resulting in discoloration of product. Defrosted product or product with severe freezer burn.

Dairy Products		
Acceptable condition:	Handling and storage:	Non-acceptable condition:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product should be in original packaging. Food grade packaging in direct contact with food. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refrigerated product must be stored at 41° F or less while awaiting pickup. If frozen, product should be stored at 0° F or less while awaiting pickup. Under no circumstances can the product be stored in excess of 41° F. 	Damaged or compromised packaging resulting in the loss of sanitary barrier protection.
Fresh Produce		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product should be in original packaging and bags or food grade packaging (produce boxes) for all repacked product. Cut produce should be securely closed in food grade packaging with each vegetable or fruit packaged separately. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Store in a cool, dry, clean area. Whole produce can be stored at room temperature. Cut produce must be stored at 41° F or less. 	Signs of decay
Baked Goods		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fresh, day-old bread, bagels, and other bakery items. Food grade packaging in direct contact with food securely closed. Bread product separately packaged from other baked goods. 	Store in a cool, dry, clean area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mold, damaged or compromised packaging resulting in loss of the sanitary barrier protection. Product not in food grade packaging.


4.4. Non-Perishable Salvage Sorting Guidelines

4.4.1. Food and Non-Food Items The guidelines listed below are intended for nonperishable products. These guidelines address sorting of non-food and non-perishable food items.

4.4.2. The Need to Presort The initial sorting of products at the agency location is critically important for the success of a salvage program. The agency staff and volunteers must be fully aware of the material contained in this section of the manual. As much as 41% to 50% of salvage products received by your agency may not be able to be redistributed for several reasons: *the nature of the products themselves, the condition of the products or their containers, contamination, potential contamination, infestation or damage.*

4.4.3. Non-Salvageable Product

Non-salvageable product is categorized by the product's nature and condition.

 **Suggested best practice:** Feeding America strongly recommends that each agency work with their member food bank to ask retailers to eliminate all toxin non-food products from their store donation programs.

Sorted by their ...	Product:
Nature	Prescription drugs. (Federal law prohibits the redistribution of prescription drugs.)
	Pesticides and other toxins oven cleaners, etc. (Some toxins require special disposal permits. Check with your local health department about the laws governing toxic disposal.)
	Baby food. (The potential for injury is too high to risk salvaging it.)
	Home-canned products, whether in glass or cans
Condition	Foods, drugs, personal care items and cosmetics which <i>have been or may have been</i> contaminated and/or adulterated by pesticides or other chemicals such as cleaning products, cosmetics, etc., that are toxic or potentially hazardous to health.
	Foods, drugs, personal care items and cosmetics packaged in paper or other materials that <i>have been or may have been</i> exposed to contamination by unknown substances.
	Foods or food-serving items Foods or food serving items, personal care products, etc., in containers that have been opened or on which the manufacturer's seal has been broken and that <i>have been or may have been</i> contaminated.
	Foods that are infested by insects or exposed to rodents or their feces or urine.

4.4.4. Opening and Presorting a Box of Salvage

Only the person who first opens a box of salvage will see what products and contaminants have been mixed within a box. Any item that is, *or may be*, contaminated should be discarded.

Follow the steps listed below to open and presort a box of salvage.

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Action:	First steps:	If ...
Examine the exterior of a box.	<p>Look for any signs of contamination or infestation, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rips. • Tears. • Dry or liquid spills. • Gnaw marks, etc. 	<p>Any of these signs of contamination is present; it is possible that the entire box and contents should be discarded. <i>At the very least</i>, it is probable that only canned goods, some pouches, waterproof plastic containers, and aseptic packages might be salvaged. All other materials and containers including sacks, paper bags, boxes, jars, and plastic-wrapped goods shall be discarded (see Non-Salvageable Product).</p>
Open the box; check the lid for signs of contamination or infestation.	<p>Examine the content for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toxic substances or any chemicals that might be harmful or fatal if swallowed (i.e., poisons, paints, charcoal, lighter fluid, pesticides, oven cleaner, drain cleaners, colognes, hair sprays, etc.). • Open pet foods. • Rodent droppings and urine (the use of a black light will help identify urine tracks). • Insects, active, or carcasses. • Mold. • Broken glass. • Sour or rotten odors (evidence of bacteriological spoilage). • Spilled cleaning products. • Stains caused by contaminants or other hazards, such as cooking oil, tomato juice, sauces, etc. 	

4.4.5. Removal of Contents and Sorting The evaluator should begin to remove the contents and place them in pre-selected areas designated by type as listed in this table:

Remove ...	Then...	And:
And isolate all toxic materials	Discard any toxic product that is leaking, has a puncture, broken seal, or missing cap. The presorting storage area for toxins shall be at least eight feet from food storage.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sanitize the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Canned goods ○ Aseptic packages ○ Retorted pouches ○ Some plastic-wrapped items. 2. Check seals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bagged or boxed products ○ Products in cardboard containers.
And isolate all cleaning products	Discard any liquid products.	
And isolate pet foods	Place open bags in tightly covered containers. Discard any pet foods that <i>may</i> be contaminated. Note: Pet foods are a primary harborage of infestation that can quickly and easily spread to food products.	
All food items (see Evaluating Salvage)	Discard obviously contaminated products and place in pre-selected areas by types and condition.	
All miscellaneous products (paper products, personal care items, and food service items)	Set aside for proper evaluation: even in presorting, these items should be examined as if they were food).	