

Retail Grocery & Foodservice Food Safety Guidelines

Together, we can solve hunger™



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

V. COLLECTION AND SAFE TRANSPORTATION OF FOODS FROM THE DONOR

a. Collection of foods at the donors.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

c. Training

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

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

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

VI. HOW TO OUTFIT AN AGENCY TO BE "FOOD SAFE" AND READY

a. Storage space

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

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

b. Thermometers

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

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

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

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

c. Other equipment

Each agency should ideally be equipped with:

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