

# Safe Food Handling for Donation

For Markets, Restaurants and Businesses  
Preparing or Serving Food

## WHY DONATE FOOD?

Over 16 million people in California struggle to secure food and YOU can help fill this gap by donating your surplus wholesome food to local nonprofit or charitable hunger relief groups. In addition to helping reduce food insecurities, other benefits include potential tax deductions for your business and lowering the amount of food waste going to the landfills.

## YOU ARE PROTECTED

Donors such as yourself are protected under the:

- [Federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act](#)
- [California Health and Safety Code, Section 114433](#)

## CONTACT US



Protecting People and the Environment

www.rivcoeh.org ■ (888) 722-4234

## CHECKLIST FOR SAFE HANDLING

- Keep cold food refrigerated at 41°F or below and frozen foods at 32°F or below.
- If possible, freeze food before donating.
- Always examine food for signs of decay, spoilage, mold or unusual or foul odors.
- Label, package and store food products separately to prevent cross contamination.
- Never donate items that have been thawed and refrozen.
- Never donate items that have been cooked, cooled and reheated.
- Keep packaged items in their original packaging.
- Examine canned and dry packaged food for tears, holes, dents, broken seals, infestation and spoilage.



## EXPIRATION DATE GUIDELINES

FOOD	DO NOT DONATE AFTER
MILK	4-7 DAYS PAST STAMPED DATE
YOGURT	7-10 DAYS PAST STAMPED DATE
SOFT CHEESE	1 WEEK PAST STAMPED DATE
HARD CHEESE	3-4 WEEKS PAST STAMPED DATE
LUNCHEON MEAT	4-6 DAYS PAST STAMPED DATE IF UNOPENED
POWDERED MILK	6 MONTHS PAST DATE IF REFRIGERATED
EGGS	3-5 WEEKS PAST STAMPED DATE
DRY CEREAL	6-12 MONTHS PAST DATE IF UNOPENED
FOOD IN JARS	12 MONTHS PAST STAMPED DATE
CANNED FOODS: ACIDIC (TOMATO PRODUCTS)	12 MONTHS PAST STAMPED DATE
CANNED FOODS: NON-ACIDIC	3 YEARS PAST STAMPED DATE
BREAD PRODUCTS	7 DAYS PAST DATE IF REFRIGERATED AT FIRST
RICE/PASTA (DRY)	12 MONTHS PAST STAMPED DATE



## DONATION SAFETY MEASURES

- Businesses that wish to donate food must have a public health permit.
- Foods that have been previously served to a consumer **cannot** be donated.
- Donated foods should be immediately served and consumed if an organized event or charitable organization does not operate under a public health permit.
- Food must be protected from potential contamination at all times through the use of sanitary, food-grade containers, and by ensuring that transport vehicles are clean and free of vermin.

## HANDLING POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOOD

- Prior to donation and transport, cold foods must be kept in the safe temperature range of 41°F or below, hot foods at 135°F or above, and frozen foods at 32°F or below.
- When a refrigerated vehicle is not available, the food items should be labeled "Process Immediately" and must not be out of the safe temperature zone for more than 2 hours, otherwise foods should be held below 41°F while in transport.
- Temperature should be checked using a thermometer to ensure food designated for donation has the proper temperatures prior to transport.
- **Donations consisting of Non-Potentially Hazardous Foods can be delivered anytime with no requirement for temperature controls or time in transit.**