



Surplus Food Donations

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Surplus food is donated rather than sent to waste. **Surplus food donations must be the same quality as food found in grocery stores or inspected food premises.** Responsibility for the safe donation of surplus food rests on both the donor and recipient.

Category	Precautions	Donor/Recipient
Non-perishable Foods (lowest risk) Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercially canned foods • Flour • Crackers • Rice • Recovered/salvaged food* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrigeration is not required • Packaging is not damaged (e.g., labelled, no bulging cans) • Bulk items may be repackaged into smaller units. Re-packaging must take place in an inspected food premises. New labels must be attached • Best before/expiry dates* 	Donor: public or inspected food premises Recipient: public or inspected food premises
Perishable Foods (low risk) Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole fresh fruits and vegetables • Commercially prepared sliced fruit and vegetable trays • Breads and baked good • Recovered/salvaged food* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrigerate sliced fruits and vegetables at a temperature of 4°C (40°F) or less • May accept whole fruits and vegetables without refrigeration if they are given out or used within a short time period (e.g., same day) 	Donor: public or inspected food premises Recipient: public or inspected food premises
Potentially Hazardous Foods (high risk) Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk • Cheese • Meats • Prepared foods (e.g., soup, lasagna, stews, canning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperatures of 4°C (40°F) or less and 60°C (140°F) or higher. • Frozen food is kept in a frozen state until used or sold (or donated). • Hazardous food must be properly cooled. • Food must not have been offered for sale (e.g., from a buffet) • Food held above 4°C (40°F) or less than 60°C (140°F) for more than two hours must be discarded 	Donor: ONLY an inspected food premise Recipient: public or inspected food premises
Highest Risk Foods Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home canned foods from uninspected private homes (e.g., vegetables, meat/fish products, etc.) • Unpasteurized dairy products • Unpasteurized juices • Uninspected meats (including wild game) • Partially consumed foods, such as leftovers or foods that have been on display (e.g., buffet) 		These foods should not be donated

Assessing Donations	
Reasons to reject donations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaged packaging that may affect the safety of the food (e.g., rips, insect or rodent damage, improper labels, bulging cans, etc.) • Passed expiry dates • Food subject of recall • Food has been mishandled (e.g., temperature abuse, infestation, etc.)
Food Labels	<p>Labels are required for all packaged food items (e.g., damaged or repackaged bulk items). Labels should include: product name, ingredients with allergens declared, and source of food (e.g., company name and contact information).</p> <p>Refer to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for Labelling Requirements for Labels for Industry for further information.¹</p>
Refrigerated and Frozen Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor's information • Temperature of the food upon arrival • Temperature time frames, such as inappropriate temperature ranges over two hours. • How the food looks (e.g., appropriately packaged)
Records (inspected food premise)	<p>Record keeping is important for both the donor and recipient (e.g., where it came from and where it was donated).</p> <p>Records should include: applicable dates (e.g., received, donated, etc.), product name, supplier, recipient (e.g., premise name).</p> <p>An inspected food premise (e.g., food bank, soup kitchen, etc.) must ensure donations are compliant with Ontario Regulation 493/17, <i>Food Premises</i>.</p>

***Definitions:**

Expiration Dates: required only on certain foods that have strict compositional and nutritional specifications which might not be met after the expiration date.² Examples include meal replacements and infant formula. Expired food should not be consumed.

Best-before Dates: information on food quality (e.g., freshness and shelf life) before food item is opened. Food can be eaten past best-before dates but it may lose flavour, freshness, or nutritional value once past best-before dates.³ Examples include: jams, condiments, yoghurt, and bread.

Recovered/Salvaged Food: Foods from homes or businesses after a flood, fire, or closure. Please speak to your Public Health Inspector for more information.

¹ Canadian Food Inspection Agency. (May 11, 2018). Food Labelling for Industry. Retrieved from: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/labelling/food-labelling-for-industry/eng/1383607266489/1383607344939>

^{2,3} Canadian Food Inspection Agency. (June 22, 2018). Date Labelling on Pre-packaged Foods. Retrieved from: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/information-for-consumers/fact-sheets-and-infographics/date-labelling/eng/1332357469487/1332357545633?SN=0406013604207461312315>

BC Centre for Disease Control. (February 2016). Providing Nutritious and Safe Food: Guidelines for Food Distribution Organizations with Grocery or Meal Programs. Retrieved from: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/food-your-health/food-safety/food-premises-guidelines>