



# FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES



FOODCYCLE LA



FoodCycle LA recovers and diverts surplus food to communities experiencing food insecurity. We partner with food retailers to reroute surplus food away from landfills to organizations working to feed hungry people. FoodCycle LA is working to 'Feed People Not Landfills' and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of wasted food.



NEW CHALLENGE  
MINISTRIES, TORRANCE



GRACE DINER,  
CULVER CITY



FARO DE LUZ,  
HUNTINGTON PARK

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## FOOD DONATION POSTER

Most of the guidelines in this booklet are covered in our food donation poster. Please post these in each department.



## QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about what is and is not accepted, contact us at (323) 897-9696 or [hello@foodcyclela.org](mailto:hello@foodcyclela.org). Refer to page 6 for more information.

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION



63

Million tons of food  
are wasted each  
year in the U.S.\*

DID YOU  
KNOW?

13.7

Million households  
faced food  
insecurity in 2019\*

WITH YOUR HELP WE CAN

**FEED PEOPLE NOT LANDFILLS**

\*The EPA estimates that in 2018, about 63 million tons of wasted food were generated in the United States.<sup>1</sup> While Americans dispose of millions of tons of food, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that 10.5 percent of American households—about 13.7 million households—had difficulty providing enough food for all their members due to a lack of resources at some time during 2019.<sup>2</sup> In many cases, the food tossed into our nation's landfills is wholesome, edible food.

1. United States Environmental Protection Agency, Food: Material-Specific Data.

2. United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Household Food Security in the United States 2019.

# FOOD RECOVERY HIERARCHY

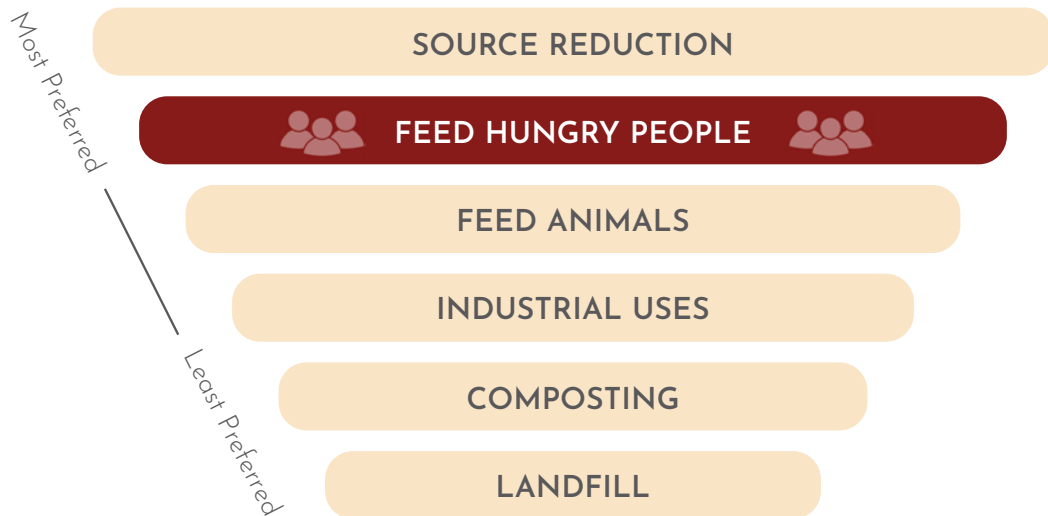
## CHOOSE TO DONATE BEFORE COMPOSTING OR DISPOSING

The highest and best use of excess, edible food is to redistribute it to feed people.

Redistributing food to feed people is the second tier of the EPA's Food Recovery Hierarchy. We can be leaders in our communities by collecting unspoiled, healthy food and donating it to our neighbors in need. By donating food, we're feeding people, not landfills, supporting local communities, and saving all the resources that went into producing that food from going to waste.



## EPA FOOD RECOVERY HIERARCHY



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT  
[www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/reduce-wasted-food-feeding-hungry-people](http://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/reduce-wasted-food-feeding-hungry-people)



## DONATIONS WE ACCEPT ✓



BAKERY ITEMS



BULK FOODS



DRY GOODS & NON-PERISHABLES



EGGS & DAIRY



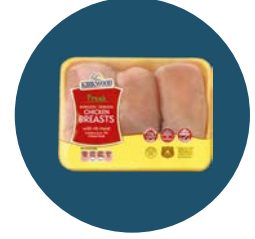
PRODUCE



PREPARED FOODS



FROZEN FOODS



MEAT & SEAFOOD

## DONATIONS WE DO NOT ACCEPT ❌

- Products that show any sign of spoilage: Mold, 'off' smell
- Prepared foods that are out of temperature for more than 2 hours
- Containers that have been opened
- Foods that were previously served to consumers
- Products exposed to environmental contamination such as fire
- Alcohol
- Foods in swollen, bulging, rusted cans
- Baby food and formula that have passed the 'best by' date



## BEST BY DATES

With the exception of baby food and formula, 'use by', 'sell by', or 'best by' dates typically do not refer to food safety but are a measure of food quality.

Many foods' quality may decline after these dates but they are still safe to donate.

### FOODS OFTEN DONATED

#### PAST BEST BY DATES

- Salads
- Sandwiches
- Breads
- Meal Kits
- Canned/Dry Goods
- Dairy



## FOOD DONOR PROTECTION INFORMATION

Thanks to the Good Samaritan Acts across the U.S. and California, businesses are fully protected from liability when donating food.

The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act passed in 1996 is a federal law that protects all food donors from both civil and criminal liability when donating 'apparently wholesome' food, including 'any raw, cooked, processed, or prepared edible substance, ice, beverage, or ingredient for human consumption', to non-profit organizations in 'good faith' (with no malicious intent).

California's Good Samaritan Act of 2017 clarifies and expands food donation under the Emerson Act to include donations fit for consumption beyond its labeled shelf life date.

### FEDERAL LIABILITY PROTECTION

Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act

### STATE LIABILITY PROTECTION

California Good Samaritan Act

More federal information about food donations

[www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/resources/donations.htm](http://www.usda.gov/oce/foodwaste/resources/donations.htm)

## GETTING STARTED

Things to consider prior to starting a donation program



What types of donations will you give?

DAIRY  
DELI MEAT  
SEAFOOD  
PRODUCE  
BAKERY

Which departments will participate?



Where will things be stored prior to collection?



Can donations remain in temperature controlled areas until pickup time?



Who can be the Food Donation Lead and coordinate with FoodCycle LA and the store's departments?

FoodCycle LA will meet with you and provide recommendations during a walkthrough.



## DONATION STORAGE

- Donations should be placed in appropriate areas based on their temperature requirements
- Place donations in boxes that can be carried out quickly by FoodCycle LA drivers
- Raw meat, seafood and eggs should be placed separately from other items to avoid contamination
- Place donations of similar type together
- Keep loose items in their cases
- Keep heavy items on the bottom and light items on top

## TEMPERATURE GUIDELINES



**32°F OR BELOW**

Foods from the freezer aisle: Frozen pizza, ice cream, etc.

Raw meat

Seafood

For frozen or refrigerated items, volunteers will ask for carts to be wheeled out or request permission to enter the freezer/cooler.



**41°F OR BELOW**

Baked goods with cream or meat fillings

Deli items and sushi

Eggs and dairy

Hot foods (must be refrigerated after 2 hours at room temperature)

Precut produce

Prepared foods



**ROOM TEMPERATURE**

Baked goods without cheese or meat fillings

Dry goods and non-perishables

Whole, unpeeled, or uncut produce

For room temperature items, volunteers will pick up from the loading dock/receiving area.

# FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES BY TYPE

## Dry Goods & Non-Perishables

Dry goods and non-perishable foods are shelf-stable foods like grains, flour, commercially canned, boxed, and otherwise packaged foods. We accept:

- Canned soups, stews, and sauces\*
- Canned fruits and vegetables\*
- Canned meats and fish like tuna, salmon, and spam\*
- Unopened jars of peanut butter and jam
- Boxed meals like pasta, rice, macaroni and cheese



### PACKAGING

Foods must be in their intact, original packaging.

### NOT ACCEPTED

\*Canned goods with a bulge in the container **cannot be donated** as this indicates spoilage. A dent in the can is acceptable as this is likely cosmetic or physical damage.

## Bulk Foods

Bulk foods\* are items in quantities larger than would be used for individual consumption. They would need further handling to be portioned for individuals and families.



### PACKAGING

Foods must be in their original packaging.

### NOT ACCEPTED

\*Bulk foods previously set out for customers to handle **cannot be donated** (i.e. self-serve bulk bins).

## Bakery Items

Bakery items include commercially baked goods such as bagels, breads, pastries, etc. We accept:

- Pre-packaged baked goods
- Bulk, loose baked goods\*

Items from commercial sources must be stored and served by food employees.



### TEMPERATURE GUIDELINES



Most bakery items do not require time or temperature control.



Bakery items that are filled with something perishable like cream or meat should be refrigerated until pickup.



Bakery items can be refrigerated or frozen for longer storage prior to donation.

### PACKAGING

Bulk baked goods can be packaged in large single-use bags or in their original containers.

### NOT ACCEPTED

\*Items that have been previously served to the public **cannot be donated** (i.e. self-serve donuts and pastries).

## Eggs & Dairy

We accept commercially packaged milk, cheese, yogurt, eggs and egg products, etc.



### TEMPERATURE GUIDELINES



Egg and dairy products must be maintained at a temperature of 41°F or below.

### PACKAGING

Foods must be in their intact, original packaging.

# Produce

We accept any type of fresh fruit or vegetable, packaged or loose.



## TEMPERATURE GUIDELINES



Whole (uncut, unpeeled) fruit and vegetables do not require time or temperature control.



Cut, peeled, or otherwise processed fruits and vegetables must be refrigerated and/or stored in a cooler until pickup time.

## PACKAGING

No required packaging if produce is maintained whole. Precut produce must be in their intact, original packaging.

# Prepared Foods

Prepared foods are prepared for consumption on a food establishment's premises and are ready to eat.

Prepared food can only be donated if:



It was maintained at appropriate temperatures.



It was stored and served by kitchen staff, away from customers.\*



## TEMPERATURE GUIDELINES



The maximum time hot foods can be left out at room temperature is 2 hours.



Chilled prepared products must be received cold and maintained at a temperature of 41°F or below.



Prepared products may also be frozen if appropriate.

## PACKAGING

Securely sealed, food-grade packaging (i.e. sandwiches wrapped in clear plastic wrap, catering tins wrapped in foil).

## NOT ACCEPTED

\*Self-serve salad bar, buffet, and bakery items **cannot be donated**.

# Frozen Foods

We accept any type of commercially packaged frozen food such as peas, berries, ravioli, waffles, ice cream, etc.



## TEMPERATURE GUIDELINES



Frozen products must be maintained at a temperature of 32°F or below at all times until pickup.

**PACKAGING** Foods must be in their intact, original packaging.

# Raw Meat & Seafood

We accept meat and seafood in raw and frozen form.



## TEMPERATURE GUIDELINES



Raw meat and seafood must be maintained at a temperature of 32°F or below, including meat products that have been vacuum packed.

## PACKAGING

Foods must be in their intact, original packaging.

## STORAGE

Raw meat and seafood must be stored in a separate container from other donated food items to avoid cross contamination. Store eggs separately or wrapped in liners to avoid cross contamination in case of breakage.

**QUESTIONS?** Contact FoodCycle LA at (323) 897-9696 or [hello@foodcyclela.org](mailto:hello@foodcyclela.org).



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