

How to Safely Recover Food

Health Facilities

Following these practices can help you safely recover your surplus food, in compliance with Senate Bill 1383 and local ordinances. Items marked with a ★ are necessary to comply with these laws.

Stop waste from the start!

- Conduct a food waste audit. Evaluate current methods of food holding and delivery to determine the main causes of surplus. Consider using an 'a la carte' ordering system to reduce waste by only serving food that patients request.
- Consider equipment upgrades, such as plate warmers to keep patient meals hot during delivery.
- For buffet style meal service, put less food out to start with and replenish more often. Provide bread, garnishes, and condiments upon request.
- Consider making surplus food available to staff.
- Educate operations and culinary staff about food waste prevention and donation procedures and involve them in waste reduction efforts.

Plan Your Food Recovery Logistics

- ★ Contract with a Food Recovery Organization or Service (FRO/S). Please visit [Resource.StopWaste.org/food-recovery-organizations](https://www.StopWaste.org/food-recovery-organizations) for a listing of available organizations.
- ★ Work with FRO/S to set a schedule that meets your storage space and operational needs while maximizing the freshness and amount of edible food for quick redistribution.
- Establish a dedicated area (in compliance with [CalCode](#)) for storing and labeling food (with date and contents) designated for donation.
- ★ Be ready for inspections, if necessary.
- ★ You must recover the maximum amount of edible surplus food.

Secure Necessary Equipment

- Food-safe containers or transport bags*
- Dedicated refrigerator/freezer space
- Labeling and recordkeeping supplies
- Scale, if you are tracking your weights (some FRO/S will track and/or weigh for you)

*Check the packaging preferences of your FRO/S partner. Ideally, find an FRO/S that will work with reusable containers. Reusable containers can be a significant cost-saver and are better for the environment.

This flyer is designed to support local efforts in edible food recovery and SB 1383 compliance. For more information about SB 1383, and a complete list of rules and resources in Alameda County, visit www.StopWaste.org/rules.

To request free assistance, go to www.StopWaste.org/request-help or call 510-891-6575 to leave a message for a call back.

Determine What to Donate

Confirm your FRO/S's specific donation policies. You may also use the information below as a guide:

Can Be Donated	Cannot Be Donated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsold and unserved produce, dairy, meats held at safe temperatures • Fresh or frozen on or before the date on the package • Unopened canned/dry-packaged, securely sealed and dated appropriately, with labeling intact • Near quality expiration dates • Lightly bruised or soft produce • Cut produce and other perishable foods stored at 41°F or below while awaiting pickup • Surplus unserved prepared foods kept at safe temperatures or cooled down (per CalCode protocol), and labeled with date and contents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contaminated: bad odor, discoloration, moldy and/or bulging packaging • Packaging is torn, has holes, dents, or broken seals* • Food not in its original packaging and missing ingredient label and/or a date • Foods previously served to consumer • Perishable foods that were not held at safe temperatures
<p>*Some dented cans are safe to donate. Scan the QR code below for a Canned Food Evaluation Guide, and more!</p>	

Ensure Food Safety

- Follow standard safety and food handling protocol per [CalCode](#) for all food in your possession, whether it's intended for sale or recovery.
- Anyone packaging food donations should take a food safety course and/or obtain a Food Handler Card with an [accredited program](#).
- Regularly check the [temperature setting](#) of your fridge. Keep frozen foods ≤ 0°F and hot foods ≥ 135°F for no more than four hours while awaiting pickup.
- Perishable foods should not be left outside the [Safe Temperature Zone](#) (STZ) for more than two hours at room temperature (or one hour when the temperature is above 90°F).
- Package donations in shallow, sanitary containers. Do not mix different foods.
- Label containers with type of food and date prepared/stored.
- Never put hot food directly into the refrigerator or freezer.
- Donate food nearest its expiration date first.

For specific questions, contact the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health at 510-567-6700.

Keep Records

- ★ You must keep the following records onsite: a copy of your contract with each FRO/S, including types of food and frequency of collection or delivery, and pounds of food recovered per month.

Scan the QR code for more tips on tracking and preventing food waste.



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