How to Safely Recover Food

Large Event - Vendors

Following these practices can help you safely recover your surplus food. The organizer of your event may also ask you to do certain additional tasks to support their compliance with Senate Bill 1383 and local ordinances.

Stop waste from the start!

- Conduct a food waste audit. Evaluate your methods for tracking overproduction and use that information to save money and be eco-smart by producing only the amount of food needed.
- Consider reducing prices on unsold food at the end of the day.
- Train staff on proper food storage, waste separation, and knife skills for reducing food waste.
- Publicize your efforts through signage or by hosting a waste-cutting challenge for attendees (consider setting up a social media hashtag such as #NoWasteAt___).

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 Food Recovery Organizations/Services, or "FRO/S," will track and/or weigh for you)

*Ask the event organizer which FRO/S they are working with to collect and redistribute surplus food and check the packaging preferences of the 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.

Determine What to Donate & Ensure Food Safety

- Confirm your FRO/S's specific donation policies.
- Follow standard safety and food handling protocol per CalCode for all food in your possession, whether it's intended for sale or recovery.
- Package donations in shallow, sanitary containers. Do not mix different foods.
- Label containers with type of food and date prepared/stored.
- Leave space between packages to ensure proper air circulation and freezing.
- Donate food nearest its expiration date first.

For specific questions, contact the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health at 510-567-6700. You may also use the information on side 2 as a guide.

Potential Foods from Commercial Kitchens	
Can Be Donated	Cannot Be Donated
- 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 stored ≤ 41°F while awaiting pickup - Surplus unserved prepared foods kept at safe temperatures or cooled down (per CalCode protocol), and labeled with date and contents	- Contaminated: bad odor, discoloration, moldy and/or bulging packaging - Packaging is torn, contaminated, 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

Potential Foods From Mobile Food Facilities

Potentially hazardous food that is held above 41°F cannot be donated. Current laws prevent much of the food from mobile food facilities from being recovered. This may be updated over time.

Can Be Donated	Cannot Be Donated
- Unopened canned/dry-packaged, securely sealed and dated appropriately, with labeling intact - Refrigerated product stored below 41°F - Fresh or frozen fruits and veggies (including slightly bruised or soft) - Cut produce stored ≤ 41°F while awaiting pickup	- Potentially hazardous food held above 41°F (cold foods) - 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

Keep Records

For SB 1383 compliance the large event organizer may ask you to maintain food donation records – including types of food, frequency of collection or delivery, and pounds recovered per month.

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