

# How to Safely Recover Food

## *Restaurants and Commercial Kitchens*



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!

- Evaluate your methods for tracking overproduction. Consider investing in software to track and reduce surplus and wasted food.
- Consider selling surpluses at a discount towards the end of meal service or prior to closing, to maximize the retail value of food before donating what's left.
- Consider displaying signage to explain to customers why certain changes that reduce waste, such as limiting offerings at the end of service, have been implemented.
- Go trayless, limiting customers to take only what can fit on their plate.
- Experiment with options for smaller meal sizes and portions.
- Consider making surplus food available to staff.

### Plan Your 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 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 (with date and contents) food designated for donation.
- Properly depackage and compost any inedible food or food scraps that are not safe or suitable for food recovery.
- ★ 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 weight (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](https://www.StopWaste.org/rules).

To request free assistance, go to [www.StopWaste.org/request-help](https://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"> <li>• Unsold and unserved produce, dairy, meats held at safe temperatures</li> <li>• Unopened canned/dry-packaged, securely sealed and dated appropriately, with labeling intact</li> <li>• Near quality expiration dates</li> <li>• Lightly bruised or soft produce</li> <li>• Cut produce stored ≤ 41°F while awaiting pickup</li> <li>• Surplus unserved prepared foods kept at safe temperatures or cooled down (per CalCode protocol), and labeled with date and contents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contaminated: bad odor, discoloration, moldy and/or bulging packaging</li> <li>• If packaging is torn, has holes, dents, or broken seals*</li> <li>• Food not in its original packaging and missing ingredient label and/or a date (except fruit)</li> <li>• Foods previously served to consumer</li> <li>• Perishable foods that were not held at safe temperatures</li> </ul>
<p>*Some dented cans are safe to donate. Scan the QR code below for a <a href="#">Canned Food Evaluation Guide</a>, 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.
- Package donations in shallow, sanitary containers. Do not mix different foods.
- Label containers with type of food and date prepared/stored.
- Leave space between containers 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.

## 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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