

Q&A T1 & T2 EFR Donation Webinar

Registered webinar participant questions:

1. **Q. How to connect food pick-ups with hotel industry? I represent 40 hotels looking for ways to give-back to the community.**

A. Hotels in Alameda County can visit StopWaste's list of Food Recovery Organizations and Services to find local donation partners that are able to accept the types of food that hotels generate (potentially, prepared food). There are also some Food Recovery Services operating in Alameda County that will pick up/recover from multiple sites for a fee, bringing donated food to other food recovery organizations that ultimately redistribute that food to their clients and food insecure communities. Those providers are located here: <https://resource.stopwaste.org/food-recovery-organizations>.

In addition, StopWaste can support any business in connecting with an appropriate food recovery partner. Our knowledgeable field team provides free phone, email, virtual, and in-person support. Submit a request for assistance here: <https://portal.stopwaste.org/ta-request> or call our Ordinance Information line at (510) 891-6575.

2. **Q. Looking for confirmation that exemptions still need to be filed with the county or city and hauler.**

A. The Organics Reduction and Recycling Ordinance (ORRO) requires that all Alameda County accounts subscribe to compost and recycling collection service, unless they have an approved waiver or an approved alternative service (such as back-haul, self-haul, shared service, or third-party service provider). There are *no exemptions* for the edible food recovery requirements for T1/T2 generators.

Any requests for collection service exemptions/waivers for Alameda County businesses should be submitted to StopWaste via www.StopWaste.org/Rules-Waivers. Sites with an approved waiver will not be required to subscribe to recycling and/or compost service (or divert those materials from the landfill) for a 5-year period.

There's more detailed information on this scenario in our webinar recording from March, 2022 that focuses on the basic requirements for composting and recycling. Here's a link to that recording: <https://www.stopwaste.org/rules/resources/webinars>.

11/03/22 Live Questions and Answers

- 1. Q. What if donating edible food requires using other resources like aluminum and plastic? A restaurant might have to use aluminum pans or foil or plastic containers or wrap. It might be hardly worth it ecologically to donate food.**

A. This is a challenge when it comes to donating prepared food. However, it is worth noting that environmental impacts of growing, harvesting, transporting, and preparing food, and the social impacts of feeding hungry people are generally significantly bigger than those of their packaging so it is well worth using some packaging in cases where it prevents loss of edible food. Having said that, StopWaste is working on establishing alternatives to single use disposable food ware and related packaging and has several pilots and programs in place addressing the reduction of these items. By establishing an agreement with a food recovery partner, you may be able to work with that partner to establish a reusable container return system for donation. StopWaste has several resources including technical assistance and grants to potentially help with transitioning from SUDS to reusables here: <https://www.stopwaste.org/at-work/reduce-and-reuse/reducing-disposable-foodware>

- 2. Q. Hi! I am an Executive Chef for a Pleasanton based tech company. I believe we fit into Tier 2. With that said we minimize food waste by repurposing food into Grab and Go offerings and salad bar options (any and all prepared food that has not previously been served to our customers) We are also looking into installing a food digester to take care of the remaining waste. Are we required to obtain a contract in this situation?**

A. Thank you for sharing your best practices for minimizing surplus food through prevention! These are excellent examples of practices that businesses can employ to prevent surplus. In order to comply with the donation requirements of the law, please keep records onsite of your prevention activities. It's always good to have a donation partner in mind for those circumstances or situations that are out of your control as a backup plan.

3. How long can prepared/cooked food (that was held at the right temperature) be kept as good to donate?

A. Generally 4-7 days from the date prepared but it depends on the food type and preferences of your food donation partners. Some can distribute donated food immediately, while others have set distribution times on certain days of the week. Make sure to properly label any food with the date it was prepared so you can count the number of days since the food was prepared before donating and always check with your food recovery partner on their preferences or requirements for donated food. Developing a relationship with food recovery partners is key for ensuring that your donations are able to best meet their needs.

Based on recommendations from the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health, up until pickup or drop-off, hot foods must be held at 135°F or above, cold foods at 41°F or below, and frozen foods at 0°F. Donated food that is kept out of this safe temperature range for more than 30 minutes may not be safe to donate or consume. Always check with the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health for more guidance on safe food handling. Here's a link to our Food Donation Guide with some general guidance on safe food handling: <https://www.stopwaste.org/at-work/reduce-and-reuse/reduce-wasted-food/surplus-food-donation>

4. Q. Is there a list of ideas for ways restaurants/businesses can implement those reduction practices?

A: StopWaste is working on finalizing industry specific commercial edible food generator waste prevention and recovery tip sheets (soon to be on the Stopwaste website). Those will be posted at <https://www.stopwaste.org/rules/resources>. There are additional resources for businesses located at <https://www.stopwaste.org/at-work/reduce-and-reuse/reduce-wasted-food>. A great first step to reducing food waste is to assess what gets wasted on a regular basis to see if there is a pattern, so that the waste could be designed out, e.g. by changing the menu etc. There are technical tools such as LeanPath to help with automating tracking.

Here are a few highlights [from a successful case study](#) of food waste tracking leading to prevention strategies. Several corporate cafeterias learned from the tracking data that soup was a frequently discarded item, so they offered free sides of soup, or sold leftover soup in pints for customers to purchase and take home. Another kitchen switched their salad bar trays for more shallow pans so that less food was leftover at the end of the day, without making the bar look empty or sparse.

5. Q. What resources exist for businesses to find organizations that accept food for animal feed?

A. Commercial edible food generators will need to recover the maximum amount of edible surplus food fit for human consumption and not divert it to compost, animal feed, etc. At this point in time, we do not have any resources available to locate organizations or businesses that accept food for animal feed. Some Food Recovery Organizations do work with local ranchers and farms that pick up spoiled food and scraps left over after food distribution.

6. Q. Does Stop Waste encourage businesses to collaborate with Too Good to Go?

A. Too Good To Go is a great example of the new apps out there to help businesses generate some revenue while cutting down on surplus edible food that would be subject to the food donation requirements, but difficult to find a food recovery partner to pick up. We have heard of this app and more businesses using them, so it is certainly worth looking into. If you are using these type of apps or food waste prevention tools, please make sure to document those best practices in your record keeping and reporting available onsite for inspectors.

7. Q. Does Alameda County Community Food Bank accept prepared food from restaurants (vs. prepackaged foods like canned foods, etc)? Thanks.

A. The Alameda County Community Food Bank generally does not accept prepared food from restaurants and other food generators. Check out the list of other local food recovery organizations and services here: <https://resource.stopwaste.org/food-recovery-organizations>

8. Q. Are the information sheets that have provided available in Spanish or other languages in order to help train staff?

A. More translated materials will be posted on StopWaste's website in January-February at <https://www.stopwaste.org/rules/resources>. In addition, there's a translation tool located on the bottom right of our webpages that allows users select to copy and translate any existing website text and paste into other documents.



9. Q. Are health inspectors tasked with checking the dumpster/green bins to make sure food isn't improperly disposed of?

A. The Alameda County Department of Health inspectors will look for intentional spoiling/dumping of edible surplus food if they have access to collection or disposal containers. They will also be noting whether they see compost bins or issues around bin contamination, however their primary focus is on edible food recovery compliance.