



DISTRIBUTION SITE

DISTRIBUTION PROCEDURES AND FOOD SAFETY FACT SHEET

Congratulations on your participation in the Waste Hunger, Not Food (WHNF) program. We are excited for your organization to start this journey and help us achieve our goal of feeding those in need. To get you started, we have developed this food safety fact sheet to help you safely serve the community rescued food. Should you have any questions regarding any of the products you receive, please contact an Environmental Health Specialist at 661-862-8740.

EQUIPMENT

WHNF accepts a variety of foods, all of which need to be received by your site. To accept cold foods, facilities must have at minimum a **refrigerator/freezer** to ensure the temperature of the food can be maintained at 41° F or below. The unit(s) shall be large enough to hold all cold foods received (up to 30 crates), whether they be refrigerated or frozen. Stand-alone refrigerator or freezer units are acceptable. Facilities must also have a method to check food temperatures during distribution. This can include a temperature probe or an infrared thermometer/laser temperature gun.

Facilities **must provide their own containers/boxes to accept food** and shall have a **clean and secure area** to store foods. The area shall be large enough to store all items delivered with no overflow into unsecured areas. Foods should be elevated 6 inches off the floor.

Ice chests and ice are required for food transport. Food shall not be in the ice chests longer than 2 hours.

If the distribution site intends to serve the food, the facility shall be equipped with either an operable stove, oven, or microwave capable of reheating any cold food to 165° F.

In addition, all facilities shall be equipped with a **hand wash sink** supplied with soap and single use paper towels or a hand dryer. The sink shall provide warm water and be always accessible to any staff/volunteers handling food.

FOOD SAFETY

Staff/volunteers at the distribution site shall be vigilant during deliveries. Donations sites shall only distribute wholesome, untampered food to recipients. WHNF staff conduct visual assessments and temperature checks of donated foods upon pick up. Distribution site staff/volunteers shall **inspect delivery** for the following signs which indicate unsafe food: decay/rot, broken or torn packaging, out of temperature foods, dents on canned goods along the seams, bulging cans, gnaw marks, evidence of vermin. If the delivery is found to be unsafe, the site shall ask WHNF staff to weigh the product, document it and dispose of the food accordingly (compost).

DISTRIBUTION

Each staff person/volunteer who prepares food items for distribution shall conduct a visual assessment of the food. If any food is found to be unsafe during this time, the steps as listed in the "FOOD SAFETY" section shall be followed.

It is recommended that each staff person/volunteer becomes familiarized with common food product dating. Food product dating is not required by Federal regulations; rather, manufacturers provide dating to help consumers and retailers decide when food is of highest quality. Dates are not necessarily an indicator of the product's safety. Commonly used food product dating phrases include:

- Best Before/if Used By: Tells the consumer that the food is safe to consume but is no longer at its peak quality (potential loss of freshness, taste, aroma, or nutrients). It is not a purchase or safety date.
- Sell-By: Informs retailers the date by which a product should be sold or removed from shelf life. It is not a safety date.
- Freeze-By: Tells the consumer when a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.

Donated food with a listed food product date on the current date shall be accepted by a distribution site. If no date is listed on a food product, it is the responsibility of the distribution site to accept the food and advise the consumer that the food product is safe to consume until *spoilage indicators* provide reason to discard, such as a noticeable change in color, consistency, or texture.

Once accepted, donated food shall be **distributed to recipients immediately**, or as soon as possible. Donated food shall not be held at a distribution site longer than 3 days.

Distribution sites may occasionally receive large quantities of a single food item that makes it difficult to distribute within the 3-day time frame. In this case, food may be frozen on or before the food product date. Food that has been frozen on or before the food product date and remained in a frozen state since it was initially frozen shall be held at the distribution site for no longer than 2 weeks.

Should the facility choose to portion, assemble, or reheat commercially prepared food for distribution, registration as a Limited-Service Charitable Feeding Operation may be required. Please contact an Environmental Health Specialist at 661-862-8740.

CLEANING

Distribution sites shall provide regular cleaning of any food storage or food preparation/serving areas. As needed, storage racks, bins or other items used to store food, shall be **cleaned and sanitized** using an appropriate chlorine concentration (100ppm or about 1 tablespoon of bleach per 1 gallon of water). Facilities shall inspect their food storage areas daily for cleanliness, presence of vermin, or any other condition which could render food unsafe. This includes a check of all refrigeration or freezer units to ensure that they can hold food at 41° F or below. If any condition is found to render the food storage/preparation area unsafe, the distribution site shall cease accepting donated food and discard any potentially unsafe food. Once the unsafe conditions have been corrected, the facility may resume accepting donations.

Questions regarding food donation or food safety, please contact environmental health specialist at (661) 862-8740

Questions regarding the Waste Hunger, Not Food program, please contact Sara Syvertson (661) 868-1214