

How to Safely Recover Edible Food

Large Event Organizers



Following these practices can help you safely recover your maximum amount of surplus edible food, in compliance with Senate Bill 1383 and local ordinances. Items marked with a ★ are necessary to comply with these laws if your permanent venue or event facility annually seats or serves on average 2,000+ individuals within the grounds of the facility per day of operation.

Best Practices - Stop waste from the start!

- Conduct a food waste audit. Start the conversation with your vendors to ensure you're working towards the same goal. Encourage vendors to save money and be eco-smart by producing only the amount of food needed.
- Consider including in vendor contracts a requirement to prioritize prevention of wasted food and to prioritize bids that take initiative to reduce overproduction.
- Ask vendors to consider cutting prices on unsold food at the end of the day.
- Consider making surplus food available to staff, volunteers, community members, and/or food recovery organizations.
- Publicize your no-waste/low-waste efforts through signage or by hosting a waste-cutting challenge for attendees (consider setting up a social media hashtag such as #NoWasteAt[INSERT BUSINESS NAME]).



Plan Your Food Recovery Logistics

- ★ Contract with a Food Recovery Organization or Service (FRO/S). Visit your city's website for a list of local food recovery 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. Notify FRO/S in advance if you expect to have more surplus than usual, so they can plan accordingly.
- ★ Establish a dedicated area (in compliance with California Retail Food Code ([CalCode](#))) for storing and labeling (with date and contents) food designated for donation.
- ★ Establish recordkeeping system, see "Keep Records" section.
- Work in coordination with large event vendors to ensure they can accommodate and/or support food recovery efforts.
- Properly depackage and compost any inedible food or food scraps that are not safe or suitable for food recovery.

Secure Necessary Equipment

- Work in coordination with large event vendors to understand equipment needed or utilized by vendors to ensure they can accommodate and/or support the event's food recovery efforts.

Determine What to Donate

Determining what food can safely be donated at a large event is highly dependent on the type of facility the event is held at. Events where vendors use brick-and-mortar, or commercial kitchens have different guidelines than those events that primarily consist of Mobile Food Facilities (MFF) and Temporary Food Facilities (TFF).

Step 1: Determine the type of event.

a) Vendors use commercial kitchens or b) Vendors are Mobile Food Facilities or Temporary Food Facilities.

Step 2: Follow the guidelines that pertain to the event type below.

a) Vendors Using Commercial Kitchens

Potentially Donatable Foods	Foods that Cannot Be Donated
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Food fit for human consumption and donated in good faith (e.g., may include food near quality expiration dates or past labeled shelf-life date).Prepared foods chilled to 41°F or below that have not been served or placed on a buffet.Fresh or frozen on or before the date on the package.Unopened canned/dry-packaged, securely sealed and dated appropriately, with labeling intactLightly bruised or soft produce.Packaged cut produce stored 41°F or below while awaiting pickup.Pre-packaged meals sealed appropriately with date and content labels.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">Food not fit for human consumption: bad odor, discoloration, moldy and/or bulging packaging.If packaging is torn, has holes, dents, or broken seals.Cans that are dented, bulging, or unlabeled.Home baked, home canned, or home jarred products.Food not in its original packaging and missing ingredient label and/or a date.Foods previously served to consumers.Perishable foods that were not held at safe temperatures.Sushi or any seafood intended for raw consumption.Expired or opened over-the-counter medications, nutritional supplements, and infant formula.Food containing alcohol or CBD.

** FRO/S have the right to refuse donations or terminate relationship with generators for any reason including if food donated is inedible or unfit for human consumption.*

b) Mobile or Temporary Food Vendors

Mobile Food Facilities (MFF) and Temporary Food Facilities (TFF) have limitations: At the end of the day, potentially hazardous hot foods that are held above 41°F must be destroyed/composted and cannot be donated. Shelf stable and/or packaged foods can however be donated.

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.
- For specific questions about food safety, contact the Department of Environmental Health & Quality at fhdutyeh@sdcounty.ca.gov or call 858-505-6900.

Keep Records

- ★ You must keep the following records onsite: pounds of food recovered each month, a copy of your contract with each FRO, list of food types being recovered, and frequency of pickup/delivery.

Additional Information

Regional SB 1383 Organics Collection & Edible Food Recovery
Resources



Department of Environmental Health & Quality

