

How to Safely Recover Edible Food

Large Venues



Following these practices can help you safely recover your surplus edible food, in compliance with Senate Bill 1383 (SB 1383) and local ordinances. Items marked with a ★ are necessary to comply with these laws if you are a permanent venue that annually seats or serves an average of 2,000 people within the grounds of the venue per day.

A large venue that does not provide food services but allows for food to be sold shall require food facilities operating at the large venue to comply with SB 1383. Ultimately the large venue management is responsible for meeting the requirements (★) but can arrange with the venue's food facilities to help with the responsibility of entering into food recovery agreements, tracking donated food in pounds and keep required records.

Best Practices - 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.
- Educate food facilities at your venue on proper food storage and waste separation for reducing food waste.
- Consider making surplus food available to staff, community members, and/or food recovery organizations.



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 venue management to understand what food recovery logistics the venue can accommodate and/or support. Communicate with management about record keeping requirements.
- Properly depackage and compost any inedible food or food scraps that are not safe or suitable for food recovery.

Secure Necessary Equipment

- Food-safe containers or transport bags. Check the packaging preferences or requirements of your partner(s).
- Dedicated refrigerator/freezer space.
- Labeling and recordkeeping supplies.
- Scale, if you are tracking weights (some FRO/S will track and/or weigh for you).

Determine What to Donate

Food donation policies vary by local Food Recovery Organization or Service, verify before donating. You may also use the information below as a general guide. Food safety regulations can be found in the California Retail Food Code ([CalCode](#)).

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 intact• Lightly 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.*

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.
- Anyone packaging food donations should take a food safety course and obtain a [Food Handler Card with an accredited program](#).
- Keep hot foods at 135°F or above and cold foods at 41°F or below. [Food temperature guidance](#).
- Confirm your food bank, FRO/S partner's specific donation policies.
- Package donations in shallow, sanitary, food-grade containers or bags. Do not mix different foods.
- [Properly cool all hot foods](#) prior to donation.
- 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.

** 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.*

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

QR Code for new DEHQ/SB1383 page



Department of Environmental Health & Quality

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