

A GUIDE FOR  
PERMITTED FOOD  
ESTABLISHMENTS

Thank you for your work in the community to feed hungry people and prevent excess waste from entering our landfills!

Please find your step-by-step guide for donating excess food to hunger relief organizations.

Snohomish County Health Department is your resource for ensuring all of your donated food remains wholesome and safe.

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# FOOD RESCUE

## DONATION GUIDE FOR BUSINESSES

### How to Donate

1. Review your operation:
  - ✓ Identify the type and quantity of excess food you prepare.
  - ✓ Ensure you are able to safely recover food for donation by following this guide and working with the Health Department, at [food.safety@snoco.org](mailto:food.safety@snoco.org)
2. Partner with a local hunger relief organization. Find out what food they accept and plan pick-up or delivery times.
3. Safely package and maintain food at proper temperatures at all times:
  - ✓ Confirm safe temperatures and cooling procedures of all hot food, keep records.
  - ✓ Keep food at proper temperatures
  - ✓ Package in clean, food-grade containers
  - ✓ Label with the common name of the food.
  - ✓ Label with production date and freeze date of prepared foods (if applicable).
  - ✓ Store in a designated area of a refrigerator or freezer while awaiting pick-up or delivery.
4. Transport donated food safely:
  - ✓ Transport food in a clean vehicle to prevent contamination.
  - ✓ Keep food at proper temperatures and use refrigerated transport when available.
5. Track donated items:
  - ✓ Use a donation delivery form or other record-keeping method to keep track of donated food sources, quantities, food types and dates.

# Donated Food Safety for Businesses

There are a number of special concerns to consider when donating food safely:

- Open food cannot have been previously served to a customer.
- Food must be in a food-grade package and properly labeled.
- If the food requires temperature control for safety (perishable foods), it must have been handled at proper temperatures.
- All food must have been kept safe from flood, fire, extreme temperatures or other events that lead to distressing of merchandise.
- Some previously served whole uncut produce or sealed TCS food can be donated BUT only under an approved plan with the health department.

Food Type	Foods are SAFE to Donate If:	Foods are NOT SAFE to Donate If:
<b>Prepared Food</b> (e.g. soups, casseroles)	Properly cooled* and stored at 41°F or below, or frozen solid.	Any food stored between 41°F and 135°F, food that has been improperly cooled*.
<b>Chilled Perishable, Prepackaged food</b>	Stored at 41°F or below, or frozen solid.	Any food stored between 41°F and 135°F or food with damaged or bulging packaging.
<b>Meat, Poultry, Fish</b>	Stored at 41°F or below, or frozen solid.	Foods stored between 41°F and 135 °F.
<b>Fresh Whole Produce</b>	Stored in a cool, dry and clean area.	Significant decay is evident.
<b>Fresh Cut Produce</b>	Stored at 41°F or below.	Food stored between 41°F and 135 °F after being cut, or if significant decay is evident.
<b>Nonperishable Baked Goods</b>	Stored in a cool, dry and clean area.	Moldy or stale products.
<b>Nonperishable, Prepackaged Food</b>	Stored in a cool, dry and clean area.	Home-canned foods, and cans/package that are rusty, severely damaged, bulging or leaking.
<b>Baby Food</b>	Stored according to label.	Expired infant formula.

\*For information on what is considered properly or improperly cooled, refer to WAC 246-215 or discuss your food preparation processes with your area inspector.

Having systems in place to control these factors will help to ensure you are protected under the **Good Samaritan Food Donation Act** (Chapter 69.80.031 RCW), an act that offers food donors protection from criminal and civil liability if the food that they donated is *apparently wholesome*. The act does not relieve your business or the Hunger Relief Organization of the responsibility to handle food safely and according to law.

Refer to [State Policy: ReFED | Rethink Food Waste](#) For Tax incentives for food donation!