



Ensuring Safe Transitions:

Guidelines for Community Food Provisions and Food Donors Supporting the Community Food Sector

2024

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Ensuring Safe Transitions

Who is this guide for?

This guide is intended to assist all stakeholders, whether new or existing, involved in the recovery, distribution or service of surplus food in their local communities.

It is important to make sure food is kept safe during this process given the high numbers of people in the UK who use food community food projects and vulnerability of those who use these projects. The diversity of organisations and agencies acting to ensure food safety standards are consistently met also complicates this process.

This document provides guidelines that will help you develop a better understanding of the foods that can be donated and distributed and how they should be safely stored, packaged and transported

This leaflet does not aim to state exact legal requirements, and compliance with this guidance may not secure full compliance with the law. For further information on the exact requirements of the legislation you should contact your local Environmental Health Department or consult Food Standards Agency resources.

Why did we create this resource?

With the distribution of over 3 million emergency food parcels by the Trussell Trust network in 2023-2024, and over 3.1 million people in the UK facing food insecurity and relying on community food provision, the risk to public health due to inadequate food safety standards can be significant.

Understanding protocols for handling, transporting, storing and distributing food during the transitions from food donors to final recipients is essential to ensure quality and safety of food is not compromised throughout the surplus food supply chain.

We used seed funding from the Food Safety Research Network (FSRN) to create accessible and informative material aiming to empower volunteers and staff within the food sector. We want to help you have the necessary skills and knowledge to create a culture of safe practice when supplying, transporting, and receiving food. This will in turn enhance the efficiency and reliability of the broader food distribution system, to the benefit of people using food aid.

The development of detailed, bespoke guidelines is therefore essential to address the intricacies of safely transferring food from restaurants and other food business operators to community food projects.



Definitions

Cold Chain: The temperature-controlled supply chain necessary to preserve the quality and safety of perishable foods.

Community Kitchen: A facility used to prepare meals for distribution to individuals in need or to provide cooking education.

Expiration Date/Best Before Date: Labels on food indicating the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality.

Food Bank: A non-profit organisation that distributes a free food parcel to those in need, often sourced from donations

Food Insecurity: The state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.

Food Pantry: An organisation that distributes low-price food to those in need to effectively act as a halfway house between a food bank and a supermarket, with the food often sourced from surplus

Food Recovery: The process of collecting edible food that would otherwise go to waste from places like restaurants and grocery stores for distribution to the needy.

HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points): A management system in which food safety is addressed through the analysis and control of biological, chemical, and physical hazards from raw material production, procurement, and handling, to manufacturing, distribution, and consumption of the finished product.

Perishable and Non-perishable: Categories of donated food, where perishable items require refrigeration and non-perishable items have a longer shelf life.

Surplus Food: Food items that are overproduced, unsold, or otherwise excess, which can be donated to avoid waste.

Volunteer: Individuals who offer their time and services to food banks and pantries without financial compensation.



Food safety processes

Food donors

Surplus food is any extra wholesome, edible food, including food that was prepared for service, but not served or sold.

Most food donations come from higher up the food supply chain, such as from farmers, food manufacturers, distributors, or retailers. But you can also collect and donate food if you are a restaurant, school, hospital community organizations, and individuals can also make a difference by collecting and donating unspoiled, healthy food or participating in local food redistribution efforts. By donating food, we're feeding people, not landfills, supporting local communities, and saving all the resources that went into producing that food, from going to waste.

How to prepare for food donation

Identifying food for donation

- Decide what can be donated
- Decide how much and how often you will be able to donate
- Decide how the food will be transported

What to consider?

Expiration Dates

Donate foods that are within their expiration or best-before dates.

Avoid Homemade Foods

Do not donate homemade meals due to safety and health regulations.

When Donating

If donating personal care or cleaning products, keep them separate from food items to avoid contamination.

Packaged Foods

Prioritize items with longer shelf lives, such as rice, pasta, and canned goods.

Do you know? Food manufacturers are responsible for the relabelling in most cases, but can also give other food business operators (FBOs) permission to relabel food products. For example, a FBO can freeze a product when appropriate to extend its shelf-life, but must determine the new durability date and conditions of use and storage which will appear on the label.

Interesting fact: Surplus food donation initiatives can significantly reduce a business's environmental footprint by minimizing waste sent to landfills.

Do you know? Products can be sold, redistributed and consumed after their Best before date but not after their Use-by date.

Do you know? UK's VAT Directive: Food donations benefit from the zero rate of VAT. Zero-rate VAT on all food and drink for human consumption, except catering, alcoholic drinks, confectionery, crisps and savoury snacks, hot food, sports drinks, hot takeaways, ice cream, soft drinks and mineral water which are standard rated.

Preparing food

- Prepare food according to local health regulations.
- Only donate foods that have been handled and stored safely.

Packaging food

- Package food in clean, food-grade packaging.
- Do not donate items in damaged, swollen, or dented containers.
- Unopened food items should be donated in their original commercial packaging.

What to consider?

Fresh Produce:

Donate fresh fruits and vegetables that are still in good condition, avoiding those with mould or excessive bruising.

Dairy and Meat Products:

Ensure that dairy and meat products have been stored at appropriate temperatures and are not close to expiration.



Labelling food

- Clearly label foods with ingredients, especially noting potential allergens.

Storing food

- Follow packet instructions on how to store a food, such as in a fridge or freezer.
- Ensure your fridges and freezers are set to the recommended temperatures.
- Fridges and chilled display equipment should be set at 8°C or below as a legal requirement.
- A freezer should be -18°C.
- You can extend the life of ambient or chilled foods by freezing them, if the food is suitable for freezing.
- Food must be frozen before midnight on the use-by date and re-labelled correctly, following FSA guidance on [bulk freezing of ambient and chilled foods](#).

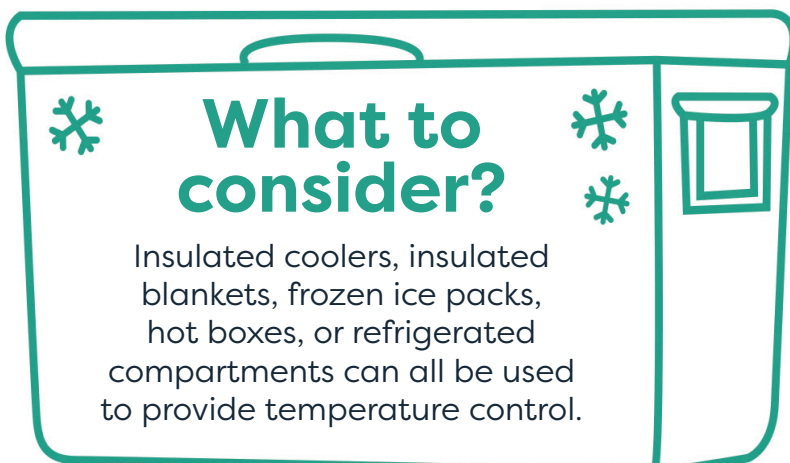
What food groups do not require a label?

- Fresh fruit and vegetables which have not been peeled, cut or similarly treated (except for sprouting seeds and similar products, like legume sprouts)
- Drinks made from fermented grapes or grape musts
- Vinegar
- Cooking salt



Handing of food

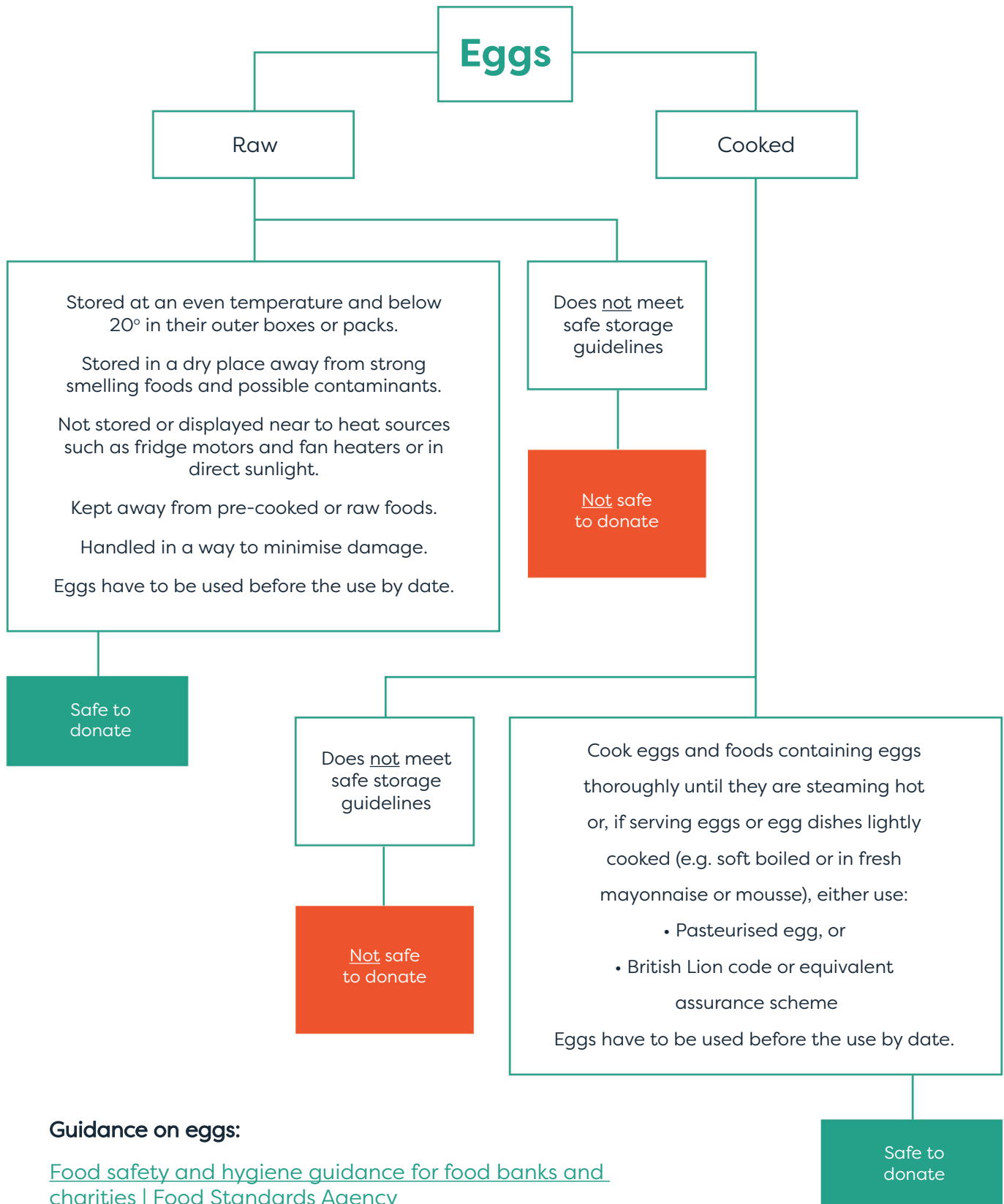
- Ensure that the transporting vehicle has special equipment to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Keep the following records:
 - Name and location of food donor
 - Date the food was prepared/harvested
 - Type of food donated
 - Food temperature at pickup
 - Name of the person who transported the food



Thermometer probes should be used for monitoring food temperatures.



Handling foods requiring special attention

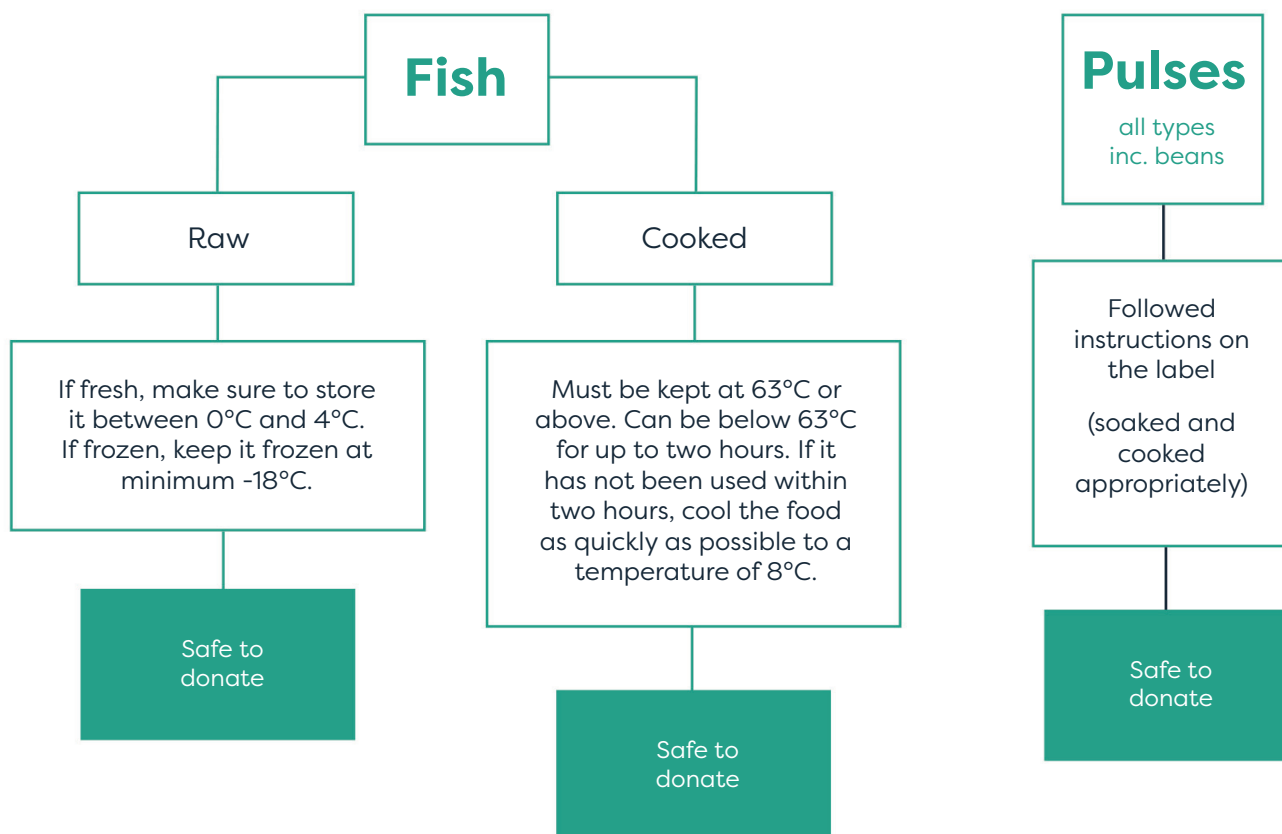
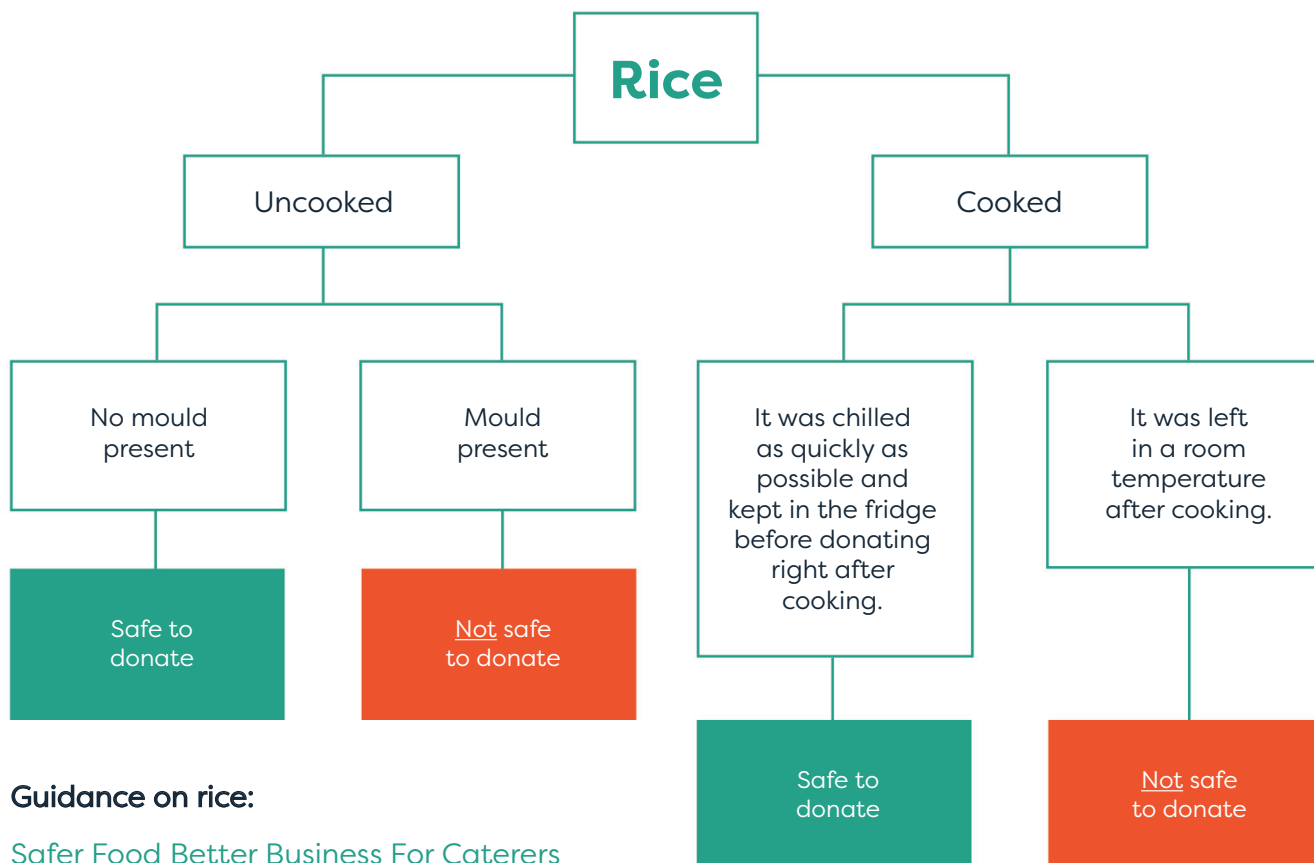


Guidance on eggs:

[Food safety and hygiene guidance for food banks and charities](#) | Food Standards Agency

[Safer Food Better Business For Caterers](#)





Checklist for donors

SAFETY CHECKLIST	YES/NO (if not applicable leave blank)
YOUR FSA HYGIENE RATING	0 1 2 3 4 5
Food item being donated	
Business details (contact name, number, address including postcode, email)	
Time/date of completing the checklist and time of donation	Time/date of completion: Time/date of donation (if possible)
Storage (high risk foods that require extensive hygiene and temperature control)	
Was the food received from a reputable supplier?	
Is ready-to-eat food stored above/separate from raw food in the fridges and freezers?	
Was the food stored in an appropriate temperature in a freezer/ fridge? Is that recorded in your documentation?	
Is food in fridges/freezers covered?	
Are the fridges maintained and cleaned on a regular basis?	
Storage (medium risk foods)	
Are dried goods stored correctly e.g. in a suitable room, off the floor, in covered containers?	
Is the packaging intact?	
Is ready to eat food packaged and labelled?	



Preparation	
Are controls in place to prevent contamination by chemicals/ foreign bodies e.g. glass, packaging materials, bolts, rust, cleaning chemicals?	
Are separate utensils and equipment used for ready-to-eat foods unless disinfected in a dishwasher? Is the dishwasher in good working order and regularly serviced?	
If colour coded equipment is provided (e.g. utensils, chopping boards), is it correctly used?	
Are vegetables/fruit/salads/ trimmed and washed thoroughly before use unless labelled as 'ready-to-eat'?	
Are controls being followed to ensure staff wash hands after handling raw food and before touching surfaces, such as the cash register?	
Are ready-to-eat foods prepared in separate clean areas?	
Do separate staff handle ready-to-eat food or are controls being followed to ensure staff change clothing and wash hands before handling ready-to-eat food?	
Are the fridges maintained and cleaned on a regular basis? The interiors of fridges and freezers should be wiped and sanitised every other day, and given a deep clean once a week.	
Temperature control	
Is a separate probe thermometer used for ready-to-eat foods and properly cleaned/disinfected before use?	
Are frozen foods defrosted safely?	
Is food cooled as quickly as possible away from raw food and other sources of contamination?	
Equipment time/temperature combinations regularly cross-checked?	
At the point of cooking did the food reach 70°C for 2 minutes?	
Food has been reheated appropriately as per FSA regulations?	
Is it possible to ensure that the food stays cooled (between 0°C and 5°C) or frozen (-18°C and -22°C) until it reaches the intended foodbank?	
Is it possible to ensure cooked food stays at 63°C or above during the donation process (if not it should be consumed within two hours)?	



Packaging/delivering	
Is the label included with the donation?	
Is the packaging sufficient and appropriate?	
Is the packaging intact and not damaged?	
Is unfit food clearly labelled and stored separately from other foods?	
Personal hygiene	
Are hot water, liquid soap and disposable towels available in the premises?	
Does staff training take place and is this documented?	
Do staff members maintain satisfactory levels of hygiene?	

Food delivery

- If you are delivering hot food, you must ensure the food is kept hot until it is delivered e.g. using clean insulated delivery bags.
- If you are providing meals that require cooking, you must provide the correct storage and cooking instructions to the food.
- You must provide consumers with the correct allergen information on request. Pre-packed foods must have the allergen information supplied with it. If you cannot, do not give it out.
- Foods must be protected from any risk of contamination during delivery e.g. using clean vehicles and transport containers.

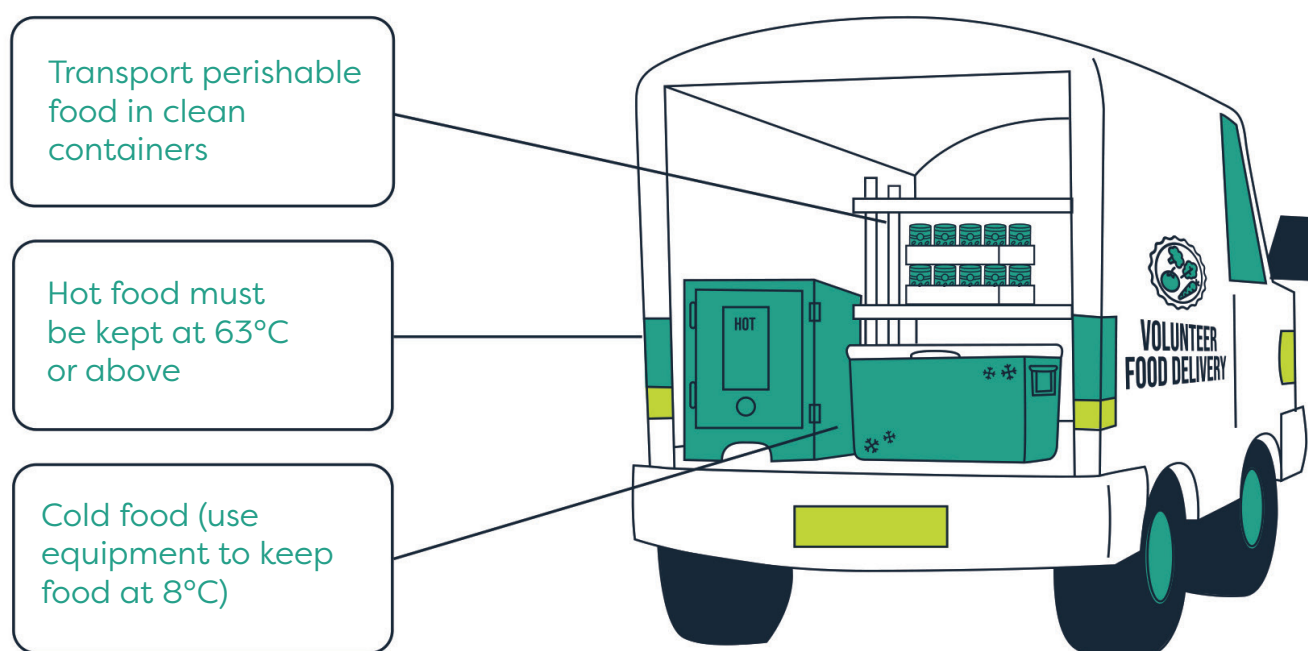
Additional information



Surplus food handlers and transporters


Safe transport and delivery of donated food requires responsible communication among all parties handling the food (donor, transporter and receiving agency), including monitoring and appropriately handling temperature and packaging requirements as well as limiting the time out of temperature controls. With a basic understanding of food safety and good judgement, food donors, transporters and recipients can ensure that donated food is kept safe for consumption. When transporting food for donation think about:

- Temperature Control: Maintain proper temperature (hot or cold) during transportation of perishable food.
- Quick Transportation: Transport food to the food bank as quickly as possible to avoid spoilage.
- Clean Transport: Use clean, sanitized vehicles for transportation.
- Prompt Delivery: Deliver donations as soon as possible, especially for perishable items.
- Communication: Maintain open communication with the food bank regarding the types of food being donated and the expected delivery times.



Consult your local authority [food safety team](#) if you have further questions about safely transporting hot or cold food. You can also find more information on the safe transport of surplus food [on the FSA site](#).

How to donate to community food provisions in Birmingham

Redistribution of surplus food to charitable groups								
Food Type	Uncut Fruit & Vegetables	Dry Goods	Bread & Bakery	Dairy Products	Raw Meat & Fish	Pre-Prepared Foods		
Description	Unprocessed whole fruit and vegetables. Eg loose or bags of potatoes	Non-refrigerated, sealed store cupboard goods Eg bags of flour	Breads and pastries meant for ambient storage (ie not chilled cakes)	Milk, cream, butter, yoghurts, eggs	Raw pieces of meat and fish, either pre-packaged or loose	Pre-packed & labelled according to food safety guidelines Eg pre-packed sandwiches, ready meals, coleslaw	Prepared in an EH registered kitchen, dated & labelled and stored according to food safety guidelines Eg Freshly made lasagne	Cooked food that has not been stored or prepared according to food safety guidelines (e.g. restaurant buffet food or leftovers you have from cooking a big family meal)
Is it safe to donate? (must be compliant with all food safety requirements)	Visual check for rotting or mould, etc	Package food in clean, food-grade packaging. Do not donate items in damaged, swollen, or dented containers. Unopened food items should be donated in their original commercial packaging	Visual check for mould	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that all products have been stored correctly at appropriate temperatures Products cannot be donated past their use-by date See separate guidance for eggs in Donor guidelines 				UNSUITABLE FOR DONATION
How to donate	 <p>Local Surplus Redistribution Organisation: Incredible Surplus A Birmingham-based organisation that intercepts and redistributes over 5 tonnes of edible surplus food weekly. Quick to respond, they intercept food that would otherwise go to waste from supermarkets, restaurants and other sources, and provide them to individuals and community organisations:</p> <p>Contact incrediblesurplus@gmail.com</p> <p>See QR code for more info on Incredible Surplus</p>							



food justice network.

Birmingham, UK.



Scan this QR code to see the
Food Justice Network Map

The map will show you details of free food support and food based activities nearby to you.

Or you can type this into your browser to open the
Food Justice Network Map on a webpage:
<https://tinyurl.com/foodjusticemap>



Community food providers

Food safety is a crucial aspect of managing community food projects, and there are several important considerations to ensure the safety of the food distributed.

What do you need to do if you are setting a food community provision?

Food Safety for Community Cooking and Food Banks



Are you providing food at community food and charity events?



How to manage food safety for your food community project?

1. Temperature Control: Perishable items like dairy, meat, and fresh produce must be stored at appropriate temperatures to prevent bacterial growth.

2. Expiration and Use-By Dates: It's essential to regularly check the dates on packaged and canned goods to ensure they are within their safe consumption period.

3. Proper Storage: Foods should be stored in clean, dry, and pest-free environments. This also includes proper segregation of different types of food to avoid cross-contamination:

- **Separate Raw and Cooked Foods**

Always store raw meat, poultry, and seafood separately from cooked and ready-to-eat foods to prevent cross-contamination. Use separate storage containers and shelves for raw and cooked items.

- **Designated Storage Areas**

Assign specific areas in the storage facility for different types of food. For instance, have separate sections for dairy, produce, canned goods, non-food items, etc.

- **Use of Colour-Coded Equipment**

Implement a colour-coding system for storage bins, utensils, and cutting boards. For example, use red for raw meat, green for vegetables, and blue for seafood. This helps in easily identifying which equipment is used for specific food types, reducing the risk of cross-contamination.

- **Allergen Management**

Keep foods containing common allergens (like nuts, gluten, dairy) separate from other foods. This can be achieved through physical separation and using distinct containers or shelves.

- **Proper Labelling**

Clearly label storage areas, containers, and shelves to indicate what type of food should be stored there. Labels should be visible and easily understandable.



Did you know? A charity can accept food with the wrong labelling or an error on its label. The food label should be correct by the time the food is presented to the final consumer. The name, list of ingredients, allergens, Use by date (UB) or Best Before date (BB) dates of the product need to appear on the new label or on a label accompanying the food.

Did you know? Nutritional labelling and information are essential in food donations, allowing food banks to distribute items that meet the dietary needs of their clients.

- **Vertical Storage Protocols**

If using vertical shelving, store heavier and non-perishable items on lower shelves and lighter, perishable items on upper shelves. This prevents accidental contamination from spillage or leaks.

4. Handling and Distribution: Safe handling practices must be followed to avoid contamination. This includes the use of clean utensils, gloves, and maintaining hygiene standards during the distribution process.

5. Food Sourcing: Food banks should source their food from reputable suppliers and donors by checking their food hygiene rating to ensure that donated food is safe for consumption.

Did you know? Many food banks have developed innovative programs to rescue perishable foods from restaurants and grocery stores, significantly reducing food waste.

Did you know? Community gardens and farms can donate fresh produce to food banks, providing healthy options to individuals and families in need.

6. Training for Volunteers and Staff: Regular training on food safety practices is vital to maintain high standards and awareness about potential hazards.

Did you know? Many food banks offer training and resources on food safety and handling to their donors, ensuring donations are safe for consumption.



7. Regular Inspections: Routine inspections of the facility, storage practices, and food items help in identifying and rectifying potential safety issues.

- **Stay Informed:**

Subscribe to national and local food safety alerts and recall notifications from health and regulatory agencies. This can be done through emails, RSS feeds, or regular checks on relevant websites.

- **Designate a Recall Coordinator:**

Appoint a staff member as the recall coordinator who will be responsible for managing recall procedures. This person should be trained in food safety and recall response.

- **Recall Response Plan:**

Develop a detailed recall response plan. This should include steps for identifying and isolating recalled food items, notifying relevant personnel, and determining the disposition of the recalled items (e.g., return to supplier, destruction).

- **Traceability:**

Maintain detailed records of food sources, batches, and distribution. This is crucial for quickly identifying and isolating recalled products in your inventory.

- **Communication Protocol:**

Establish clear communication channels and protocols to inform staff, volunteers, and potentially affected recipients about the recall. Transparency is key to maintaining trust and ensuring safety.

- **Regular Training:**

Conduct regular training sessions with staff and volunteers on handling recalls, including recognizing recalled items and understanding the steps to be taken when a recall occurs.

8. Food Allergy Awareness: It's important to be aware of common food allergens and properly label food items to inform recipients of potential allergens. Posters showing allergens should always be on display.

9. Emergency Preparedness: Food banks should have plans in place for emergencies like power outages or natural disasters that could impact food safety.

10. Community Education: Educating recipients about safe food handling and storage practices is also a key aspect of food safety in food banks.



Receiving donations

Considering different types of food donations

When receiving donations from food businesses, or handling food, food banks should carry out assessments on whether products past their 'best before' dates can be redistributed.

This should include a visual inspection, checking for freshness and any damage. In some instances, torn or damaged outer packaging may be acceptable if the integrity of the primary pack is maintained before food is used as a meal ingredient.

In the context of food safety, food banks handlers need to understand that foods are classified as either high risk or low risk.

High-risk foods

High-risk foods can be defined as “any ready-to-eat food that will support the growth of pathogenic bacteria easily and does not require any further heat treatment or cooking”.

These types of foods are more likely to be implicated as vehicles of food poisoning organisms consumed in food poisoning incidents. Such foods are usually high in protein; require strict temperature control and protection from contamination. Examples include:



Cooked meat and poultry such as: beef, pork, ham, lamb, chicken, turkey, duck



Cooked meat products such as: meat pies & pasties, pate, meat stock & gravy, cook-chill meals



Dairy produce such as: milk, cream, artificial cream, custards, products containing unpasteurised milk, ripened soft & moulded cheeses



Egg products such as: cooked eggs, quiche and products containing uncooked or lightly cooked eggs, for example; mayonnaise, mousse, home-made ice cream



Shellfish and other sea-foods such as: mussels, cockles, cooked prawns



Farinaceous dishes including: cooked rice, pasta, couscous



Food storage best practice: ensuring safety and quality for high-risk foods

Refrigeration

Store high-risk foods in refrigerators at temperatures below 8°C.

Use separate refrigerators or dedicated sections within a refrigerator for high-risk foods.

Proper Packaging

Use airtight and leak-proof containers to prevent cross-contamination and ensure the freshness of high-risk foods.

Package cooked meats and dairy in sealed containers to reduce exposure to air and bacteria.

Labelling

Clearly label high-risk foods with their expiration dates and storage instructions.

Use a color-coding system or distinctive labels to easily identify high-risk items.

Isolation

Keep high-risk foods isolated from low-risk foods to prevent cross-contamination. This includes using separate shelves, storage areas, or containers.

Regular Monitoring

Regularly monitor the temperature of refrigerators to ensure they are within the safe range.

Conduct frequent checks on the condition of high-risk foods and discard any items that show signs of spoilage.

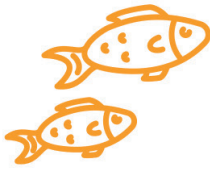
Top-Tip

Follow the “first in, first out” (FIFO) principle for to ensure that older food items are used or discarded first.

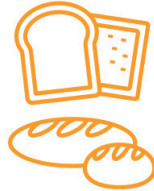


Low-risk foods

Low-risk foods are ambient-stable such as; bread, biscuits, cereals, crisps and cakes (not cream cakes). Such foods are unlikely to be implicated in food poisoning. Examples include:



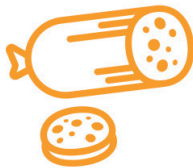
Foods that have been preserved, for example: smoked or salted fish



Dry goods, those that contain minimal amounts of moisture, such as bread, flour, biscuits



Acidic foods, for example: pickled foods, vinegar, fruit



Fermented products such as: salami, pepperoni



Foods with high sugar/fat content for example: jam & chocolate

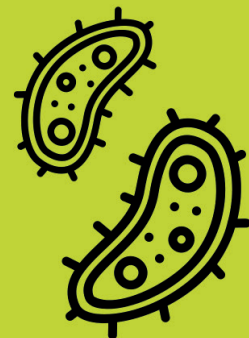


Unopened tinned food

Remember!

Remember that low-risk foods are only low-risk when they are handled safely. Bacteria can easily enter damaged fruits and vegetables, and some fruits harbour dangerous bacteria on the rind which can be spread to the inside.

Viruses — including Norovirus, can and do travel on low-risk foods and cause food poisoning.



Food storage best practice: ensuring safety and quality for low-risk foods

Room Temperature Storage

Low-risk foods can be stored at room temperature in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight.

Ensure adequate ventilation to prevent the accumulation of moisture.

Dry Storage

Store dry goods, such as bread and biscuits, in airtight containers to maintain freshness and protect against pests.

Keep acidic foods in a cool, dark place to preserve their quality.

Labelling

Clearly label low-risk foods with their expiration dates and any specific storage instructions.

Employ a colour-coding system or labels to distinguish low-risk items.

Isolation from High-Risk Foods

Store low-risk foods separately from high-risk foods to prevent cross-contamination.

Use separate shelves or storage areas for different food categories.

Monitoring and Inspection

Regularly inspect low-risk foods for signs of spoilage, pest infestation, or damage.

Dispose of any items that do not meet quality standards.

Top-Tip

Follow the “first in, first out” (FIFO) principle for to ensure that older food items are used or discarded first.



Control measures to ensure food safety

CAUSE	PREVENTION
Food in damaged packaging	Avoid purchasing food in damaged cans or packaging that has broken seals.
Food that is not cooked or reheated thoroughly	Check the cooking temperature with a thermometer. 70°C degrees or above for two minutes is the temperature food should be cooked at.
Food not stored correctly	<p>Separate raw food from cooked food.</p> <p>Store raw food at the bottom of the fridge to avoid juices dripping on to and contaminating other food.</p> <p>Do not defrost meats over night at room temperature. Make sure the food never enters the Danger Zone (above 5°C and below 63°C) because the bacteria may grow and make you ill.</p> <p>Defrost food in the fridge. Food cannot be refrozen if accidentally defrosted unless it is first cooked.</p> <p>Ensure fridge/freezer temperature is correct. The temperature of your fridge needs to be below 5 °C and your freezer below -15 °C.</p> <p>Keep hot foods and cold foods separate.</p> <p>Do not leave food at room temperature for more than 1 hour</p> <p>Allow cooked foods to cool to room temperature (about 21 °C) before storing them in the refrigerator. This prevents the refrigerator temperature from rising and reduces the risk of bacterial growth in all food stored in the fridge.</p> <p>When marinating foods, be sure to do so in the fridge instead of in your kitchen where bacteria can multiply.</p>
Food that has been left out too long	Put chilled/frozen foods back in the fridge/freezer. If you are allowing foods to cool to room temperature before storing them in the fridge/freezer, put the hot food into smaller containers to speed up the cooling process. This process should not take more than 2 hours.
Food prepared on unclean surfaces/with unclean equipment	Use different chopping boards/utensils for different food groups to prevent cross contamination and wash the chopping boards. Clean a kitchen thoroughly. A cleaning schedule should be put in place and a 'clean as you go' policy



CAUSE	PREVENTION
Somebody who is ill or has not washed their hands and is handling food	Washing hands before and during food preparation is crucial for preventing bacteria spreading around the kitchen, to other foods and preventing cross-contamination.
Food that has been eaten after its 'use by' date	The ' use by ' date is aimed at consumers and shows by what date a product should be eaten by. After this date, the product is not safe to consume and should not be distributed.
Food that has not been washed properly	Wash fresh produce such as fresh fruit and vegetables but do not wash meat, poultry or eggs. You must wash leafy vegetables and salad even if they look clean as they host parasites and bacteria such as E. coli.

Foods items can become contaminated however, food banks can put some controls in place.

As best practice, anyone making or donating foods for a food bank should label it appropriately, saying what the item is, the date it was produced, and include details of any allergens so that individuals with food hypersensitivities can avoid it.

To ensure traceability and food safety at your throughout the whole supply chain consider keeping the following logs:

- Product Temperature Log and Rejection Log
- Receiving / Transporting Agency Temperature Log
- Refrigerated Storage Daily Temperature Log

Food allergens

Allergenic contamination occurs when a food that causes an allergic reaction comes into contact with another food. Allergenic contaminant can cause abnormal immune system in certain people. Extreme care should be taken when dealing with allergens and preparing food for someone with a food allergy.

In terms of [the law](#), there are 14 allergens that food businesses are required to declare. These include the more common ones such as nuts, peanuts, milk and eggs and the unusual ones including lupin, celery, mustard and sulphites.

Food establishments in the retail and catering sectors are required to:

- Provide allergen information to their customers
- Handle and manage food allergens effectively in food preparation.

Whilst any food can cause an allergic reaction, by law, food businesses are required to tell their customers if any food they provide contains any of the 14 allergens as these are identified as most commonly causing food allergies.

It is important for food handlers to take steps to avoid cross-contamination when preparing food to protect customers with food allergies. This is because allergic reactions to food can be triggered by only a tiny amount of an allergen.

Food allergen Information and controls for caterers

People with food allergies have to take great care when eating out to avoid certain foods that could cause them harm. As a business you have a legal obligation to ensure that any food you produce or prepare is **safe**. This is so they can make an informed choice about what to eat.

You have a legal obligation to provide information to consumers on the allergens that are in the food you supply.



Peanuts



Nuts



Crustaceans



Molluscs



Fish



Eggs



Milk



Cereals
Containing
Gluten



Soya



Sesame
Seeds



Celery



Mustard



Lupin



Sulphur
Dioxide



- ## How to prevent cross-contamination?

- Always refer to the Allergen Matrix to the left when dealing with food.

Review date:

Reviewed by:

Checklist for community food providers

SAFETY CHECKLIST	YES/NO (if not applicable leave blank)
Food item being donated	
Foodbank details (contact name, number, address including postcode, email)	
Time/date of completing the checklist, receiving the donation, and handing it out to the community members?	Time/date of completion: Time/date of donation (if possible): Time/date of handing the donation to the community:
Storage (high risk foods that require extensive hygiene and temperature control)	
Is the ready-to-eat food being stored above/separate from raw food in the fridges and freezers?	
Was the food stored in an appropriate temperature in a freezer/fridge? Is that recorded in your documentation?	
Is food in fridges/freezers covered?	
Are the fridges maintained and cleaned on a regular basis?	
Storage (medium risk foods)	
Are dried goods stored correctly e.g. in a suitable room, off the floor, in covered containers?	
Is the packaging intact?	
Is ready to eat food packaged and labelled?	



Preparation		
Are controls in place to prevent contamination by chemicals/ foreign bodies e.g. glass, packaging materials, bolts, rust, cleaning chemicals?		
Are separate utensils and equipment used for ready-to-eat foods unless disinfected in a dishwasher? Is the dishwasher in good working order and regularly serviced?		
Is colour coded equipment is provided (e.g. utensils, chopping boards), is it correctly used?		
Are vegetables/fruit/salads/ trimmed and washed thoroughly before donations unless labelled as 'ready-to-eat'?		
Are controls being followed to ensure staff wash hands after handling raw food and before touching surfaces?		
Are ready-to-eat foods prepared in separate clean areas?		
Do separate staff handle ready-to-eat food or are controls being followed to ensure staff change clothing and wash hands before handling ready-to-eat food?		
Temperature control		
Is a separate probe thermometer used for ready-to-eat foods and properly cleaned/disinfected before use?		
Are frozen foods defrosted safely?		
Is food cooled as quickly as possible away from raw food and other sources of contamination?		
Equipment time/temperature combinations regularly cross-checked?		
At the point of cooking did the food reach 70°C for 2 minutes?		
Food has been reheated appropriately as per FSA regulations?		
Is it possible to ensure that the food stays cooled (between 0°C and 5°C) or frozen (-18°C and -22°C) throughout the entire process of reaching the intended person?		
Is it possible to ensure cooked food stays at 63°C or above during the donation process (if not it should be consumed within two hours)?		



Packaging/delivering		
Is the label included with the donation?		
Is the packaging sufficient and appropriate?		
Is the packaging damaged?		
Is unfit food clearly labelled and stored separately from other foods?		
Personal hygiene		
Are hot water, liquid soap and disposable towels available in the premises?		
Does staff training take place and is this documented?		
Do staff members maintain satisfactory levels of hygiene?		

Food delivery

- If you are donating/picking up hot food, you must ensure the food is kept hot until it is donated e.g. using clean insulated delivery bags
- If you are providing meals that the member of the community can re-heat themselves, you must provide the correct storage and cooking instructions with the food
- You must provide consumers with the correct allergen information on request. Pre-packed foods must have the allergen information supplied with it.
- Foods must be protected from any risk of contamination during delivery e.g. using clean vehicles and transport containers

Additional information



List of supporting documents and useful resources

WHO IS IT FOR?	DOCUMENTS	SOURCE	WHAT DOES THE DOCUMENT PROVIDE?
Food Donors	Food Redistribution and Labelling Checklist	WRAP	This checklist highlights the essential labelling-related requirements for safely and legally redistributing surplus food, and the additional requirements when freezing food to be redistributed.
	Framework for Effective redistribution partnerships	WRAP	Information sheet for both the food surplus provider and recipient organisations as a contribution to the smoother running of food redistribution arrangements
	Guidance on the freezing down of chilled and ambient product to preserve life	WRAP	Information on suitability of chilling different types of food products and associated temperatures.
	Redistribution Guidance for Hospitality	Sustainable Restaurant Association	Diagram to work out which food surplus solution would suit you best
	Surplus Food Redistribution Guide	Zero Waste Scotland	Guidance on what food can be redistributed
	Readiness to Supply Declaration: For Food Surplus Providers	Zero Waste Scotland	Information sheet for the food surplus provider and recipient organisations as a contribution to the smoother running of food redistribution arrangements
Food Redistribution Coordinators	Redistribution Partnership Arrangement	Zero Waste Scotland	Template for food redistribution partnership agreement between a donor and a recipient.
	Food Redistribution Product List	WRAP	Guidelines for different product distribution based on the 'Best Before' or 'Best Before End' date.
Food Surplus recipients (community food provisions)	Managing food safety for charity food providers	Food Standards Agency	Food Safety Management Guidance (including information on allergens, use-by and best before dates, labelling non-prepacked food, foods requiring special attention and traceability)
	Storing and freezing food safely	Food Standards Agency	Guidance on how to store food to keep it safe to eat.
	Transporting food safely	Food Standards Agency	Guidance for transporting food to the recipient.
	Training for charity food providers	Food Standards Agency	List of available training for charity food providers.
	Readiness to Receive Declaration	Zero Waste Scotland	Information sheet for the food surplus recipient organisations as a contribution to the smoother running of food redistribution arrangements
	Useful Information for Community Food Members	FareShare Midlands	This document is a summary of key and useful information which we hope will provide advice & direction around a host of food supply scenarios.





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