

How to Safely Recover Food

GROCERY STORES, SUPERMARKETS

FOLLOWING THESE PRACTICES CAN HELP YOU SAFELY RECOVER YOUR SURPLUS FOOD, IN COMPLIANCE WITH NEW STATE LAW SENATE BILL 1383 AND LOCAL ORDINANCES. ITEMS MARKED WITH A ^ ARE NECESSARY TO COMPLY WITH THESE LAWS (IF YOUR GROCERY OR SUPERMARKET IS LARGER THAN 10,000 SQ FEET OR HAS A REVENUE OF \$2 MILLION OR LARGER).

STOP WASTE FROM THE START!

- Evaluate your methods for inventory management and tracking overproduction. Consider investing in software or staff time to reduce shrinkage. Track these items and only make as much as you can sell. This will reduce waste and inventory costs.
- Consider using signage to explain to customers why certain waste-reducing measures, such as limiting offerings at the end of service, have been implemented.
- Set up a discount shelf or sign up with a third-party surplus food marketing service for ripe, near-to-expiration, discontinued, or slightly damaged food. Clarify date labeling/encoding and provide clear communication about this reduced-price section to customers.
- Consider making surplus food available to staff.

PLAN YOUR LOGISTICS

- ^Contract with a Food Recovery Organization or Service (FRO/S) that is a 501(c)(3) to comply with the CA Dept. of Education and USDA Guidance on donating surplus food. Please visit Zero Waste Sonoma for a list of available organizations: <https://zerowastesonoma.gov/materials/food>
- ^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 make an extra-large donation, so they are prepared to collect or receive and redistribute surplus food.
- Establish a dedicated area (in compliance with CalCode) for storing and labeling (with date and contents) food designated for donation.
- Properly depackage and compost any inedible food or food scraps that are not safe or suitable for food recovery.
- Be ready for inspections, if necessary.
- You must recover the maximum amount of edible surplus food.

SECURE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT

- Food-safe containers or transport bags*
- Dedicated refrigerator/freezer space
- Labeling and recordkeeping supplies
- Scale, if you are tracking the weight of donated foods (some FRO/S will track and/or weigh for you)

*Check the packaging preferences of your FRO/S partner. Ideally, find an FRO/S that will work with reusable containers. Reusable containers can be a significant cost-saver and are better for the environment.

^These items are necessary to comply with these laws.



[WWW.ZEROWASTESONOMA.GOV/
MATERIALS/FOOD](https://www.zerowastesonoma.gov/materials/food)

CONFIRM YOUR FRO/S'S SPECIFIC DONATION POLICIES. YOU MAY ALSO USE THE INFORMATION BELOW AS A GUIDE:

CAN BE DONATED:

- Surplus pre-packaged entrees, with labeling intact
- Surplus prepared foods kept at safe temperatures or cooled down (per CalCode protocol), and labeled with date and contents
- Unbitten, uncut fruits with a peel*, including lightly bruised or soft produce
- Fresh foods or foods frozen on or before the date on the package
- Unopened canned/dry-packaged food, securely sealed and dated appropriately, with labeling intact
- Food near quality expiration dates

CANNOT BE DONATED:

- Contaminated: bad odor, discoloration, moldy and/or bulging packaging
- Packaging is torn, contaminated, and has holes, dents, or broken seals*
- Food not in its original packaging and missing ingredient label and/or a date (N/A for produce)
- Packaged foods previously served
- Perishable foods that were not held at safe temperatures

*Fruits with edible peels (e.g., apples, pears) must be washed prior to re-distribution.

*Some dented cans are safe to donate. See Pocket Guide to Can Defects for info.



DETERMINE WHAT TO DONATE AND 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.
- Package donations in sanitary, food-grade containers or bags. Do not mix different foods in the same container or bag.
- Label containers with type of food and date prepared/stored.
- Donate food nearest its expiration date first.
- For specific questions regarding food safety, contact the **County of Sonoma Department of Health Services, Environmental Health and Safety Section.**

**County of Sonoma Department
of Health Services, Environmental
Health and Safety Section**
Phone: (707) 565-6565
EH@sonoma-county.org

KEEP RECORDS

- ^You must keep the following records onsite: a copy of your contract with each FRO/S, including types of food and frequency of collection or delivery, and pounds of food recovered per month.

FREE FOOD RECOVERY SOFTWARE AVAILABLE

- Zero Waste Sonoma has purchased a license for www.Careit.com, a food recovery software that matches donors with excess food to non-profit recipients to feed local residents in need. To sign up for a free Careit account, please visit my.careitapp.com/auth/register and sign up as a "Business."



FOR SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RELATED TO SB 1383 REGULATIONS,
PLEASE CONTACT ZERO WASTE SONOMA:

ZWS-SB1383@SONOMA-COUNTY.ORG

(707) 565-3375

WWW.ZEROWASTESONOMA.GOV



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