

How to Safely Recover Food

LARGE EVENT ORGANIZERS

FOLLOWING THESE PRACTICES CAN HELP YOU SAFELY RECOVER YOUR SURPLUS FOOD IN COMPLIANCE WITH SENATE BILL 1383 AND LOCAL ORDINANCES. ITEMS MARKED WITH A ^ ARE NECESSARY TO COMPLY WITH THESE LAWS.

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 or volunteers.
- Publicize your efforts through signage or by hosting a waste-cutting challenge for attendees (consider setting up a social media hashtag such as #NoWasteAt_____).

PLAN YOUR FOOD RECOVERY LOGISTICS

- ^ Contract with a Food Recovery Organization (FRO) well in advance of the event and provide estimates about the amount of surplus food you expect to have so that the organization can prepare to collect and redistribute it. Please visit Zero Waste Sonoma for a list of available organizations: <https://zerowastesonoma.gov/materials/food>
- ^ Work with your FRO to set up a recovery plan that considers storage space, timing, and other operations so that you can maximize food freshness and have it quickly redistributed. Establish a dedicated area (in compliance with CalCode) for storing and labeling (with date and contents) food designated for donation.
- Establish a staging area (in compliance with CalCode) for participating vendors. This can include: labels (for indicating date and contents), refrigerated and shelf-stable storage space, and packaging.
- Ensure that vendors 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

- Ensure that vendors are following standard safety and food handling protocol per CalCode for all food, whether it's intended for sale or recovery.
- For specific questions regarding food safety, contact the **County of Sonoma Department of Health Services, Environmental Health and Safety Section.**

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.

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

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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