

# Guidelines on Food Donation

A public health document prepared by:



*Guidelines on Food Donation*  
*For latest updates, please refer to [www.nea.gov.sg](http://www.nea.gov.sg)*

<b>Intended Audience</b>	All organisations who intend to donate, prepare, cook and/or transport food for the needy.
<b>Legal Status</b>	This guideline should be read in conjunction with legislation and is intended to help people comply with the law and regulations, where applicable.
<b>Last Review Date</b>	24 Oct 2016

## INTRODUCTION

In Singapore, the donation of food to the needy by various organisations (e.g. food manufacturers, F&B retail establishments, non-governmental/profit, organisations, etc.) may consist of the following operations:

- a) donating/collecting and redistributing pre-packed (not easily perishable) food items (e.g. canned food, instant noodles, rice, flour, sugar, dry beans, salt, jam, sauce) and perishable food items (e.g. bread, cakes and pastry);
- b) preparing and cooking food;
- c) transporting donated food to recipients.

Responsible organisations should ensure the wholesomeness of food donated and prepared so that recipients can benefit from the donated food.

This set of guidelines serves to assist organisations in providing safe food to the needy. Food that is not wholesome or prepared unhygienically can cause people who consume it to come down with foodborne illness. As the sick, young, old and expecting women have lower immunity, they are more susceptible to foodborne illnesses. Hence it is important to exercise care when food is served to people with lower immunity.

## GUIDELINES

### **(A) Donation/Collection and Redistribution of Pre-packed (Not easily perishable) and Perishable Food**

1. Visually inspect the food to ensure that it is in a clean and wholesome condition. If in doubt, discard the food.
2. Pre-packed (not easily perishable) Food
  - i. Examples of pre-packed (not easily perishable) food include canned food, instant noodles, rice, flour, sugar, dry beans, salt, jam, sauce, etc.
  - ii. Only accept and redistribute pre-packed (not easily perishable) food in their sealed original enclosed packaging (properly labelled with food name, ingredients and expiry date). Ensure they are not expired and in good condition.
  - iii. Discard:
    - a. Food with mould, odd smell, discolouration, unusual product appearance/separation, and/or signs of insect infestation.
    - b. Food in cans that are swollen/bulging, deeply dented, rusty, leaking and/or with improperly formed or defective seam. A deep dent on a can often has sharp points and could affect the integrity of the can.
    - c. Food in glass or plastic containers with bulged, loose or crooked cap, leaks (e.g. stained label), cracks or chips on the containers.

3. Perishable Food
  - i. Bread, Cakes and Pastry
    - a. Limit redistribution to non-cream cakes, pastry without fillings and plain bread.
    - b. If expiry date is not provided, only collect and redistribute bread and pastry that are produced on the day of collection. It is recommended that organisations check and verify with donors that the donated baked items are produced on the same day of collection.
  - ii. Fresh Produce
    - a. Examples of fresh produce include shell eggs, vegetables, fruits and meat etc.
    - b. Upon receipt, check the colour and smell of the fresh produce. Chilled meat to be received and maintained at 4°C and below and frozen meat to be received and maintained at -12°C and below.
    - c. Discard:
      - Fresh produce that are mouldy, slimy, dried out, wrinkled, smell bad, and/or with excessive bruises/scars/soft spots.
      - Potatoes that are green.
      - Raw meat that is discoloured, gives out rotten meat odour and/or with significant amount of blood/liquid found in the package.

## **(B) Preparation and Cooking of Food**

1. The kitchen should have/be:
  - i. Adequate number of sinks with potable water for the purpose of food preparation and washing.
  - ii. Proper hand washing facilities with soap and paper towels provided for all food handlers.
  - iii. Adequate working space for proper handling and segregation of raw and cooked food.
  - iv. Adequate refrigeration and cooking equipment.
  - v. Adequate pedal-operated refuse bins lined with plastic bags.
  - vi. Pest-proof with proper pest management.
  - vii. Clean before and after food preparation.
2. Safe Food Handling Practices:
  - i. Training
    - a. It is recommended that persons involve in food preparation undergo the Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) on Basic Food Hygiene Course to learn and practise good hygiene and food safety measures.

- ii. Personal Hygiene
  - a. People who are ill should not handle or prepare food. Any cut on the hand should be covered by a clean, brightly-coloured bandage.
  - b. All food handlers should wash their hands:
    - After using the toilet
    - Before starting work
    - After handling raw food
    - Before handling cooked/ready-to-eat food
    - After cleaning duties
    - After handling waste
    - In between tasks
  - c. Do not use bare hands to handle cooked/ready-to-eat food. Wear clean disposable gloves or use clean utensils to handle cooked/ready-to-eat food. Change gloves regularly, especially after different tasks and when they are torn or soiled. Clean clothing should be worn by food handlers.
  - d. Food handlers should refrain from behaviour that could cause contamination to food, for example, smoking, spitting, eating, sneezing or coughing when handling or preparing food.
  - e. Jewellery and accessories should not be worn when handling or preparing food.
  - f. No personal belongings should be kept in production areas.
- iii. Food Storage
  - a. Pre-packed (Not easily perishable) Food
    - Store pre-packed (not easily perishable) food items in a designated storage place according to the instructions on the product label or by the manufacturer.
    - Keep doors, windows and roofs well sealed to prevent pest entry.
    - Place the food products in a first expired first out (FEFO) manner, so that food with the nearest expiry date is always used/ distributed first.
    - Store food 15cm from the floor and away from the walls, e.g. store on shelves or racks to carry out easy cleaning.
    - Store non-food items, such as liquid soap, detergent and pesticides, separate and away from food items.
    - Clean the storage area, including the floor and shelves, regularly.
    - Perform periodic checks (e.g. monthly) to ensure all food products are safe for use. Expired food products should be disposed of immediately.
  - b. Fresh Produce
    - Store frozen food in a freezer at -12°C or below.
    - Store chilled food in a chiller at between 0°C and 4°C.
    - Check temperature of the chiller and freezer regularly.
    - Always store raw food below cooked/ready-to-eat food to prevent juices from raw food dripping onto cooked/ready-to-eat food.

- Do not over-stuff the chiller and freezer.
  - Clean and maintain chiller and freezer, including the rubber lining regularly.
- iv. Food Preparation
    - a. Thaw frozen food:
      - in the chiller
      - in the microwave oven
      - in their original sealed packaging under running water
    - b. Do not refreeze thawed food.
    - c. Use different colour-coded utensils, chopping board and knives for handling raw/uncooked food and cooked/ready-to-eat food.
    - d. Wash all vegetables and fruits properly, especially if these are to be eaten raw.
    - e. Do not prepare food on the floor or in the toilet. Water from the toilet should not be used for food preparation.
  - v. Cooking
    - a. Cook food thoroughly. Cook meat to an internal temperature of 75°C.
    - b. Reheat food thoroughly before serving. Cooked food should not be reheated more than once.
    - c. Cover cooked/ready-to-eat food.
    - d. Place cooked/ready-to-eat food in clean containers or packages.
  - vi. Cleaning
    - a. Thoroughly wash and sanitize surfaces that have come in contact with raw food.
    - b. Clean all food contact surfaces, utensils, cutting boards and crockery before and after each task.
    - c. Dispose refuse in a pedal-operated refuse bin lined with plastic bag.
    - d. Empty refuse bin when it is three-quarter full and at the end of the day's operations.

### **(C) Transportation of Donated Food to Recipients**

1. Food Transport Vehicle
  - i. Transportation vehicle should be clean and should not be used to transport animals, hazardous chemicals or detergents, together with the food.
  - ii. Clean the transportation vehicles before and after every use.
2. Transportation of Raw Food Items
  - i. Maintain chilled meat at 4°C and below and frozen meat at -12°C and below.
3. Transportation of Cooked/Ready-to-eat Food
  - i. Food should be stored in clean containers.

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- ii. Avoid transporting cooked/ready-to-eat food together with raw food items.
- iii. Keep hot food above 60°C and cold food below 5°C. Food needs to be transported within the shortest time possible to reduce microbial growth
- iv. If cooked food is kept in the temperature danger zone of between 5°C and 60°C, the food should not be served after 4 hours of cooking.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF DONORS AND RECIPIENTS**

It is important that donors and recipients play their part to ensure overall food safety in the food donation supply chain. Key responsibilities of each party include the following:

1. Donors: Ensure that information on the source and condition of donated food, as well as measures to ensure its safe consumption is properly communicated to recipients. Ensure that donated food is held at appropriate temperatures and transported within the shortest time possible.
2. Recipients: Check the condition of the food upon receipt. Request for information on its source as well as measures to ensure safe consumption if they are not available.

## **MORE INFORMATION**

For more information on food hygiene guidelines, please visit the National Environment Agency's website at [www.nea.gov.sg](http://www.nea.gov.sg).