



# How to Safely Recover Food

## *Restaurants and Commercial Kitchens*

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!

- Evaluate your methods for tracking overproduction. Consider investing in software to track and reduce surplus and wasted food.
- Consider selling surpluses at a discount towards the end of meal service or prior to closing, to maximize the retail value of food before donating what's left.
- Consider displaying signage to explain to customers why certain changes that reduce waste, such as limiting offerings at the end of service, have been implemented.
- Experiment with options for smaller meal sizes and portions.
- Consider making surplus food available to staff.

### Plan Your Logistics

- ★ Contract with a Food Recovery Organization (FRO). Please visit [Resource.StopWaste.org/food-recovery-organizations](https://Resource.StopWaste.org/food-recovery-organizations) for a listing of available organizations.
- ★ Work with your FRO to set a schedule that meets storage space and operational needs while maximizing the freshness and amount of edible food for quick redistribution.
- 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 FROs will track and/or weigh for you)

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

## Determine What to Donate and Ensure 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 shallow, sanitary containers. Do not mix different foods in the same container.
- Label containers with type of food and date prepared/stored.
- Donate food nearest its expiration date first.

For specific questions about food safety, contact the [Alameda County Environmental Health Department](#) at 510-567-6700.

Confirm your FRO's specific donation policies. You may also use the information below as a rough guide, always deferring to food safety regulations in CalCode:

Potentially Donatable Foods	Foods that Cannot Be Donated
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unsold and unserved produce, dairy, meats held at safe temperatures</li> <li>● Fresh foods or foods frozen on or before the date on the package</li> <li>● Unopened canned/dry-packaged food, securely sealed and dated appropriately, with labeling intact</li> <li>● Food near quality expiration dates</li> <li>● Non-labeled food products with date and contents recorded</li> <li>● Surplus unserved prepared foods kept at safe temperatures or cooled down (per CalCode protocol), and labeled with date and contents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contaminated: bad odor, discoloration, moldy and/or bulging packaging</li> <li>● If packaging is torn, has holes, dents, or broken seals</li> <li>● Food not in its original packaging and missing ingredient label and/or a date (except fruit)</li> <li>● Foods previously served to consumer</li> <li>● Perishable foods that were not held at safe temperatures</li> </ul>

## Keep Records

- ★ You must keep the following records onsite: pounds of food recovered each month, a copy of your contract with each FRO, list of food types being recovered, and frequency of pickup/delivery.

Scan the QR code for more tips on tracking and preventing food waste.

