

CITY OF SANTA CLARITA

EDIBLE FOOD RECOVERY PROGRAM TRAINING GUIDE





Photo by Jkinsocal

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INTRODUCTION TO EDIBLE FOOD RECOVERY

Restaurants, grocery stores and supermarkets are in the business of selling food, not wasting it. But occasionally your business may have food that cannot be sold to customers, but is still safe to eat. Perhaps a prepared order is cancelled, a package has damage on the outside, produce is unattractive, a product is over-ordered or a freezer breaks down. Your business may find that you are left with food that is not sellable, but is definitely edible. When these situations arise, the food cannot be discarded. It must be donated.

These types of food donations are also referred to as “edible food recovery.” It is not the same as having a food drive or providing in-kind donations as an act of goodwill. Although these types of food donations are great, they are not required by law.

FOOD DONATION - IT'S THE LAW

California law requires your business to donate any food item that cannot be sold, but is still safe to be eaten. This includes foods from all departments and all food types. It is the responsibility of the business, with cooperation from its employees, to donate all excess edible food. Your business may have more specific guidelines and procedures for edible food donation. This guide is intended to inform staff in all positions and all departments how to safely and effectively donate edible food.

FOOD DONATION IN SANTA CLARITA

The City of Santa Clarita has many organizations that actively take donated food from businesses, such as yours, and make sure it gets into the hands of the members of your community that need it most. A State law called SB 1383 requires your business to recover and donate this food.

Donating edible food not only reduces harmful greenhouse gas emissions by keeping it out of the landfill, but it also feeds members of your community that may be food-insecure.

The business you work for is required to donate all excess edible food for human consumption that would otherwise be disposed of under California state law Senate Bill 1383 and local laws. It is the responsibility of the store or restaurant, with cooperation from its employees, to donate all excess edible food. Please visit city.sc/organics for local food recovery organizations.

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

FOOD IS NOT TRASH



DID YOU KNOW?

Last year, Santa Clarita recovered **737,076 pounds** of edible food that would have otherwise gone to the landfill.

That is **614,230 meals** provided to your food-insecure community members!



UNDERSTANDING FOOD DONATION

YES		NO	
			
Surplus food	Expired/past "sell by" food	Organic waste (food scraps)	Food not fit to be consumed
			
Bulk food	Damaged boxes	Open packaged food	Bulging cans

What type of food can be donated?

All foods that remain edible but are no longer sellable, with the exception of expired baby food and baby formula. This includes frozen foods, meat, seafood, eggs, dairy, cold deli, produce, bakery, shelf-stable, dented cans or other damaged products where the food has not been spoiled, exposed, rotten or in any way unsafe to consume.

What is "edible food"?

Edible food is any food product that is not fit for sale, but is still safe to eat. This includes foods from all departments and all food types.

What happens to the food that is donated?

Recovered food is collected by a designated Food Recovery Organization where it is sorted and distributed to the food-insecure population of Santa Clarita.

Will anyone be checking to see if our business is donating the maximum amount of edible food?

Yes. The City of Santa Clarita and/or their contractors will be performing site visits and inspections to ensure you are adhering to all requirements of SB 1383 and local ordinances.

Please visit city.sc/organics for local food recovery organizations.

These are City of Santa Clarita guidelines. Check with your store management for specific food donation requirements.



KNOWING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ORGANIC WASTE AND EDIBLE FOOD



Is it okay to throw away edible food, if I put it in the green/food waste/organics bin?

No. If the food being disposed of is edible, it must be donated. All food that is not fit to be eaten should be disposed of in the green organic waste bin, where it will be processed into compost.

It is okay to donate our excess food to a farm or for animal feed?

No. Non-edible food scraps are acceptable to be donated as animal feed. However, all food that is considered edible must be donated to a Food Recovery Organization.

What are some examples of non-edible food waste?

Trimnings from food prep, left-overs from customers, food that has been contaminated, left out of proper temperature or returned from customers should be discarded into the green bin.

What are some examples of edible food waste?

Food products that have been damaged but still sealed, “ugly” produce, products past their “best-by” date, left-over prepared foods that cannot be sold, orders that were prepared but not picked up (still in safe temperature). Basically, any food item that is not acceptable to sell, but still safe and acceptable to eat.

What if someone claims that our donation made them sick? Am I liable?

No. All good-faith donations are protected by The Good Samaritan Law and the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act.



COULD ANY OF THIS DISCARDED FOOD HAVE BEEN DONATED?



UNDERSTANDING DATE LABELS

DID YOU KNOW?

Expiration, sell-by, best-by or use-by dates are completely up to the food manufacturer, and are not an indicator that the food is no longer safe to eat. California law requires food to be donated regardless of the label date (with the exception of baby food and baby formula).

Every year, tons of edible food is discarded because of confusion over these date labels.



HELPFUL TIP: Not sure if a product is safe to donate? Trust your eyes and nose. Smells good? Looks good? Good to donate!



"BEST IF USED BY / BEFORE" DATE:

Indicates when a product will be of best flavor or quality. It is not a safety date.



"SELL BY" DATE:

Tells the store how long to display the product for sale for inventory management. It is not a safety date.

"USE BY" DATE:

The last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. If handled properly, it may still be safe to eat past this point.

"EXPIRATION" DATE:

Applies to certain products like baby food/formula, vitamins, medicines. If expired, discard the product; it cannot be donated or sold.

WHAT IS NOT DONATABLE?

- Moldy, rotten, contaminated foods or foods that have been left out of temperature
- Items from self-serve stations, salad bars or buffets
- Items returned from customers
- Baby food and baby formula past its expiration date



These are City of Santa Clarita guidelines. Check with your store management for specific food donation requirements.



UNDERSTANDING FOOD DONATION

Many non-perishable items are safe to donate long after the date on their packaging. Shelf life of refrigerated and frozen foods can be extended if they are handled properly and kept in temperature. The table below can be used as a general reference of how long certain foods can still be safe for consumption past its “best by” date.

FOOD ITEM	SHELF LIFE AFTER CODE DATE
SHELF STABLE	
Canned good (low acidity)	3 years
Canned good (high acidity)	18 months
Dry beans, pasta, rice, ramen	2 years
Boxed/bagged goods (cereal, crackers, mixes, etc.)	1 year
Sauces, condiments, dressings	1 year
Beverages	1 year
Chips	2 months
Mayonnaise, cream based items	3 months
Baby food/adult formula	discard after date
FROZEN	
All assorted meats/poultry	2 months
Fruit/vegetables	6 months
Ice cream	2 months
DAIRY/COOLER	
Juice	3 weeks
Milk	1 week
Cheese	1 week (soft) 1 month (hard)
Eggs	3 weeks
Yogurt, sour cream, dips	2 weeks
Salsa, pesto	discard after date
Hummus	1 week
Prepared dishes or meals	3 days
Salads	3 days
PRODUCE	
Packaged produce (bagged lettuce, etc.)	determine by visual inspection
Cut produce	determine by visual inspection
BREAD/PASTRY	
Fresh	4 days
Frozen	1 month
Containing cream	throw away if not kept refrigerated/frozen

Source: Feeding America

These are City of Santa Clarita guidelines. Check with your store management for specific food donation requirements.



PREPARING FOOD FOR DONATION



How do I prepare food for donation?

1 Sort and Seal

- Check that items are sealed and not severely damaged.
- Group items by storage temperature: frozen, refrigerated and room temperature.

2 Store Appropriately

- **Frozen Items:** Store frozen items at 0°F or below.
- **Refrigerated Items:** Store refrigerated items at 41°F or below.
- **Room Temperature Items:** Designate a labeled donation shelf or cart in a clean, dry area.

What are the steps for packaging already prepared food for donation?

1 Ensure food is safe to eat and has been stored at the proper temperature.

- Freezing prepared foods is a best practice for donation.
- PHF/TCS food must cool to 70°F within 2 hours and then to 41°F within 4 hours.

2 Label Containers

- Clearly label containers with the contents, preparation date and any allergen information.

Keep Items Separated

- ### 3
- Do not directly mix different types of meats or foods in aluminum trays, quart containers or plastic bags.

Am I responsible for delivering the food?

No! Your Food Recovery Organization will schedule recurring pick-ups or pick-up food on an as-needed basis. If your business has the ability to deliver or if your volume does not support weekly pickups, most local food recovery organizations would gladly accept donation deliveries! Your business can develop a system that works best for ensuring that the maximum amount of edible food is recovered.

These are City of Santa Clarita guidelines. Check with your store management for specific food donation requirements.



STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO DONATING FOOD

STEP 1: Set-up Donation Pick-up

- Management can set up a recurring donation pick-up or drop off with a local Food Recovery Organization (Visit city.sc/organics or see Edible Food Donation Packet provided by the City of Santa Clarita for a list of local organizations).
- Designate a notebook or binder for keeping receipts and tracking donations in pounds per month.
- Only need occasional donation pick-ups? You can use an app like Carelt to set up an account so you are prepared to donate when needed.

STEP 2: Label and Store Items Properly

- Clearly label a specific area in the back-of-house for dry good donations using signs provided by the City of Santa Clarita (or similar), on the shelves in the walk-in cooler for refrigerated items and freezer for frozen donation.
- To extend the life of fresh produce, place in refrigerator.
- Refrigerate items at 41°F (5°C) or below. Frozen items should be kept in the freezer at 0°F (-18°C) or below.

STEP 3: Educate Management and Staff

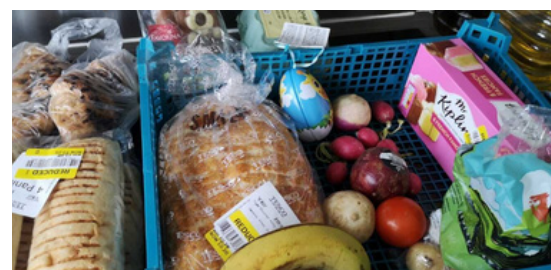
- Ensure department heads and employees are aware of SB 1383 requirements and best practices. Educate staff on the location of donation areas. Use this training guide!

STEP 4: Designate Record Keeper

- Designate an employee or manager to keep donation records on-site and available for inspections. Make sure you are tracking donations in pounds per month and have records available either on paper or electronically for inspections.

STEP 5: Train New Staff

- Review this packet, or your company supplied training manual, with all new-hires to ensure you are donating the maximum amount of edible food in compliance with SB 1383.



Thank you for doing your part to donate food to those in need in Santa Clarita.

These are City of Santa Clarita guidelines. Check with your store management for specific food donation requirements.



MORE RESOURCES & CONTACT INFORMATION

Information on Liability Protections

- **Good Samaritan Law:** provides liability protections for entities that make good faith donations of surplus food. ([usda.gov/about-usda/news/blog/2020/08/13/good-samaritan-act-provides-liability-protection-food-donations](https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/blog/2020/08/13/good-samaritan-act-provides-liability-protection-food-donations))
- **Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act:** [congress.gov/104/crpt/hrpt661/CRPT-104hrpt661.pdf](https://www.congress.gov/104/crpt/hrpt661/CRPT-104hrpt661.pdf)

Information on California Food Donation Law:

- **CalRecycle:** calrecycle.ca.gov/organics/slcp/foodrecovery
- **Santa Clarita Food Recovery Video:** youtube.com/watch?v=RgJiVeOo5_Y

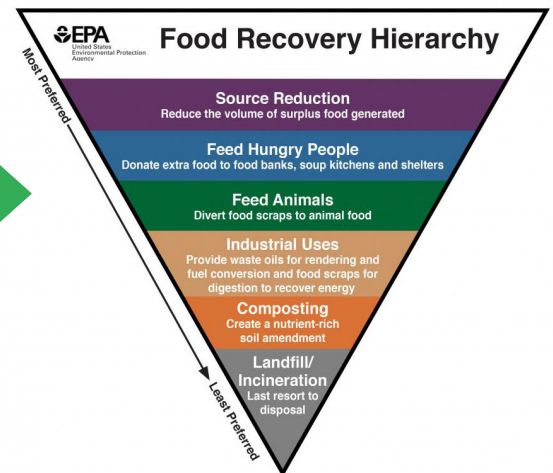
Information on Food Recovery Apps:

- **Careit Food Donation App:** careit.com
- **Eleplate Food Donation App:** eleplate.org

Surplus Food Sale Apps

- **FlashFood App:** flashfood.com
- **Too Good To Go:** toogoodtogo.com/en-us

EPA'S FOOD RECOVERY HIERARCHY



Thank you for making a difference!

For questions or more information, contact:

City of Santa Clarita

Phone: (661) 286-4098

Email: Environment@santaclarita.gov

Website: [GreenSantaClarita.com](https://www.GreenSantaClarita.com)