

Food Donation Resources

Call the county's recycling hotline for information on food donation, a free audit, or assistance with starting up a program. ¡Se Habla Español!



(1-877-713-2784)

Learn more online at:
www.sandiegocounty.gov/gov/dpw

Ready to donate right now?
Great! Pick up the phone!

Feeding America San Diego (858) 452-3663

San Diego Food Bank (858) 527-1419

North County Food Bank (760) 761-1140

Why Donate Food?

In addition to disposal cost savings and potential tax deductions for your business, you can help reduce food insecurities and the amount of food waste going to the landfills.

What Foods can be Donated?

Almost anything you serve or sell, including canned and packaged foods with expired dates,* produce and prepared foods. Contact your local food bank or pantry for a complete list.

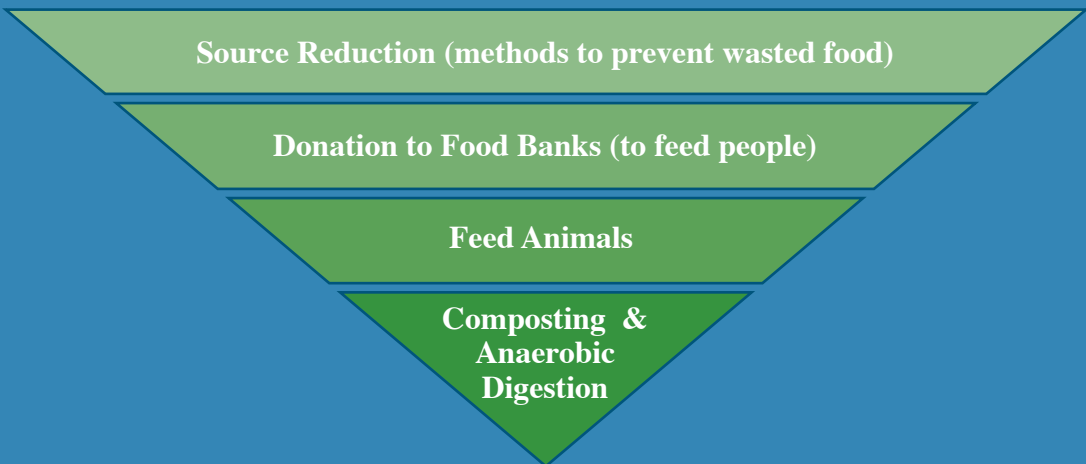
*Infant formula is the only exception, and cannot be served after its use by date.



Too Good to Waste!



Hierarchy of Best Management Practices



A Food Donation Guide for Businesses in the County of San Diego

Made possible by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency.



Source Reduction First!

Following are some tips for restaurants, markets and other businesses serving or selling food. Preventing lost food before it happens is the safest, easiest and most cost effective method to minimize waste.

Step 1: Conduct an assessment of the food you’re throwing away

- Use helpful tools developed by the U.S. EPA (epa.gov) to conduct an audit of the food you’re wasting. Other useful websites and software programs can be found online.
- Try tracking wasted food for a couple of days (pick one busy day and one less busy day), and based on results...

Step 2: Implement strategies to reduce waste

- Adjust your menu or sales inventory to reduce foods that are frequently wasted.
- Change food preparation methods to minimize waste, such as reducing portion sizes.
- Maximize use of the food you serve. For example, leftover bread can be made into croutons and unserved vegetables and trimmings can be made into a soup stock or sauce.
- Store food in sealed, labeled containers and at proper temperatures to reduce spoilage.
- Serve leftover or surplus food (while always following food safety guidelines!) to employees.
- Put items nearing their expiration date on sale.
- Rotate perishable stock at every delivery.



Food past its expiration date? It’s probably still servable...

Unless it’s infant formula, there’s a good chance that food products past their expiration date are still donatable. Contact your local food bank to learn more.

Food Donation Tips

Partner with a Pantry

The key to a successful food donation program is developing a good working relationship with your local food bank or pantry. In addition to providing food safe containers for hot or cold items, they will also pick-up your donations for free.

Ask the pantry or food bank you’re working with for a contact name of a similar business donating food and talk to them.

Start Small

- Begin by donating the easiest, most accessible items such as packaged or canned foods past their expiration dates.
- Once up and running, strive to establish a consistent, organized schedule of pick-ups (or deliveries if you decide to transport donations yourself).

Track Results

- Tracking pounds of food donated (provided for free by most food donation organizations) can allow you to calculate disposal cost savings, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, and social benefits to your community.
- Online programs and software are available to help you track source reduction (and save money) too!

Donating Food Safely

Food Handling Safety

- Donating food in a responsible manner begins with overall safe food handling.
- Always keep food at safe temperatures and out of the danger zone... Cold food should be kept below 41°F, frozen food at 32°F or less, and hot food 135°F or higher.
- Ensure every refrigerator has an accurate thermometer placed near the door on the top shelf.
- After heating, cooking or hot holding, potentially hazardous foods must be rapidly cooled from 135°F to 70°F within two hours, and from 70°F to 41°F within four hours.
- Rapidly reheat food using cooking equipment or the microwave to an internal temperature of 165°F within two hours.
- Always use safe food handling practices like hand washing and avoiding cross contamination.

Package and Cool Perishables

Use food safe containers for perishable food to be donated and store in a refrigerator or freezer.

Be Safe!

The County of San Diego has developed a food handling for donation checklist. Ask your inspector for a copy.



Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act

“A person or gleaner shall not be subject to civil or criminal liability arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of apparently wholesome food or an apparently fit grocery product that the person or gleaner donates in good faith to a nonprofit organization for ultimate distribution to needy individuals.”

Protection from Liability

California Health and Safety Code Section 114433

“No food facility that donates food shall be subject to civil or criminal liability or penalty for violation of any laws, regulations, or ordinances...for a violation occurring after the time of donation.”

California Civil Code Section 1714.25

“(a) Except for injury resulting from negligence or a willful act in the preparation or handling of donated food, no food facility that donates any food that is fit for human consumption at the time it was donated to a nonprofit charitable organization or a food bank shall be liable for any damage or injury resulting from the consumption of the donated food.”

Potential Tax Deduction Too!

The Internal Revenue Code (IRC) section 170 "Allowable Deduction for Charitable Donations to ordinary Income Property" encourage donations by allowing C corporations to earn an enhanced tax deduction for donating selected surplus property, including food.