



How to Safely Recover Food

Large Event - Vendors

Following these practices can help you safely recover your surplus food. The organizer of your event may also ask you to do certain additional tasks to support their compliance with Senate Bill 1383 and local ordinances.

Stop waste from the start!

- Conduct a food waste audit. Evaluate your methods for tracking overproduction and use that information to save money and be eco-smart by producing only the amount of food needed.
- Consider reducing prices on unsold food at the end of the day.
- Train staff on proper food storage, waste separation, and knife skills to reduce food waste.
- Publicize your efforts through signage or by hosting a waste-cutting challenge for attendees (consider setting up a social media hashtag such as #NoWasteAt_____).

Determine What to Donate & Ensure Food Safety

- Ask the event organizer which Food Recovery Organization (FRO) they are working with to collect and redistribute surplus food.
- 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 your local Environmental Health Department:
envhealth@smcgov.org.

Confirm the FRO's specific food recovery policies. You may also use the information below as a rough guide, always defer to food safety regulations in [CalCode](#):

Potentially Donatable Foods from Commercial Kitchens	
Potentially Donatable Foods	Foods that Cannot Be Donated
• Unsold and unserved produce, dairy, and meats held at safe temperatures • 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 • Lightly bruised or soft produce • Non-labeled food products with date and contents recorded • Pre-packaged meals, sealed appropriately, with date and content labels • Surplus unserved prepared foods kept at safe temperatures or cooled down (per CalCode protocol), and labeled with date and contents	• Contaminated: bad odor, discoloration, moldy and/or bulging packaging • Packaging is torn, contaminated, has holes, dents, or broken seals • Food not in its original packaging and missing ingredient label and/or a date • Foods previously served to consumer • Perishable foods that were not held at safe temperatures
Mobile Food Facilities (MFF) and Temporary Food Facilities (TFF) have limitations. At the end of the day, potentially hazardous hot foods must be destroyed/composted.	

Keep Records

For SB 1383 compliance the large event organizer may ask you to maintain food donation records.

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

