

Food Safety

FOOD SAFETY AND SAFE HANDLING

In an effort to maintain the integrity of the food distributed by the Foodbank, while ensuring it remains healthy and safe for consumption, agencies must be trained in proper food storage and safe handling practices. Each partner agency agrees to observe safe food handling practices in transportation, storage, handling, and distribution of food and USDA commodities when the *Mid-Ohio Foodbank Partnership Agreement* was signed.

Staff and volunteers should avoid touching their face, hair, mouth, or any other part of their body when in food prep areas. Hands will need to be washed when anything other than food or utensils are handled during prep.

Hairnets should be worn in appropriate areas to reduce food contamination. Any cuts or wounds should be covered with a bandage and disposable gloves need to be worn. Gloves should be changed as often as necessary when the gloves become soiled or contaminated. Gloves need to be replaced under the same circumstances as hand washing protocol: after preparing food, serving food, handling raw meat, handling dirty dishes or utensils, or after handling garbage. Hands should always be washed prior to putting on gloves.

FOOD STORAGE

All food storage areas must provide protection from elements such as weather, fire, theft and pests. Aisles between pallets or shelving should be wide enough to provide easy access for retrieving product, inventory, and inspection purposes. Doors, windows, and roofs should be well sealed to prevent pests from entering your storage facility, and to protect from water damage. A secure, dedicated food storage facility with adequate capacity should be available. It must be safe, sanitary, and dry to ensure the integrity of the food until used or distributed. Food should never be stored in any area that is not specifically designated as a food storage area, such as a bathroom or hallway.

All food must be stored at least four inches from the floor, ceiling and walls. Storing food on pallets, platforms or shelves can help prevent pests and protects the food from anything that may be spilled on the floor or potential floods. Keeping food situated away from the ceiling and walls will allow for proper air circulation, while preventing possible mold or mildew from coming into contact with food.

Limit the height at which food is stacked on shelves and pallets to protect the bottom layer of product from being crushed. Ignoring this recommendation can present potential safety hazard if the food were to fall over and cause injuries to staff, clients or volunteers.

All toxic products such as cleaning and maintenance supplies need to be stored away from all food items. This will help avoid the possibility of cross-contamination. It is highly recommended that any chemical based product be stored on a designated shelving unit away from edible items, or stored in a different area of the facility.

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INVENTORY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

Typically, agencies have approximately three months' worth of food in stock at any given time to avoid food spoilage. To help assure the quality of the food distributed to clients, please rotate stock regularly to reduce the potential of product expiring. Date each case of product as soon as it is received, and utilize the FIFO (first in first out) method when stocking shelves and putting new product away. Older dates on stock should be placed up front, and used before product with newer dates. To learn more about expiration/best buy/and storing of perishables, here is a useful guide: [The Food Keeper: A Consumer to Guide to Food Quality and Safe Handling](#)

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Functional thermometers must be present and visible in all storage areas. Temperature logs can show discrepancies in climate over a period of time, fluctuating temperatures can be a sign of malfunctioning equipment which may need repaired or replace.

Temperature logs should be maintained for dry, refrigerated and frozen storage. The log should document date and time recorded current registered temperature, and Initials of the person checking the temperatures. This log is an important document to support the ongoing maintenance of proper storage conditions, and the temperature should be recorded each day the program is open.

All feeding programs are required to record temperatures in the dry, refrigerated and frozen storage areas. The temperature should be captured with a properly calibrated thermometer in both the refrigerated and frozen storage areas. This information should be updated every

day the program is operational. During a site visit, Foodbank staff will request these records to ensure safe food temperatures are being maintained throughout all storage areas at each site. Just like all other records, this information must remain on file for a period of five consecutive years. Improper food storage temperatures must be addressed immediately by the site, as it is a serious food safety violation and can impact the integrity of the food being distributed.

Storage Area	Temperature Log
Refrigerators	33° F -40° F
Freezers	0° F or below
Dry Storage	50° F -75° F

DAMAGED PRODUCT PROTOCOL

It is not uncommon for food banks to receive product that may be damaged in some way. Feeding America sets standards for acceptable and unacceptable container defects when it comes to damaged goods. Mid-Ohio Foodbank trains volunteers to properly identify products that do not meet the compliance standards and guidelines set by Feeding America. Those products are discarded and only acceptable products are admitted into our warehouse for distribution. If damaged or infested products have been received from the Foodbank, do not discard the product, please contact Orders and Customer Service **614.317.9426** immediately.



EXPIRATION DATES

Many food products are safe to eat beyond the sell-by date printed on the package, but manufacturers' policies dictate that these foods be removed from retail outlets. The Foodbank is still able to distribute many of those items.

Mid-Ohio Foodbank works actively to ensure the quality of donated product, however agencies should always inspect product as it comes in to their facility. **Please discard any expired medicine and baby food, including formula. Since they cannot be distributed past best by dates.**

FACILITY MAINTENANCE

Equipment and food storage facilities should be clean and well maintained. It is important to ensure all food is stored in a safe manner, and that any equipment such as refrigerators or freezers work properly to keep food safe for consumption.

CLEAN STORAGE AREAS REGULARLY

Regular facility maintenance and cleaning of floors, pallets, and shelving will contribute to a food safe environment. The food storage and handling facility should be sanitized, swept and mopped often. All spills should be cleaned up immediately to prevent injury and deter pests. It is recommended that high traffic areas be cleaned frequently, usually each day the food program is operational. Other storage areas should be cleaned on a consistent schedule.

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MAINTAIN A RELATIONSHIP WITH LICENSED PEST CONTROL FIRM

Any facility that handles food is highly susceptible to rodent and insect infestation. To combat any such issues, pest prevention measures should be taken regularly. It is a Foodbank requirement that partner agencies maintain a relationship with a licensed pest control firm to ensure any pest issues are treated and eliminated in a timely manner, with a qualified professional. Pest control products should be safe to use around food products, poison should not be used due to possible contamination.

Partner agencies should keep a record of the name of the pest control firm, along with any services previously provided to show a Foodbank representative for site visit purposes, if requested. This information will need to be updated in the event the provider changes, however old records should be kept on file to document patterns and treatment processes.



KEEP EQUIPMENT IN PROPER WORKING CONDITION

Food storage and facility equipment must be kept in good working order. Locks on doors and windows should function properly. Shelving units need to be stable, and cleaned regularly.

Refrigerator and freezer units should be inspected for leaks or problems, and gaskets should be cleaned and checked for gaps. Having a proper seal on refrigeration units will ensure that proper temperatures are being maintained. If there are signs of moisture build up or mold, the equipment may need repaired. Air filters will need to be cleaned regularly to prevent equipment from overheating.

