

Vermont’s Universal Recycling and Composting Initiative bans throwing away food and food scraps in landfills by 2020. This law adopted the Food Recovery Hierarchy that sets priorities for managing food and food scraps.

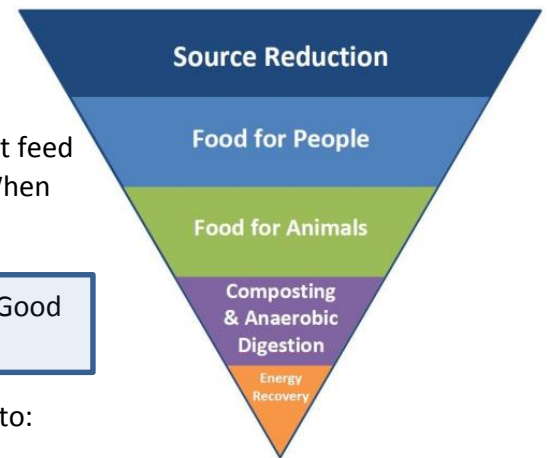
Extra food can be donated to food rescue agencies or organizations that feed the hungry only if it was handled properly and not previously served. When creating a program to donate food, follow these guidelines.

You are protected from liability by federal law under the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act when donating properly handled food.

Donating surplus food to local food rescue organizations will allow you to:

- Lower trash disposal and diversion costs
- Follow the Universal Recycling law by not throwing food away
- Support your community by helping the one in four Vermonters who is in need
- Take possible federal tax deductions (ask your accountant about the details)

### Vermont Food Recovery Hierarchy



## DONATING FOOD SAFELY & SAFE FOOD HANDLING GUIDE

### TIME & TEMPERATURE CONTROLS

Potentially hazardous foods require temperature control for safety (see guide below). Examples include prepared foods, meat, poultry, dairy, fish, seafood, tofu, eggs, cut produce, and garlic in oil mixtures. Foods kept in the **temperature danger zone**, which is **between 41°F and 135°F**, can spoil, cause bacteria to grow, and may cause people to become sick.

Food Type	Storage Requirements	Foods That Cannot be Donated
Prepared Foods	Stored at 41°F or below Frozen at 0°F or below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foods kept in the danger zone more than 2 hours</li> <li>• Previously reheated foods</li> <li>• Previously served foods</li> </ul>
Chilled Perishable, Prepackaged Foods (e.g., dairy, juice)	Stored at 41°F or below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foods kept in the danger zone more than 2 hours</li> <li>• Damaged or bulging packaging</li> <li>• Foods stored in non-food grade packaging</li> </ul>
Meat, Poultry, Fish (Unfrozen)	Stored at 41°F or below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foods kept in the danger zone more than 2 hours</li> <li>• Foods stored in non-food grade packaging</li> </ul>
Meat, Poultry, Fish (Frozen)	Frozen at 0°F or below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foods kept in the danger zone more than 2 hours</li> <li>• Severe freezer burn</li> <li>• Defrosted foods</li> </ul>
Fresh Produce (Whole)	Stored in a cool, dry, and clean area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant decay</li> </ul>
Fresh Produce (Cut)	Stored at 41°F or below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foods kept in the danger zone more than 2 hours</li> <li>• Color change or decay</li> </ul>
Baked Goods	Stored in a cool, dry, and clean area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foods stored in non-food grade packaging</li> <li>• Moldy or stale products</li> </ul>
Canned/Boxed Foods	Stored in a cool, dry, and clean area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damaged or bulging packaging</li> <li>• Home-canned products</li> </ul>

Information in this table is from *Comprehensive Guidelines for Food Recovery Programs* (p. 44 – 45), developed at the Conference for Food Protection, revised March 2007

## LABELING FOOD FOR DONATION

Food service facilities must properly label the food they are donating. **All food donated must be kept in food-grade packaging at all times.**

### ALLERGEN LABELING

Each year, millions of Americans have allergic reactions to food. It is strongly recommended that foods for donation be labeled with the ingredients so people with food allergies are aware of what is in the food. These eight major foods account for 90% of food allergic reactions and are important to label: *milk, eggs, fish (e.g., bass, flounder, cod), crustacean shellfish (e.g., crab, lobster, shrimp), tree nuts (e.g., almonds, walnuts, pecans), peanuts, wheat, and soybeans.*

### DATE MARKING

The Vermont Department of Health food service regulations require date marking for prepared foods. Prepared food must be discarded **after seven days**. Mark the date when food is prepared and the date when food must be discarded (the day food is prepared + six days = seven days).

### Prepared Foods

- Label the packaging with the food name and the date it was either prepared, frozen, or with the seven-day expiration date.
- Food that has been refrigerated for seven days should not be donated and should be composted.
- Foods that are frozen, thawed, and then refrozen should not be donated.

- Food that will be donated can be frozen prior to donation to “stop the clock” and prevent the growth of bacteria. Label the frozen food with the number of days left in the seven-day holding period.
- Store foods in a designated area of a refrigerator or freezer while waiting for pick-up.

### **Non-Perishable Foods** (*baked goods and canned/boxed foods*)

- “Best by,” “sell by,” and “use by” dates found on food packaging are dates marked by the manufacturer. They indicate the time period the product will have the highest quality. These dates do not mean that food is no longer safe to eat.
- Store foods in a designated area while waiting for pick-up.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRACKING DONATIONS

Facilities are encouraged to keep logs documenting that food is handled and served properly within the facility. Here is an example of a food donation log:

Date	Name of Food Donated	Temperature (°F)	Name of Food Rescue Agency

Food rescue agencies receiving donations should have the equipment to maintain proper food temperatures by keeping foods hot or cold during transportation, receiving, and storage.

## QUESTIONS?

### Food Safety and Handling

Contact the Vermont Department of Health, Food and Lodging Program at 802-863-7221 or visit [healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov)

### Food Donation and Vermont’s Universal Recycling and Composting Initiative

Contact the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, Solid Waste Management Program at 802-828-1138 or visit [www.recycle.vt.gov](http://www.recycle.vt.gov)

### Food Donation Locations

Visit the Materials Management Map and zoom in to find the purple apple: [anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/Organics/default.html](http://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/Organics/default.html)

