



# Recipients

## Food Safety Guidelines

### TCS Foods

**TCS (Time/Temperature Controlled for Safety) foods** are those that require time/temperature to prevent the growth of microorganisms and reduce the risk of food borne illness. TCS foods include:

- frozen foods
- hot or cold prepared foods
- dairy
- meat
- seafood
- cut fruits and vegetables

These foods must be kept outside of the **Food Temperature Danger Zone (41°F-135°F)** until they are picked up for delivery.

### Inspecting All Donations

It is the responsibility of the receiving agency to inspect all donations for cleanliness, condition of containers, and signs of temperature abuse. These are things to look out for:

- Damaged cans (severe denting on the seam, rusting, swelling, leaking)
- Damaged boxes (open, torn, live or dead insects inside, staining)
- Damaged bags (open, torn, broken seal, foreign objects inside, live or dead insects inside)

If you receive damaged donations, please discard them and contact the Food Resources Team.

### Date Labelling

According to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, as long as foods are not open and have been properly stored, they are **safe to consume past the “best by”, “sell-by”, and “use-by” dates**. Because of this, it is likely that your organization will receive donated foods that are past the dates printed on their packaging.

For more information about date labelling, check out the [USDA’s guide to Food Product Labelling.](#)

### Food Storage Guidelines

Please follow these guidelines to keep food safe until it is eaten:

- Refrigerated and frozen food must be put into the fridge or freezer as soon as possible so that it doesn’t spoil or defrost (**reminder: chilled foods must be kept below 41°F and frozen foods must be kept below 0°F**)
- Bread that will not be consumed within 2 days should be tightly wrapped and frozen
- Fresh meat, poultry, and seafood should be consumed on the day it is received, otherwise it should be frozen