

# Safely donating food

Tips to keep the food you donate safe. The Minnesota Food Code applies to all donated food.

## Temperature requirements

Donated prepared foods and potentially hazardous foods must meet the temperature requirements below. Some examples of potentially hazardous foods include:

- Cut tomatoes or melons
- Dairy products
- Meats
- Poultry
- Seafood
- Most cooked food
- Cut leafy greens.

**Cold food** must be maintained at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below.

**Hot food** must be maintained at 135 degrees Fahrenheit or above.

**Cooling hot food – Time/Temperature Control for Safety** foods must be:

1. Cooled from 135 degrees to 71 degrees Fahrenheit in less than 2 hours, and
2. Cooled from 71 degrees to 41 degrees or below in less than 4 hours for a total of 6 hours.

## Labeling food

Labeling requirements depend on whether the food is in its original package or has been prepared as a meal.

**Donated commercially prepackaged food labels must clearly show:**

- Name of the item or food
- Manufacturer information
- List of ingredients
- Use-by date - if included. Must contain the statement: "Donated Food-Not for Resale."

Donated prepared food must be labeled on the outside of the container with:

- Food name
- Food donor,
- Preparation date.

Example: Lasagna prepared 1/12/17, from ABC Restaurant, 123 Food Street.  
Each individual item does not need to be labeled.

## Transporting and receiving food

Donated food should be accompanied by a log sheet with times and temperature of the food when it left the donating business. **When the food arrives at the receiving organization, record the time and food temperature on the log sheet.**

When received, the food temperature should be:

- 41°F or below for cold items
- 140°F or above for hot items

Completely fill out the log sheet and keep the log sheet with the food.

Organizations receiving food should keep log sheets for three months.

If Time/Temperature Control for Safety food is received:

1. At a temperature between 41°F and 135°F, and
2. Has been outside of that range for 2 hours or less

then the food should be served immediately.

If the Time/Temperature Control for Safety food has been outside of that range for more than two hours, it should be discarded.

Visit [Food Safety](#) for more food safety resources.