

Food Donations

This section covers food donation requirements that must be addressed by every food business giving (food donor) and receiving (food donation receiver) food donations. You should be aware that the activity of donating or receiving food may impact on the other activities undertaken in your business; for example, freezing food, defrosting food donations, storing food donations, cooking food, managing food allergens, etc.

Note: This section is intended to be used by small food businesses that are already using the Safe Catering Pack as their food safety management system and that are donating or receiving food donations, such as cafés, restaurants, community kitchens, etc.

Food donor

A food donor (hereafter referred to as a 'donor') is a food manufacturer, wholesaler, caterer, retailer or other type of food business that donates food to a charity or similar organisation. Food businesses can redistribute or donate surplus food to various charities as long as the food is in an acceptable condition, safe to eat and correctly labelled. It is best practice to label food donations clearly and store them in a designated area at the appropriate temperature to ensure that they are safe to eat.

If you decide to donate food and this introduces a new step that is not part of your usual food handling process, such as chilling, transporting, or storing food for donation, you must include the new step in your Safe Catering Pack. If the new step is not already covered by the Safe Catering Pack, you should use the 'Other steps' section 3, page 63 to carry out a hazard analysis and identify appropriate controls to ensure food safety. For example, if your restaurant begins chilling cooked food specifically for donation, you must assess the risks involved, such as ensuring that the food is cooled correctly and documenting the procedure, controls, and monitoring in the Safe Catering Pack.

Food donation receiver

A food donation receiver (referred to as a 'receiver' throughout this document) is a food business, such as a charity or other non-profit food business, that receives food donations.

As a receiver of food donations, you should assure yourself that the food you are receiving is safe to eat.

Examples of food

Donor checklist

What can go wrong here? (Hazards)	What can I do about it? (Control/Critical Limits)	How can I check? (Monitoring/Verification)	What if it's not right? (Corrective Action)
<p>Food is not safe to eat/use</p>	<p>Make sure food being donated is safe to eat. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>Make sure all food you are donating is within the 'use-by' date. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>When donating food past its 'best before' date, make sure there are no signs of spoilage (e.g. visual signs of mould, colour changes, and foul odour). <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>Make sure food has not been previously reheated. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p>	<p>Check that food being donated is safe to eat. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>Check the 'use-by' date. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>Inspect food for signs of spoilage (e.g. visual signs of mould, colour changes, and foul odour). <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>Check if food has been previously reheated. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p>	<p>Do not donate food if you think it is unsafe.</p> <p>Do not donate food if the 'use-by' date has passed.</p> <p>Do not donate food with signs of spoilage.</p> <p>Do not donate food that has been previously reheated.</p>
<p>Growth of food poisoning bacteria in cold food</p>	<p>Chilled food intended for donation should be stored at 0 °C to 5 °C. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>Frozen food intended for donation should be stored at or below -18 °C. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p>	<p>Measure the temperature of the food by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taking the temperature of a 'dummy' food (e.g. prepacked jelly or water). <input type="checkbox"/> Measuring the core or surface temperatures of food in the fridge/freezer (sanitise the probe before and after use). <input type="checkbox"/> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>(Record on SC2, Sec 6, pg 3)</p>	<p>If the temperature of chilled food is higher than 5 °C for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than 2 hours: use food immediately or restore temperature More than 2 hours and less than 4 hours: use food immediately or dispose of the food More than 4 hours: dispose of the food.



What can go wrong here? (Hazards)	What can I do about it? (Control/Critical Limits)	How can I check? (Monitoring/Verification)	What if it's not right? (Corrective Action)
		<p>Measure the air temperature by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Placing a temperature probe inside the chill unit. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this Looking at the temperature of the display gauge (cross-check periodically using a temperature probe). <input type="checkbox"/> I do this <p>(Record on SC2, sec 6, pg 3)</p> <p>Instruct staff not to donate food that was kept at the wrong temperature. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Observe staff practices. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>If the temperature of frozen food is higher than -12 °C or food shows signs of thawing, either restore temperature or continue thawing and use immediately.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff.</p> <p>Remind staff of safe food donation practices.</p>
<p>Contamination of food with food poisoning bacteria during transport</p>	<p>Make sure that food is protected during transportation using clean containers/packaging. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure that the delivery vehicle is clean. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check packaging/containers for signs of damage and make sure that they are clean. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check that the delivery vehicle is clean. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Dispose of unsafe food.</p> <p>Review cleaning schedules and practices.</p> <p>Make sure that transport conditions (vehicle, transport containers/boxes, cool box, etc.) are clean and suitable for donations.</p> <p>Do not donate food that is not protected from contamination during transport.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff.</p>

What can go wrong here? (Hazards)	What can I do about it? (Control/Critical Limits)	How can I check? (Monitoring/Verification)	What if it's not right? (Corrective Action)
<p>Cross-contamination from raw to ready-to-eat foods during transport</p>	<p>Make sure raw and ready-to-eat foods are separated during transport in order to avoid cross-contamination.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check that raw and ready-to-eat foods are kept separated during transport.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Dispose of unsafe food.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff.</p>
<p>Growth of food poisoning bacteria during transport</p>	<p>Make sure donations are packed to maintain a safe temperature or use a temperature-controlled vehicle.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure that chilled food is transported at 0 °C to 5 °C.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure frozen food is transported at or below -18 °C.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check that the temperature-control method used during transport is maintaining safe temperatures.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Following transport, check the temperature of chilled food (Sanitise probe before and after use).</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>(Record on SC9, sec 6, pg 12)</p> <p>Following transport, check the temperature of frozen food (Sanitise probe before and after use).</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>(Record on SC9, sec 6, pg 12)</p>	<p>Dispose of unsafe food and follow temperature guidelines in this Safe Catering Pack.</p> <p>If the temperature of chilled food is higher than 5 °C for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 2 hours: use food immediately or restore temperature • More than 2 hours and less than 4 hours: use food immediately or dispose of the food • More than 4 hours: dispose of the food. <p>If the temperature of frozen food is higher than -12 °C or food shows signs of thawing, either restore temperature or continue thawing and use immediately.</p>



What can go wrong here? (Hazards)	What can I do about it? (Control/Critical Limits)	How can I check? (Monitoring/Verification)	What if it's not right? (Corrective Action)
<p>Allergen cross-contamination in packaged food</p>	<p>Make sure that food containing allergens that pose a risk of cross-contamination (bags of wheat flour, eggs, milk, nuts, etc.) are kept separate from other foods.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check packaging/containers and the condition of food for signs of damage and/or leakage of allergens.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check that food is being transported in a way that prevents allergen cross-contamination with other foods.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Observe staff allergen handling practices.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Do not donate food where packaging/containers are damaged and/or leaking allergens.</p> <p>Where you know that the food has been contaminated with an allergen, do not donate it.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff.</p>
<p>Allergen cross-contamination in loose food</p>	<p>Segregate loose donations (such as breads, burger buns, etc.) that pose a risk of cross-contamination where possible.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Provide accurate information about what allergens are present in the food being donated.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check that foods containing allergen ingredients arrive in such a way as to prevent cross-contamination of other foods not containing those allergens.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check donated loose food for signs of contamination with allergens.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check that the allergen information provided with loose food is correct.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure staff know how to check allergen information and understand the danger of undeclared or incorrectly declared allergens to consumers.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Where you know the food has been contaminated with an allergen, do not donate it.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff.</p>

What can go wrong here? (Hazards)	What can I do about it? (Control/Critical Limits)	How can I check? (Monitoring/Verification)	What if it's not right? (Corrective Action)
<p>Food is unsafe due to a lack of or inaccurate mandatory food information on prepacked foods</p> <p>(See information on labelling at the end of this section page 59)</p>	<p>Make sure that prepacked foods are correctly labelled with mandatory food information. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure labelling information has not been altered or changed. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check that the labelling information on the food is correct and compliant. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check that the label has not been altered/changed. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure staff know how to check labelling information and that they understand the importance of it. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Where prepacked food is missing labelling information or the information is not correct/compliant, dispose of food and do not donate it. Raise the issue with the supplier of the food.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff.</p>
<p>Food is unsafe due to a lack of or inaccurate mandatory food information on non-prepacked foods</p> <p>(See information on labelling at the end of this section page 59)</p>	<p>Make sure that non-prepacked foods being donated are accompanied by the mandatory food information. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure mandatory food information has not been altered or changed. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check that the mandatory food information is correct and compliant. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check that the label has not been altered or changed. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure staff know how to check mandatory food information and that they understand the importance of it. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Where mandatory food information is unknown or inaccurate, do not donate food.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff.</p>



What can go wrong here? (Hazards)	What can I do about it? (Control/Critical Limits)	How can I check? (Monitoring/Verification)	What if it's not right? (Corrective Action)
<p>Loss of traceability</p>	<p>Make sure records are in place to trace food that is donated one step forward and one step back (reference sec 4, pg 3 on traceability). <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>I do this</p>	<p>Instruct staff to maintain records accurately. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>I do this</p> <p>Monitor and review traceability records. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>I do this</p>	<p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff on record completion.</p> <p>Review donation procedures.</p>
<p>Food has not been clearly labelled as food for donation or stored in a designated location</p>	<p>Make sure that food is clearly labelled as food for donation and/or stored in a designated location. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>I do this</p>	<p>Check that all food donations are clearly labelled and stored in a designated location. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>I do this</p>	<p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff on record completion.</p> <p>Review donation procedures.</p>

Examples of food

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Donation receiver checklist

What can go wrong here? (Hazards)	What can I do about it? (Control/Critical Limits)	How can I check? (Monitoring/Verification)	What if it's not right? (Corrective Action)
<p>Food is not safe to eat/use</p>	<p>Where possible, maintain a list of donors and the foods received (use record SC9 sec 6, pg 12). <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>Make sure that all high-risk food has a 'use-by' date and that the food is within it. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>If receiving food past its 'best before' date, check that it has no signs of spoilage (e.g. visual signs of mould, colour changes, and foul odour). <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>Make sure that donations are clean and not damaged (e.g. punctured or swollen packaging, or dented/blown cans) and check that seals are intact and unbroken on bottles and jars. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p>	<p>Check that food has come from listed donors where possible. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>Check the 'use-by' date. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>Inspect food for signs of spoilage (e.g. visual signs of mould, colour changes, and foul odour) if receiving food past its 'best before' date. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p> <p>Inspect donations to make sure that they are clean and not damaged (e.g. punctured or swollen packaging, or dented/blown cans) and check that seals are intact and unbroken on bottles and jars. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: right;">I do this</p>	<p>Dispose of food donations if you think they are unsafe and review with the donor as appropriate.</p> <p>Check that the supplier is registered with the Health Service Executive (HSE).</p> <p>Do not accept high-risk food donations that are missing or past their 'use-by' date.</p> <p>Dispose of spoiled food and review with the donor.</p> <p>Do not accept any donations that are damaged or leaking.</p> <p>Dispose of food that is not protected/is in damaged or dirty packaging or that is visibly contaminated and review with the donor, where possible.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff carrying out food donation receipt activities.</p>



What can go wrong here? (Hazards)	What can I do about it? (Control/Critical Limits)	How can I check? (Monitoring/Verification)	What if it's not right? (Corrective Action)
<p>Growth of food poisoning bacteria in cold food</p>	<p>Before you accept food, make sure that you have the space to store it at the correct temperature. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure that chilled food donations are delivered at 0 °C to 5 °C and placed in cold storage immediately. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure that frozen food is delivered at or below -18 °C and placed in a freezer immediately. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check that you have sufficient space to store food safely. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check the temperature of chilled foods (Sanitise probe before and after use). <input type="checkbox"/> I do this (Record on SC1, sec 6, pg 2)</p> <p>Check the temperature of frozen foods (Sanitise probe before and after use). <input type="checkbox"/> I do this (Record on SC1, sec 6, pg 2)</p>	<p>Do not accept food unless you have sufficient space to store it safely.</p> <p>If the surface temperature of chilled food is higher than 5 °C and lower than 8 °C, then restore the food to 5 °C or colder.</p> <p>Reject chilled food if the surface temperature is higher than 8 °C, or risk assess the product.</p> <p>If frozen food is showing signs of thawing or if the temperature is higher than -12 °C (e.g. -11 °C), risk assess the food. Depending on the risk assessment, either defrost and use the food immediately or reject it.</p> <p>Dispose of food donations if you think they are unsafe and review with the supplier.</p>
<p>Contamination of food with food poisoning bacteria during transport</p>	<p>Make sure that food is protected during transportation using clean containers/packaging. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure that the delivery vehicle is clean. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check packaging/containers for signs of dirt, damage or contamination. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check that the delivery vehicle is clean. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Do not accept food that is not protected/is damaged, has dirty packaging, or is visibly contaminated.</p> <p>Do not accept food if the delivery vehicle is unclean.</p>

What can go wrong here? (Hazards)	What can I do about it? (Control/Critical Limits)	How can I check? (Monitoring/Verification)	What if it's not right? (Corrective Action)
<p>Cross-contamination from raw to ready-to-eat foods during transport</p>	<p>Make sure that food has been packed in a way that keeps raw and ready-to-eat food separated in order to avoid cross-contamination.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check that raw and ready-to-eat foods have been kept separate.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Do not accept/ dispose of food that has not been protected during transport or that shows signs of contamination.</p>
<p>Growth of food poisoning bacteria during transport</p>	<p>Make sure that donations are packed to maintain them at a safe temperature or use a temperature-controlled vehicle.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure that the delivery has been received while the premises is open and a member of staff is available to receive the delivery.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure that chilled food is transported at 0 °C to 5°C.</p> <p>(Sanitise probe before and after use)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure that frozen food is transported at or below -18 °C.</p> <p>(Sanitise probe before and after use)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Following transport, check the temperature of food.</p> <p>(Sanitise probe before and after use)</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check that food has been accepted by a member of staff while the premises has been open.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Following transport, check the temperature of chilled food.</p> <p>(Sanitise probe before and after use).</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>(Record on SC9, sec 6, pg 12)</p>	<p>Dispose of unsafe food and follow temperature guidelines in this Safe Catering Pack, and report issues to the donor.</p> <p>Dispose of food donations that have been left outside or unattended.</p> <p>If the temperature of chilled food is higher than 5 °C for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 2 hours: use food immediately or restore temperature • More than 2 hours and less than 4 hours: use food immediately or dispose of the food • More than 4 hours: dispose of the food. <p>If the temperature of frozen food is higher than -12 °C or food shows signs of thawing, either restore temperature or continue thawing and use immediately.</p>



What can go wrong here? (Hazards)	What can I do about it? (Control/Critical Limits)	How can I check? (Monitoring/Verification)	What if it's not right? (Corrective Action)
<p>Allergen cross-contamination in packaged food</p>	<p>Make sure that packaged food is intact and not damaged or leaking, which may cause cross-contamination.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check packaging/containers and the condition of food for signs of damage and/or leakage of allergens.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Observe staff allergen handling practices.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Where you know that the food has been contaminated with an allergen, dispose of the contaminated product as appropriate.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff.</p>
<p>Allergen cross-contamination in loose food</p>	<p>Inspect loose food donations for possible allergen cross-contamination information (e.g. sesame burger buns mixed with plain burger buns).</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure information has been provided by the donor about what allergens are present in the donated food.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Carry out spot checks of loose food donations for possible cross-contamination.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check that the allergen information provided with the loose food is correct.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Instruct and monitor staff to make sure they understand how to check allergen information and inform them of the dangers of incorrectly declared allergens to consumers.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Discuss any allergen information issues with the donor.</p> <p>Refuse or dispose of donations where the allergen status is unknown.</p> <p>Review allergen procedures with staff.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff.</p>

What can go wrong here? (Hazards)	What can I do about it? (Control/Critical Limits)	How can I check? (Monitoring/Verification)	What if it's not right? (Corrective Action)
<p>Food is unsafe due to a lack of or inaccurate mandatory food information on prepacked foods</p> <p>(See information on labelling at the end of this section page 59)</p>	<p>Make sure that prepacked foods contain labelling information. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure labelling information has not been altered/changed. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure that food donations are clearly labelled and include a description of the food, ingredients, allergen information, and traceability details. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure that all frozen food is correctly labelled with 'use-by' date, 'frozen on' date, storage instructions, thawing instructions, and cooking instructions. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check that the labelling information on the food is correct and compliant. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check that the label has not been altered/changed. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure staff understand how to check labelling information and the importance of it. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check that frozen food is correctly labelled with 'use-by' date, 'frozen on' date, storage instructions, thawing instructions, and cooking instructions. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Where prepacked food is missing labelling information or the information is not correct/compliant, do not accept/dispose of the food.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff.</p>
<p>Food is unsafe due to a lack of or inaccurate mandatory food information on non-prepacked foods</p> <p>(See information on labelling at the end of this section page 59)</p>	<p>Make sure that non-prepacked foods being donated are accompanied by the mandatory food information. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure mandatory food information has not been altered or changed. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Check that the labelling information on the food is correct and compliant. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Check that the label has not been altered or changed. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Make sure staff understand how to check labelling information and the importance of it. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Where food information is unknown or inaccurate, do not accept food.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff.</p>



What can go wrong here? (Hazards)	What can I do about it? (Control/Critical Limits)	How can I check? (Monitoring/Verification)	What if it's not right? (Corrective Action)
Loss of traceability	<p>Make sure records are in place to trace food that is donated one step back to the supplier (reference sec 4, pgs 2 & 3 on traceability). <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Keep all invoices or delivery dockets of food received. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Keep a record of all dates and quantities of donations and the suppliers. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Monitor and review traceability records. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Instruct staff to keep all delivery dockets of food received. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p> <p>Instruct staff to keep up-to-date and accurate records. <input type="checkbox"/> I do this</p>	<p>Do not accept donations that are missing traceability details.</p> <p>Better supervision, training, and/or retraining for staff.</p>

Advice on donations

Introduction

A food business is defined in food law as any undertaking, whether for profit or not and whether public or private, carrying out any of the activities related to any stage of the production, processing and distribution of food.

Any business that donates food, as well as any business or organisation that receives food donations, is considered a food business under food law. This means that both the donor and the receiver must follow the same food safety rules in order to make sure that the food is safe to eat and handled properly. For example, if a restaurant donates leftover meals to a charity, the restaurant must ensure that the food is prepared, stored, and transported safely. Similarly, the charity receiving the food must store and serve it in a way that keeps it safe for people to eat. Both parties share responsibility for making sure that the food does not cause any harm to consumers.

Food donations are subject to the same food law requirements as food that you are selling. When donating food, you must comply with the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2021/382 on the hygiene of foodstuffs as regards food allergen management, redistribution of food and food safety culture.¹

Food for donation and donated food must be safe to eat and stored correctly at all times. All food businesses, whether they donate food or receive food donations, must make themselves aware of their legal responsibilities under food legislation.

You should take measures to make sure that food donations come from trusted suppliers. Donors and receivers should agree on what is suitable and what is not suitable for donation and have adequate storage capacity and facilities to process the food donations safely.

Food donations should have the same checks as purchased food (goods inwards checks, labelling checks, temperature checks, etc.). Checks on food donations should be recorded in the relevant Safe Catering Pack records.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/382/oj/eng>

Types of food donations

If you are donating food or receiving food donations, whether seasonal/occasionally or on a regular basis, make your environmental health officer aware of this.

In the table below are examples of types of food that can be donated and examples of food that **should not** be donated.

Types of food donations	Safe to donate	Not safe to donate
Unsold bread and cakes	✓	
Dried, canned food in an acceptable condition	✓	
Whole fresh fruit and vegetables	✓	
Food that remains in packaging	✓	
Refrigerated food that has been maintained at 0–5 °C (and that is within its 'use-by' date)	✓	
Frozen food that has been maintained at or below –18 °C	✓	
Portions of food prepared by a food business that has not been served to customers	✓	
Spoiled or rotten food		✗
Unlabelled food		✗
Food with damaged packaging or broken packaging		✗
Tinned food that has been dented, damaged or rusted		✗
Cooked rice		✗
Reheated food		✗
Food that has been defrosted and refrozen		✗
Precut fruit and vegetables that are unpackaged		✗
Hot food*		✗

*It is not recommended to donate hot food due to the difficulty of maintaining hot food temperatures at or above 63 °C during transport to the recipient business/organisation.

Food that was initially kept hot and has not been reheated must be cooled as quickly as possible and placed in the fridge within 2 hours of cooling. Refer to section 3 pages 31-32 on cooling for more information.

Note: If you are donating food of animal origin (meat, fish, etc.) to other food businesses, you need to speak to your environmental health officer for advice and guidance, as other legislation may apply to you. Freezing of fresh meat and fish prior to donating may require approval from your environmental health officer. This activity (freezing) requires additional labelling and the provision of new storage and cooking instructions. For more information, visit www.fsai.ie.

Food intended for donation can be frozen on its 'use-by' date, provided that:

- The food is suitable for freezing
- The food is in an acceptable condition
- The food is frozen before midnight on the 'use-by' date
- The freezing step is included in the donor's food safety management system or Safe Catering Pack
- Instructions for use are provided that make it clear that the product should be thawed under refrigeration and cooked immediately after defrosting
- The product is suitably labelled with the date of freezing, the original 'use-by' or 'best before' date, and its new 'best before' date (original label should be kept)
- The food has not been previously frozen.

If you are freezing or defrosting food, this must be done in line with safe practices outlined in Section 3 (pages 21 and 32) of the Safe Catering Pack and as per the manufacturer's instructions. For more information on freezing or defrosting food donations, please visit the food donation section of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) website: <https://www.fsai.ie/business-advice/running-a-food-business/food-donations/food-businesses-donations/charities-receiving-donated-food-q-and-a>.

CAUTION: The food receiver will need to ensure that they have sufficient storage capacity (including fridges and freezers) and the ability to use donations within the 'use-by' date.

Labelling

Food donors have a responsibility to provide accurate mandatory food information and are responsible for any changes they make to food information.

Food donors must:

- Not supply food that they know, or suspect is not compliant with food information/labelling requirements
- Not modify the information accompanying food if this would mislead the consumer and/or reduce consumer protection or the ability of consumers to make informed choices
- Ensure that information relating to non-prepacked food intended for the final consumer is provided to the receiver to ensure that sufficient information is passed on to enable the provision of mandatory food information to the final consumer.

Prepacked foods: Labelling requirements

Prepacked foods are food items that are sealed in a package before being sold, where the contents cannot be changed without opening or tampering with the packaging. This includes items that are prepared and packaged in a factory or even at the retail level, such as a bag of sweets or a box of cereal. The packaging is a crucial part of the product, as it is intended for presentation to the final consumer.

The following mandatory information must appear on the label of a prepacked food, when relevant:

- The name of the food*
- The list of ingredients
- Any allergenic ingredient or processing aid that is used in the manufacture or preparation of a food and is still present in the finished product, even if in an altered form
- The quantity of certain ingredients
- The net quantity of the food*
- The date of minimum durability or the 'use-by' date
- Any special storage conditions and/or conditions of use
- The name or business name and address of the food business operator
- The country of origin or place of provenance where its absence may mislead the consumer as to the true origin or provenance of the food, or where the country of origin is specifically required under legislation
- Instructions for use where it would be difficult to make appropriate use of the food in the absence of such instructions
- With respect to beverages containing more than 1.2% alcohol by volume, the actual alcoholic strength by volume*
- A nutrition declaration.

* **Must appear in the same field of vision.**

NOTE: Some food requires additional information to be provided under Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers. For more information, visit:

<https://www.fsai.ie/business-advice/labelling>

Non-prepacked foods: Labelling requirements

Non-prepacked foods are foods that are not prepackaged, such as those sold from a deli counter, bakery, or salad bar, and include foods prepared on the spot at the customer's request. Examples include loose fruit and vegetables, bread, and takeout meals, which need to have allergen information provided by the food business.

Where loose food is being donated, it should be packed in some form in order to protect it during transport to the charity.

In this case, the following information must be declared on the outer pack/container:

- Name of the food
- Date of minimum durability
- Storage instructions
- Business name and address of the donating food business.

The business donating the food must supply all the relevant mandatory labelling information on a document accompanying the food (e.g. delivery docket). See the 'Prepacked foods: Labelling requirements' section for a full list of the mandatory labelling information.

Both donors and receivers should be aware of cross-contamination that may occur with loose food donations. Donations should be assessed using the 'Allergens' section of this Safe Catering Pack (refer to section 3 pages 81-88, Allergens, for more information).

NOTE: Processing aids (such as spray oils) containing allergens must also be declared.

'Use-by' / 'best before' dates

A 'use-by' date is about safety and is a strict deadline. Food past its 'use-by' date is not safe to eat and must be disposed of. Examples of food with a 'use-by' date include yogurt, fresh meat, cheese, hummus, and dairy products such as cream. This does not apply in relation to eggs, which should be used within their 'best before' date.

High-risk foods that require a 'use-by' date should not be donated without having one. "High-risk foods are those on which bacteria grow easily. They are ready to eat or will only receive light cooking, which will not destroy bacteria that may be present.

A 'best before' date is about quality, meaning that the food may start to lose its flavour or texture after this date, but it is still safe to eat if it looks, smells, and tastes fine. Examples of food with 'best before' dates include chocolate, tinned goods, cereals, jams, frozen vegetables, and pasta.

Donation traceability

Any donations received must follow the same guidance laid out in the Traceability section of this Safe Catering Pack. Refer to section 4 pages 2-3 of this Safe Catering Pack for more information on traceability.

Catering businesses and charities providing food directly to consumers are only required to maintain a 'one step back' system of traceability, and they are not required to record individual consumers to whom they have provided food. With donation, however, as the food is being donated to other food businesses, it is essential that the traceability system reflects this.

The following information should now be included in the donating food business's traceability system:

- Name and address of recipient
- Identification of products delivered/collected.

Keep records of all donations received by using SC1 (section 6, page 2).

The following traceability information should be supplied with all food that is to be donated:

- Name and address of the donating food business
- Accurate description of the product
- Date of delivery.

In addition to the general rules for traceability outlined above, more specific information is required for foods of animal origin (e.g. meat, fish, eggs). Foods of animal origin include unprocessed (e.g. raw) meat and processed food products (e.g. salami) but exclude food containing both products of plant origin and processed foods of animal origin (e.g. pepperoni pizza or ham and spinach quiche).

The following additional information is required for these products:

- Volume or quantity of food
- A reference identifying the lot or batch number.

NOTE: Many charities ask the donating business to assist them with their 'one step back' system by providing information about the food donations (e.g. by way of a receipt or docket that accompanies the donation). While the donating business is not obliged to provide traceability information for the receiver, many assist receivers by doing so.