

Safe Food Donations



Peterborough Public Health is mandated by provincial legislation to inspect all “food premises” within our jurisdiction, with the goal of preventing foodborne illness.

We recognize the benefit that our food banks, local shelters and community meal programs provide to those in need and understand that they are unique in their non-profit and community-focused nature. However, we must also recognize that these unique “food premises” are not exempt from the requirements of the provincial food safety legislation that is intended to protect the health of everyone who uses these services.

Since many of these organizations rely upon the generosity of our community members, it is important to consider the following list of **do’s** and **don’ts** for food safety donations.

Remember - it is best to contact your local organizations before donating food to see what food items they need the most.

Food Bank and Community Meal Programs	
Can accept	Can NOT accept
Food items from approved/inspected sources	Food items from unapproved/uninspected sources (e.g., private homes)
Inspected meats	Uninspected wild game
Commercially harvested fish	Wild-caught fish from an unapproved source
Graded eggs (“Grade A” or “Grade B”)	Ungraded or “Grade C” eggs
Pasteurized dairy products	Unpasteurized dairy products
Pasteurized juices	Unpasteurized juices
Commercially canned food products (undamaged)	Home-canned foods (e.g., jams, vegetables, meats, etc.) Any canned product displaying a severe dent, bloating or leaking
Unprocessed (or commercially processed) raw fruits and vegetables	Processed (cut) raw fruits and vegetables
Prepared foods coming from an approved/inspected source that have not been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stored between 4°C to 60°C (40°F to 140°F) for 2 hours or more, or previously served to clients or customers 	Prepared foods coming from an unapproved/uninspected source (e.g., private homes) Leftover foods that were previously served to customers or clients Prepared foods that have already been re-heated Prepared foods that have been “temperature abused” (stored between 4°C to 60°C [40°F to 140 °F] for 2 hours or more)
Dry goods (undamaged)	Dry goods that appear to be damaged or previously opened
Foods that are <i>close to</i> or even past the “best before” date may be acceptable. A “best before” date is a quality indicator, not a food safety indicator. A “best before” date refers to the period of time an unopened food item should retain its best quality, taste and nutritional value.	Foods past their “expiry date” are not acceptable. In Canada, only a few foods are labelled with an “expiry date”. Examples include: infant formula and meal replacement drinks.

Ways that you can help:

- Donate acceptable foods from the list above.
- Donate money for the purchase of food items or equipment that’s needed.
- Volunteer and help prepare meals within a community organization.

For further information or clarification, please contact:

Peterborough Public Health at 705-743-1000 or info@peterboroughpublichealth.ca