

Food Recovery and Food Waste Diversion

Senate Bill (SB) 1383

Requires all food generators reduce the disposal of organic wastes in landfills by 75% and recover 20% of currently disposed edible foods that are fit for human consumption by 2025.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health is working collaboratively with County Department of Public Works and local cities in supporting education and outreach in these areas to ensure that all recovered food is handled, stored, and transported safely.



Ways to Prevent and Reduce Food Waste

Disposal of edible food is unnecessary and preventable. Food facilities must implement strategies to reduce food waste. Listed below are some ideas by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for retail restaurants, groceries, markets, and other food facilities to prevent food loss and waste:

- Modify menus or reduce serving size to reduce uneaten food
- Adjust sale inventory to reduce foods that are frequently wasted
- Encourage customers to take their leftover food home
- For buffet style services, encourage customers to take only what they will eat
- Change food preparation and handling practices to prevent food preparation waste
- Properly store foods in appropriate containers and at proper temperature to reduce food spoilage
- Use the first-in /first-out (FIFO) method to reduce food spoilage
- Rotate perishable stock and packaged foods with date labels at every delivery
- Offer foods at discount prices for customers at the end of working day

Food Donations

Nonperishable and unspoiled perishable food can be donated by food facilities

- Eggs, Milk and Juice – all graded eggs, and pasteurized milk, milk products and juices
- Meat, Poultry, and Fish – all meats, poultry, and fish (*recommend freezing prior to donation*)
- Dry Goods – all dry goods in unopened packages and commercially baked products with no signs of spoilage and broken seals
- Canned Foods – slightly dented cans (*not dented at seams/rim*) are acceptable
- Surplus or leftover foods, prepared foods and meals stored below 41°F and 135°F or above
- Fruits and produce – whole fruits and vegetables.

Safe Food Donation Practices

- All donated food must comply with the California Retail Food Code (Cal Code)
- Donated foods must be in good, wholesome condition
- Perishable foods must always remain at 135°F or above for hot foods, and 41°F or below for cold foods, prior to transportation.
- Nonperishable foods (whole fruits and produce, canned and dry foods, and other similar products) can be delivered anytime without temperature control requirements
- The following food items are not allowed to be donated per the Cal Code and must be disposed.
 - Food items using “time as a public health control” method must be discarded after 4 hours
 - Hot food items held on a mobile food truck/cart must be discarded at the end of the working day
 - Leftover or returned foods that have been served to customers
 - Korean and Vietnamese rice cakes held out of temperature for more than 24 hours
 - Baby food, baby formula, or reduced oxygen packaged food that has exceeded the sell-by date



Checklist for Safe Handling of Food

- Keep cold perishable foods at 41°F or below, and hot foods at or above 135°F
 - Keep pasteurized milk and pasteurized milk products in their containers and refrigerated at 45°F or below
 - Store raw meats, foods containing major food allergens, and ready-to-eat foods separately to avoid food contamination
 - Ensure prepared food items are clearly labeled with the date and time of preparation
- Thoroughly wash hands before handling food and/or utensils, and when switching to different tasks
- Check food for any signs of spoilage, mold, odors, and decay
- For canned and dry packaged foods, check the packaging for tears, holes, broken seals, dents, bulging cans, and vermin
- Keep packaged food items in their original packaging
- Donated food should be covered and protected from contamination before and during transportation
- Transportation vehicle should be maintained clean and free from vermin
- Do not donate food that has been previously served to customers
- If refrigerated transport is not available, the food items should be labeled “Process Immediately” and must not be out of temperature controls for more than 30 minutes.

Food Waste Diversion

Diverting food wastes from the landfill not only conserves limited landfill space, but also reduces greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change. The EPA created the **Food Recovery Hierarchy** to help food generators prioritize different methods for managing surplus foods. The top levels of the hierarchy are the best ways to prevent and divert wasted food because they create the most benefits for the environment, society, and economy, and to divert wasted food.

Below are best practices for food facilities to assist in food recovery and waste diversion efforts:

- Reduce the volume of excess food generated and purchased
- Increase food recovery for human consumption by donating excess foods
- Donate surplus foods to food banks, food pantries, homeless shelters, local missions, community centers, childcare centers, and charitable organizations.
- If food cannot be donated for human consumption, consider diverting food to animal feed
- Consider diverting inedible foods toward compost
- Divert food waste into clean energy through the process of anaerobic digestion

Food generator must create a food waste diversion program to reduce food waste:

- Evaluate current food waste disposal practices
- Assess collection process
- Create monitoring and maintenance procedures (i.e., waste log tracker)*

Additional Resources and Guidance

For food safety questions, please contact Industry Engagement at (626) 430-5320 (8am-5pm)
For more information on donating surplus food:

- Los Angeles County Food Redistribution Initiative [LACFRI](#)
- The Los Angeles County Food DROP Program - [FoodDropLA](#)
- Food Recovery Hierarchy and Resources About Food Recovery in Los Angeles [EPA](#)

For information on food waste recovery and diversion:

- Los Angeles County Department of Public Works - [Organic Waste Management](#)
- EPA Prevention and Diversion of Wasted Food - [Tool for Preventing and Diverting Wasted Food](#)
- FDA - [How to Cut Food Waste and Maintain Food Safety](#)



To view a larger image, click <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/food-recovery-hierarchy>

Good Samaritan Food Donation Act

The act protects food donors from liability when donating to charitable organizations.

- Encourages the donation of surplus food from going to waste.
- Protects all food and grocery donors who donate in good faith to a non-profit organization.
- Provides protection for food and grocery products that meet all quality labeling standards imposed by federal, state, and local laws and regulations.