Food Safety Guidance for Food Pantries

REGIONAL FOOD BANK

Following these requirements helps protect food safety, prevents contamination, and ensures compliance with state and federal guidelines.

1. Proper Food Storage

- Store all food at least **6 inches off the ground** and away from walls and ceilings.
- This requirement applies to both **storage** and **distribution** areas.

2. Temperature Control

- **Dry foods:** Store between **50–70°F.** Run a fan for circulation if temperatures are too high.
- **Refrigerated foods:** Store at **32–40°F** at all times.
- **Frozen foods**: Store at 0°F or below at all times.
- Place **thermometers in all storage units** (dry, refrigerated, and frozen).
- **Maintain and file temperature logs** for each unit.

3. Temperature Danger Zone

- Food must not remain between **40°F–140°F** for more than **2 hours.**
- During transportation, use **coolers or cooler blankets** to maintain safe temperatures.

4. Refrigeration & Freezer Maintenance

- Keep units clean and in good working order.
- **Clean up spills** immediately.
- **Defrost** and deep **clean** as needed.

5. Food Inspection

- Inspect all food from the food bank and other donations.
- Check:
  - **Cans, boxes, and jars** for damage
  - **Extended shelf life dates** of products
- Remember: **Only baby food and nutrition supplements have true expiration dates**.

6. FIFO (First In, First Out)

- Always use the **oldest product first**.
- **Label and rotate stock** regularly.

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7. Food Allergens

- Store foods containing allergens **separately**, either:
  - On a **bottom shelf**
  - In **labeled bins or storage totes**
  - Away from other food to prevent cross-contamination.

8. Repacking Rules

- **No food may be repacked in the pantry**.
- Repacking must be done in a **licensed food repacking facility.**
- **Exception:** Commercial breads and baked goods may be repacked if eligible under the **Bread Repacking Guide.**

9. Label Requirements

- All food items distributed must be **properly labeled** with:
- **Manufacturer's name and address**
- **Name of the product**
- **Complete list of ingredients**
- Any item missing this information **may not be distributed** (exception: uncut produce)**.**

10. Home-Canned & Home-Grown Foods

- **Do not distribute home-canned foods or home-grown eggs.**
- Only distribute **eggs and canned goods from licensed farms or facilities**.

11. Non-Food Item Storage

- Store **chemicals, cleaners, hygiene products, and pesticides** separately from food.

12. Pest Control

- Inspect all incoming food for **signs of pests.**
- Only the following traps may be used:
  - **Glue traps**
  - **Snap traps inside a cardboard sleeve**
- Any additional pest control requires a **licensed Pest Control Operator (PCO)**.
- Keep **receipts/invoices from PCO services on file.**