



**FOOD FOR LIFE CANADA INC.**

<b>POLICY CATEGORY</b>	<b>Governance</b>
<b>POLICY NUMBER</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>TITLE OF POLICY</b>	<b>Food Quality and Safety Standards</b>
<b>APPROVED BY</b>	<b>Board</b>
<b>DATE OF APPROVAL</b>	<b>Draft</b>
<b>REVISION DATE</b>	

**Purpose of Policy**

To reduce health and safety risks in the collection of surplus food from food suppliers and the subsequent food delivery to our member centres, agencies and outreach programs.

**Policy Statement**

Food for Life and ReFresh Foods will comply with all regulatory and legislative requirements pertaining to food quality and safety. We will do routine record keeping to document compliance. We will regularly monitor compliance and provide written reports.

**Policy Application**

**a) Regulatory Environment**

Food for Life and Refresh Foods are food recovery programs and therefore are subject to all relevant municipal, provincial and federal food safety regulations. The most important of these is the “Health & Promotion Act-Food Premises” that is enforced at the municipal level by the local public health department. FFL & Refresh Foods staff liaise with the Halton Region Public Health Department on a regularly to ensure that we are in compliance with the applicable regulations.

Halton Region Public Health staff members provide additional information & guidance on food safety issues & acceptance of food donations when required. All staff members of Food for Life and Refresh foods have completed the “Food Handlers Certification Course” that is offered by the Halton Region Public. We also monitor the Canadian Food Inspection Agency food safety + allergen recalls on a daily basis. The Ontario Association of Food Banks and Food Banks Canada serve in an advisory role to FFL &

Refresh Foods in regards to: food safety, food handling standards, food donation acceptance policies, food distribution etc.

## **b) Food Storage Requirements**

FFL & ReFresh Foods use refrigerated vehicles in conjunction with a warehouse which has a walk-in cooler and walk-in freezer. Temperature integrity of refrigerated or frozen foods is ensured by pre-cooling vehicles to necessary temperature, measuring temperature of food at pick-up and daily during storage at our facility. Temperatures are recorded and donations are stored in appropriate storage area:

1. Ambient warehouse space on pallets (not floor) in a clean and organized manner
2. Walk in Cooler at 4 C or lower in a clean and organized manner
3. Walk in Freezer at -18C or lower in a clean and organized manner

## **c) Accepted Food**

### **i) Food-type Categories**

The following four categories assist FFL & ReFresh Foods in determining the relative risks associated with each type of food handled and provide guidance on what precautions should be taken and which foods should be accepted for donation. All potential donors are required to provide the following information:

1. Name & Address & Phone # of Donor
2. Reason for Donation
3. Best Before Date
4. Amount of product available for donation
5. Product modification details if applicable
6. Potential Safety and Quality Issues

### **Category 1: Non-perishable Foods**

These foods are viewed as having the lowest risk. Category 1 includes non-perishable foods (items that do not require refrigeration). Examples include: pre-packaged foods, canned products and dry goods such as flour, sugar, pasta, breads and pastries (without cream or meat fillings), cereal, crackers etc.

These foods will be stored on pallets at ambient temperature in a clean and inspected warehouse facility.

#### Acceptance Criteria:

- I. Driver or consignee will conduct visual inspection to ensure that product is in a clean and reasonable condition. Outside packaging (boxes, cartons) may be damaged, however donation cannot be accepted if internal packaging envelopes have been damaged or compromised.
- II. Product can be accepted beyond best date according to the following sources:
  1. Letter from manufacturer stating length of time product can be consumed beyond best before
  2. Input from Halton Region Public Health
  3. Information from Food Handlers Storage Guide

### **Category 2: Low Risk Perishable Foods**

Category 2 foods include low risk perishable foods such as fruit and vegetables. These foods will be stored in a refrigerated walk in cooler at 4C or lower. Donations will be transported in a refrigerated vehicle that has been pre-cooled to 4C.

Acceptance Criteria:

- I. Driver or consignee will conduct visual inspection to ensure that produce is clean and in reasonable condition. Produce cannot be infected with moulds, be in a state of significant deterioration or spoilage (contain browning, large areas of bruising) or be infected with insects (fruit flies). No leaking boxes or packages can be accepted.
- II. Outside packaging (boxes, cartoons) may be damaged, however donation cannot be accepted if internal packaging envelopes have been damaged or comprised. (packaged salads, packaged cut vegetables etc).
- III. Product can be accepted beyond best date according to the following sources:
  1. **Letter from manufacturer stating length of time product can be consumed beyond best before**
  2. **Input from Halton Public Health Department\*(see asterisk explanation below)**
  3. **Information from Food Handlers Storage Guide**

**Category 3: Potentially Hazardous Foods**

Category 3 includes potentially hazardous foods such as: dairy & dairy products, egg and egg products, meats, poultry, seafood, all frozen foods, butter etc. (Basically any product requiring refrigeration or freezing). It is critical that potentially hazardous foods are kept at a temperature of 4°C (40°F) or less, or -18C or less for frozen foods. Donations will be transported in a refrigerated vehicle that has been pre-cooled to appropriate temperature and proper thermometers will be used to check the temperature of potentially hazardous food when it is received and during storage at FFL & ReFresh Foods storage facility. These foods will be stored in either a walk in cooler at 4C or lower or walk-in freezer at -18C.

Acceptance Criteria:

- I. Driver or consignee will conduct visual inspection to ensure that product is clean and in reasonable condition. Outside packaging (boxes, cartoons) may be damaged, however donation cannot be accepted if internal packaging envelopes have been damaged or comprised.
- II. Driver will measure temperature of food at time of pick-up. Food must be at 4C for refrigerated foods and -18C for frozen foods. If not, donation will not be accepted. (ensures temperature integrity of donation).
- III. Foods must be in their original unopened containers. However frozen pizzas, prepared meals can be accepted without outer packaging. (e.g. frozen reclamation)

Category 3 products are not accepted beyond their best before date.

#### **Category 4: High Risk Foods**

This category includes prepared meals from restaurants, catering companies & Community & Corporate events (e.g MS Rona Bike Tour, Mercedes Benz Run, Terry Fox Run), and any other source. This category present special challenges as several food categories may available during 1 donation event. (e.g. fruit, bread and sausage). Also prepared foods at restaurants and catering events need to be kept at the appropriate “hot” temperature during serving times and then brought down to 4C for donation purposes.

\* The legislation regarding best before dates is under the Food and Drugs Act B.01.007. The Food and Drug Regulations (FDR) currently require that, with certain exceptions, prepackaged foods with a durable life of 90 days or less be labeled with either a best before date and instructions for proper storage, or a packaged on date and durable life information. Foods with a shelf life of longer than 90 days do not require best before dates.

However, the durable life date (best before date) is not a date after which the product is considered to be unsafe or inedible, nor is it a guarantee of freshness or quality. That is because the durable life date marking system (which each manufacturer determines for themselves) is based upon freshness, rather than safety. There is no restriction on the selling date and it is not illegal to sell a product after the best before date. The best before date serves only as a reference point for consumers who have the option of not purchasing the product should they encounter a date which has passed. The product may still be consumed beyond that date providing it is in an acceptable condition.

Although there is no requirement to label products with a durable life of more than 90 days with a best before date, some companies may opt to use a production date but there is no format required by regulation.

**September 2010 - Draft**