



Industry Food Donation Guidelines

March 2019

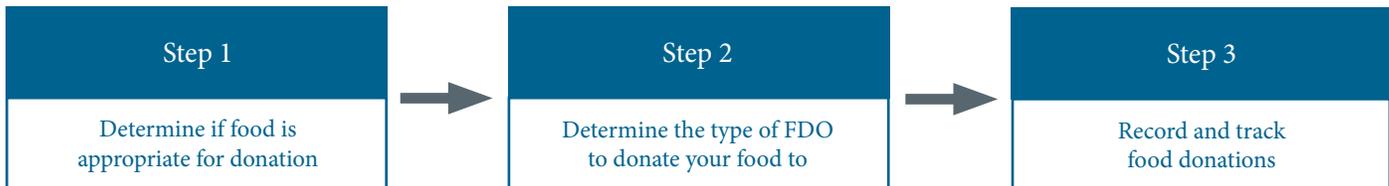
1 Executive Summary and Rationale for Donations

2 Starting and managing a
food donation program
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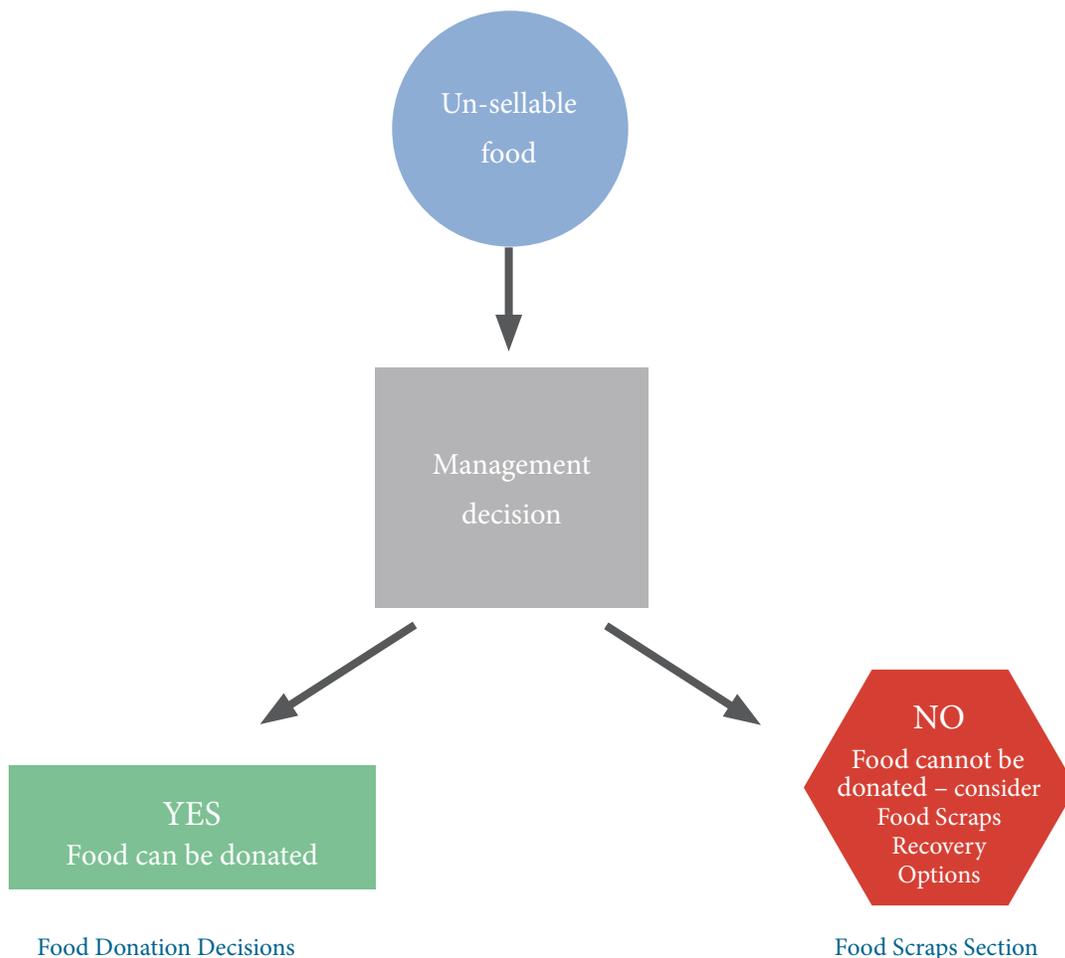
3 Processor, Caterer/Restaurant and Retailer Specific Information

Industry Food Donation Guidelines

3 Steps to Starting and Managing a Food Donation Program



There are many reasons why a food product may be un-sellable, such as overstock of items near the best before date (BBD) or contamination during food processing. Overstocked product can be donated, but contaminated food cannot. When food is un-sellable, a decision must be made to either donate the food to a Food Distribution Organization (FDO), consider food scraps recovery options, or dispose of the food.



Step 1: Determine if Food is Appropriate for Donation



Food Donation Decisions

Decision making around food donations will be slightly different depending on the type of organization (e.g., restaurant, distributor, caterer, farm), food product being considered, and the reasons why the food is un-sellable. A food donation decision matrix is shown in *Figure 1* on the next page. Some companies may already have policies and processes in place for making donation decisions.

SUITABILITY OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRODUCTS: There are a number of factors that determine the suitability of food for different FDOs. Donating to FDOs without knowing their needs and preferences can add to their costs.

IS PRODUCT SAFE? You need to know some basic information about your product. Why is it slated for discard rather than wholesale or retail sale? Is the food:

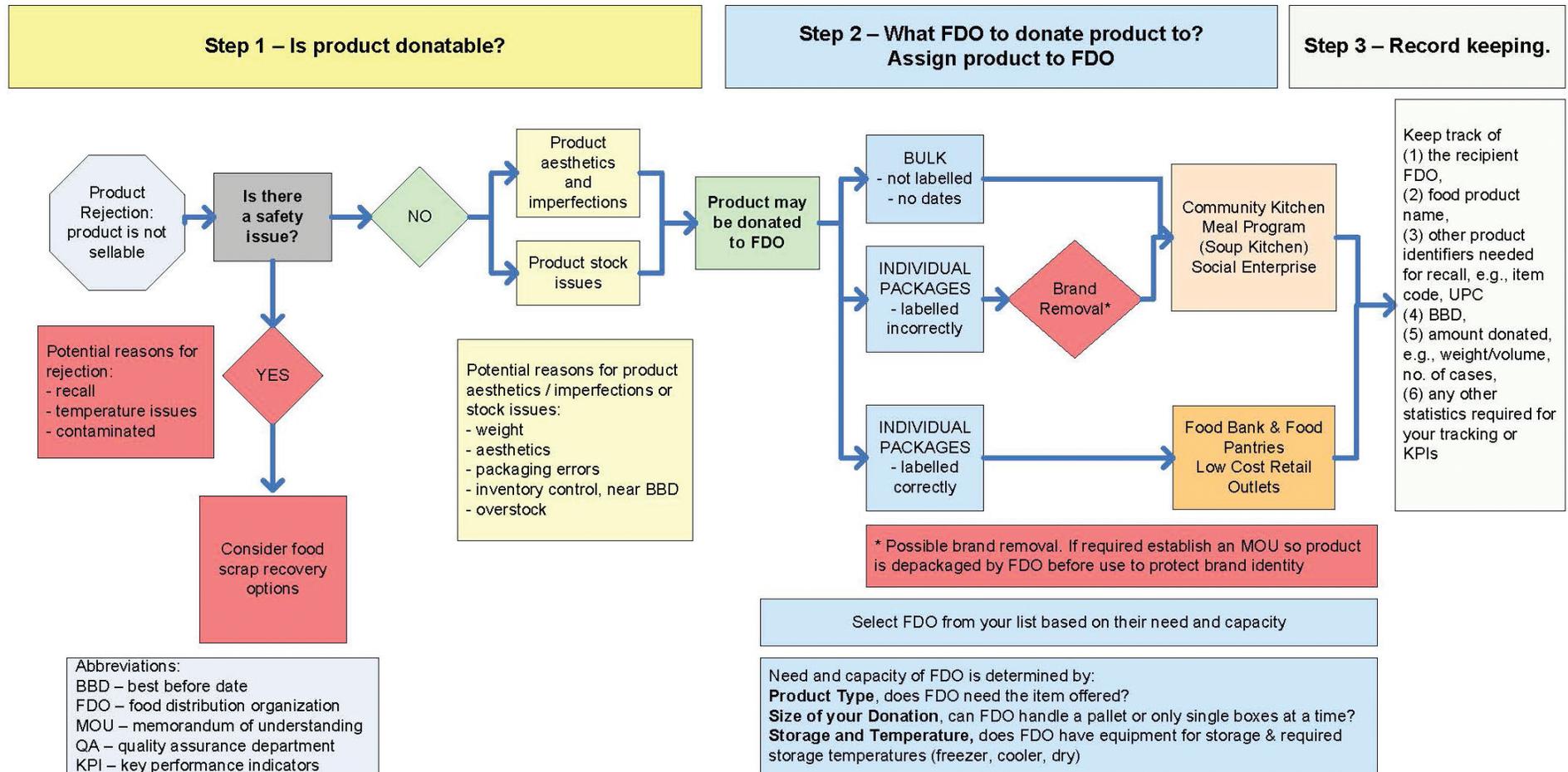
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Part of a food recall?2. Perishable and has it been left unrefrigerated?3. Mouldy, badly bruised or limp?4. Potentially exposed to contamination?	}	<p>If you answered “Yes” for any of questions 1–4, the decision must be to dispose of the product.</p> <p><i>Consult food scrap recovery options.</i></p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Packaged or labelled incorrectly during production?6. Left over from a catered buffet?7. Aesthetics, imperfections (e.g., discoloured, misshapen, or wrong size)	}	<p>If you answered “Yes” for any of questions 5–7, you may be able to donate.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>

Businesses that integrate food donation into their daily operations find that it takes little extra time once these systems are in place

When food is removed from distribution due to packaging or labelling issues, or when it is left over from a professionally catered buffet, the decision is less obvious. In these situations, company policy, a manager’s decision or consulting your quality assurance department may be helpful.

Consult the food donation decision matrix on the next page (*Figure 1*) to lead you through the decision-making process.

Figure 1. Food Donation Decision Matrix



ISSUES TO CONSIDER

There are many opportunities to donate un-sellable or overstocked food throughout the supply chain. The variety of products that could be donated is extensive.

You MAY be able to donate...

- Perishable foods near the best before date.
- Non-perishable foods past the best before date.
- Incorrectly weighed or measured foods that cannot be resold.
- Incorrectly labelled foods—as long as the correct ingredient list can be provided.
- Damaged and imperfect items, and bulk ends. Unopened non-perishable product returns or shipping errors.
- Outdated promotional items, discontinued products, special runs, packs where POs have been cancelled, or other inventory to be cleared out.

BRAND REPUTATION PROTECTION

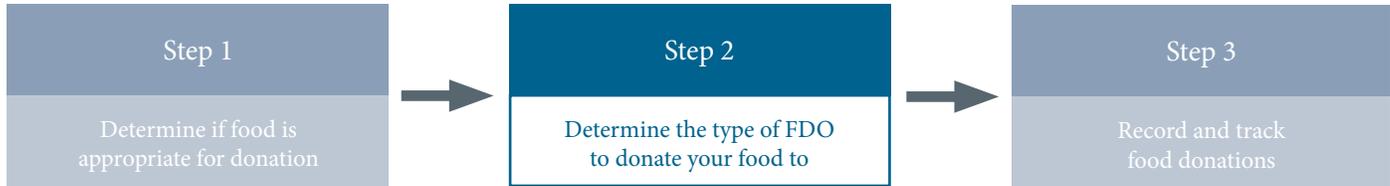
Businesses considering donation may be concerned that their brand's reputation will be negatively affected by donating foods that do not meet their high quality standards. Businesses can discuss brand anonymity with their FDOs and include it in a mutual agreement such as a memorandum of understanding (MOU). FDOs that use the donated food in a meal program will have more control over brand confidentiality than will those providing grocery hampers. However, FDOs must still be able to trace the origins of the food products they receive in case of a recall. MOU templates can be found at www.bccdc.ca/health-professionals/professional-resources/food-donation-guidelines.

BEST BEFORE DATE ISSUES

Food is often removed from inventory because it is close to its best before date (BBD). Most FDOs accept certain foods past the BBD. The BBD is not an indicator that the food is no longer safe to eat, but a date set by the manufacturer to assure the customer of the product's quality—that the food will still have the texture, colour, or flavour that the customer has come to associate with the brand. Generally, food companies apply a BBD that is approximately 20% shorter than the true date after which food quality is expected to deteriorate.¹ FDOs receiving perishable foods past their BBD will want an interpretation of safety for these products. Generally a note or email will suffice. The information provided to the FDO should state the actual BBD, after which foods should not be consumed. Perishable foods may be frozen before their BBD to extend the period that they can be safely used by FDOs.

Inform the FDO about product quality issues and supply a BBD for all donated foods.

Step 2: Determine the Type of FDO to Donate Your Food To



How To Start: Assign The Task To A Specific Person Or Position

Designate someone to make decisions about food donations. This designated “donation liaison” leads the day to day activities involved with food donation. This person may:

- Identify and connect with local FDOs.
- Communicate, coordinate and approve food donations within your company.
- Assess product quality.
- Assess storage capacity of the shipping/receiving departments.
- Train staff to distinguish between healthy edible food and food scraps (waste).
- Keep records of donations to FDOs.
- Be familiar with food production (if you are manufacturing food), and have regular interactions with your quality assurance (QA) department.
- Maintain relationships with FDOs.

Connect With FDOs and Grow the Relationship

FIND FDOs THAT ARE A GOOD FIT

There are many different FDOs in BC. To ensure you’re giving the right kinds of foods to FDOs in your area, you need to learn about their focus, abilities, and clients. Social service agencies, local governments, or faith based groups may be able to refer you to a local FDO that could benefit from your food donations. A partial list of food banks by city can be found on the Food Banks BC website. The Red Book Online provides a guide to services in the Fraser Valley, Metro Vancouver, Squamish-Lillooet, and Sunshine Coast regional districts.

FDOs with meal programs can usually accept foods packaged in bulk. FDOs that cook meals for large numbers of people in inspected kitchens can easily use these products. Community kitchens may also be able to use bulk food in collective cooking programs.

FDOs providing free groceries or operating non-profit retail stores serve individuals and families who would not be able to use bulk packaged food. These FDOs could only use such supplies if they had packaging supplies and equipment to repack the food into smaller amounts suitable for home use.

All FDOs know there are some costs associated with “free” food, but donors will want to ensure that they don’t simply transfer their disposal costs for food scraps to non-profits with limited budgets. Regular staff engagement and education, including visits to your FDO recipients, will help the liaison make the best decisions.

Relationships With FDOs

Building a more formal, long-term relationship with your FDO

will help to clarify expectations for both organizations. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) can be a helpful tool to capture important information such as contacts, hours of business, general expectations, verbal agreements and best practices. [MOU templates](#) are available on the BCCDC website.

There are numerous other ways that businesses can contribute.

- **Volunteer.** Most FDOs rely heavily on volunteers to maintain their daily operations. Consider involving your staff as a team-building activity to increase support for the donation program.
- **Donate money.** FDOs need cash as well as food. Financial donations can help offset operational costs, support a specific program, or purchase foods that have not been donated in sufficient quantities. Charities can offer a tax receipt.
- **Share purchasing power.** FDOs augment their food donations by purchasing additional food. A retailer or wholesaler might share their purchasing power with a partnering FDO in order to help reduce their costs.
- **Share infrastructure.** Many FDOs report needing more access to cold storage and transportation. Donating warehousing space, freezer or cold storage space, or arranging for transportation and delivery from your facilities could be very beneficial.
- **Share packaging, other supplies and services.** Dishes, equipment, storage wares, and environmentally sensitive packaging for supplying personal size portions of foods, as well as services such as graphic design, internet/phone services may also be needed by FDOs.
- **Grow or manufacture food specifically for donation.** Farmers may “grow a row”, and manufacturers may do a special product run specifically intended for an FDO. Consider donating in-demand items from Appendix 1.

Food Banks BC

www.foodbanksBC.com

Food Banks Canada

www.foodbankscanada.ca/utility-pages/find-a-food-bank.aspx#

Red Book Online

redbookonline.bc211.ca/ or call 211

When you are interested in donating food, research your local FDOs online and follow up with a phone call to determine their needs.

Nutrition And Health Are Very Important

FDOs require access to healthy foods to meet the needs of their clients and foster healthy behaviours. *Healthy food and beverage donations include whole foods, as well as minimally refined and processed foods and beverages that have little or no added sugar, sodium, saturated fat, or trans-fat.*

Appendix 1 has a more detailed table of healthy and in-demand foods and beverages needed by FDOs.

- Less nutritious foods may not be acceptable, depending on the FDOs' needs and clients. Many FDOs prefer not to receive pop, candy, chocolate, or other foods that may be culturally unsuitable. Some organizations may feel pressure to accept foods they cannot or choose not to use because they do not want to compromise future donations. Reassure FDOs that you will not withhold future donations if they refuse foods based on internal, nutritional or other criteria.

Expiry dates on infant formula or adult nutrition products cannot be exceeded. Most FDOs need these products available for their clients. Do not donate these products past their expiry date.

Alcohol or foods containing alcohol may not be acceptable for donation at any time.

- Some, but not all, FDOs also accept non-food items for use in their programs and services. Check to see if they accept items such as clothing, household supplies, toys, and pet food.
- Some FDOs serve clients with special medical or nutritional needs. FDOs may need to accommodate dietary requirements, such as not providing foods high in sugar to people with diabetes or maintaining higher standards for food safety when serving clients with compromised immune systems.
- **Trans fat restrictions.** FDOs with meal programs require a permit to operate a food service establishment, which prohibits serving foods that do not comply with the Public Health Impediments Regulation. The regulation restricts trans fat in all foods used to 2% trans fat or less of total fat content for all soft spreadable margarine and oil; and 5% trans fat or less of total fat content for all other foods. Visit www.restricttransfat.ca for more information.

For more information on healthy eating, connect with a registered dietitian at HealthLink BC by dialing 8-1-1, or send an email via their website at: <https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/healthy-eating/email-healthlinkbc-dietitian>.

Consider the Capacity of FDOs

Food donors also need to determine FDOs' capacity for storage, temperature control and transportation of foods. Recommendations given here likely fit with your standard operating procedures.

CAPACITY AND COLD STORAGE

Maintain cold chain integrity up to the point of donation. Perishable foods cannot be left on the loading bay for extended periods. Keep records and share information so the FDO can be confident that the food they are receiving has been handled safely and kept under appropriate temperature control.

Questions to ask about capacity:

1. Is the FDO large enough to handle pallets of food?
2. How many cubic feet of space do they have, and how much space can they allot to the goods you wish to donate?
3. Do they have a walk-in freezer or cooler? What is its capacity?
4. Do they have staff or volunteers available to receive the food? During which hours?

TRANSPORTATION AND DELIVERY

FDOs operate on limited budgets using paid and volunteer labour, and they may not have the logistical capacity to handle all types of donations. Create clear signs or labels that show which FDO will be receiving particular food donations. Contact the FDO to see if pick-up is possible (larger organizations have refrigerated trucks), or consider delivering the donation yourself.

Questions to ask about transportation and pick-up:

1. How and when will the transfer of food from your business to the FDO happen?
2. Does the FDO have its own trucks, or will a cab or personal vehicle be used to pick up the food?
3. What size load can the FDO handle? Do they have a loading dock with pallet jacks, or is their entrance at street level (i.e., will food need to be off-loaded onto hand carts)?
4. If the food for pick-up is frozen or refrigerated, does the FDO have reefer trucks to maintain the cold chain?
5. If foods for donation are sorted at night, will product need to be stored for pickup or delivery to the FDO the next day?

Contacting individual FDOs in your area to get this information ahead of time will facilitate a smooth donation process when food becomes available.

If an FDO's temperature-controlled storage is limited and your company has capacity, suggest storing a portion of the donation at your own facility for an agreed-upon period.

Other best practices for transportation include separating certain items before delivery:²

- Household chemicals and health and beauty products from food
- Allergen from non-allergen foods
- Raw from cooked foods
- Pet foods from food for human consumption

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Food delivery delays may occur for many reasons:

- Drivers late or unavailable
- Multiple site pick-ups
- Heavy traffic
- Complex pick-up and off-load processes

During delays, food safety can be unintentionally compromised. Maintaining the cold chain for perishable foods is essential for businesses and FDOs, as well as for customers and clients receiving foods. Perishable foods requiring cold storage should not be left in the loading bay and should never be out of temperature control, whether at the facility, during transport, or at the FDO. Food Banks Canada guidance for rejection criteria for food items are to:²

- Reject refrigerated products warmer than 7°C
- Reject frozen protein products warmer than -5°C.

Frozen protein products received at -12°C to -6°C, and refrigerated products received at 5°C to 7°C, are considered deviations. Products may be accepted if a supervisor is notified and provides special handling instructions and the deviation is properly documented. In cold weather, protect fresh produce, canned goods and other products from freezing if it can affect quality.²

PLANNING AND SCHEDULING

Give as much advance notice as possible so the FDO can plan for receiving, storing, and using the food items. Check the hours of operation for each FDO. They may not be able to pick up or receive goods at certain times of day because no one is working at that time, or if they are busy preparing meals. If possible, set up a regular schedule for delivery or pick-up that meets both organizations' needs, as this will establish a routine that minimizes logistical surprises and encourages regular, smaller donations that may be easier for organizations to handle.

Consult the checklists in Appendix 2:

- Checklist for routine donations
- Checklist for first time donations

DOCUMENTATION

Paperwork should be completed before transferring foods, ensuring any important information accompanies the food being shipped (e.g., food identification, ingredient list, allergen labeling, nutrition information, BBD, etc.).

The controls, standards, and practices you follow to deliver donated foods should be no different than those used to deliver foods to the consumer via a distribution warehouse or directly to retail.

Step 3: Record and Track Food Donations



RECORD KEEPING

Food product recalls can occur at any time for any number of reasons. Businesses and FDOs need to work together to ensure donated food is traceable.

- Apply the same coding and procedures for donated foods that you use for the consumer or wholesale market.
- Food donors need to track food donations using a variety of identification codes in case it is necessary to retrieve food that has been deemed unsafe to eat.
- If any ingredient, such as a spice, is recalled, it should be identifiable in donated foods, just as it is when products are destined for the consumer market.
- If your business uses a waste sheet, note the codes and volumes in this document so they can be traced following a recall.
- FDOs also need to maintain records about the food donations they receive, use, and/or redistribute. They should be encouraged to subscribe to the Canadian Food Inspection Agencies Food Recall Warning emails and have a food recall process in place.

Donated food needs to be traceable in the event of a recall.

CHARITABLE TAX RECEIPTS AND FDOs

Charitable tax receipts can only be issued by registered charities. Not all FDOs have charity status even though they are non-profit organizations.

The costs of the donated product can still be expensed, even if you donate to a non-registered FDO, e.g., when goods are handled as wastage reports in the businesses' accounts. To receive charitable tax receipts, businesses are required to maintain records about their food donations and may need to provide this information to their FDOs for verification. Check the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) policies online.^{3,4}

Businesses desiring charitable tax receipts should:

- (1) check the FDO's charitable status and policy on receipts before making the donation;
- (2) consult with an accountant; and
- (3) follow the CRA policy.

While some FDOs may issue charitable receipts for foods near the BBD based on weights donated, some do not. Be aware that they are not obligated to write receipts.

An Excel spreadsheet can be used to generate an invoice to the FDO charity. See *Processor, Caterer/Restaurant and Retailer Specific Industry Food Guidelines* for an example. These receipts can provide financial benefits as well as a way to track donations for social responsibility audits and highlight employee achievements. Tracking the number of meals and donations can be a useful Key Performance Indicator for your company.

Items required for donation record keeping, generating receipts, and KPIs are shown in the table below.

Keep track of the following:

- Donation date
- Name of the recipient FDO
- Name of the item
- Unit of measure for the item (e.g., cartons or kg)
- Quantity donated
- BBD (Best Before Date)
- Production dates, UPC codes, lot codes, or specific batch numbers
- Wholesale unit cost for the item
- COGS or cost of goods sold (multiply the unit cost of the item by the number of units)

Optional:

- Weight of food donations (kg)
- No. of meals by portion donated

Starting in 2015, organics (e.g., food or food scraps) are banned from Metro Vancouver garbage. Healthy edible food can be donated. Waste or scraps should be collected for compost or biofuel.⁶

Food Scrap Recovery Options for Food Unsuitable for the FDO

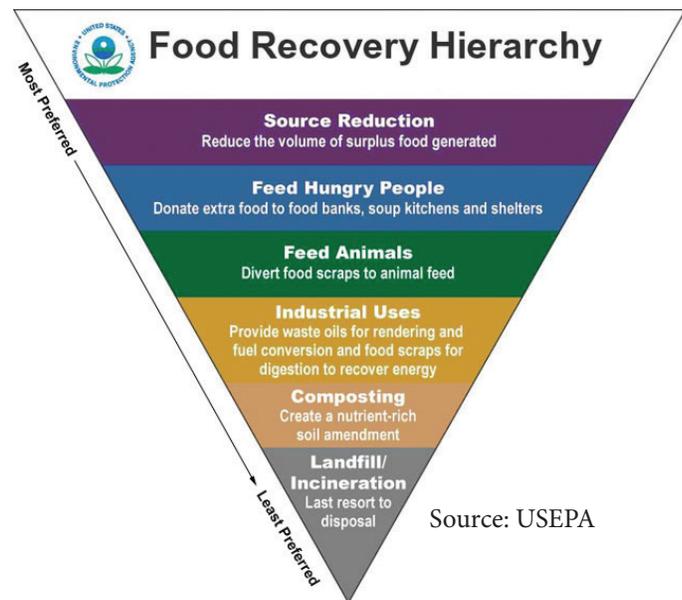
Food surplus or spoilage is often unavoidable. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides guidance on the best uses for surplus food and food scraps recovery management.⁵ Here are some ideas for managing surplus food and food scraps.

Feed Animals. A relationship with a livestock farmer or an animal rescue agency can help you divert fresh/raw foods. Some businesses convert food scraps into animal food products.

Industrial Uses. Fat, oil, and grease can be rendered into a raw material to make biodiesel, soaps, cosmetics, and other products. Anaerobic digestion of food scraps and waste oils produces biogas that can generate heat and electricity, fiber that can be used as a nutrient-rich soil conditioner, and liquid that can be used for fertilizers.

Composting. Ask your hauler or municipality for information about organics recycling program.

See the BCCDC website for examples of food scraps recovery options.



Other Resources

Closing the Loop With Organics Recycling: A practical guide for restaurants and food service operators
<http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/solid-waste/SolidWastePublications/ClosingtheLoop.pdf>

FarmFolk/CityFolk Foodprint Project: <http://www.farmfolkcityfolk.ca/projects/foodprint/>

WRAP UK: <http://www.wrap.org.uk/content/hospitality-and-food-service-wraps-work-0>

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5. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Sustainable Management of Food. [cited Mar 14, 2019] Available from: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food>.
6. MetroVancouver. Food scraps recycling. Burnaby, BC: MetroVancouver; 2015 [cited 2015 Feb 25]; Available from: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/solid-waste/food-scraps-recycling/Pages/default.aspx>.

Appendix 1 – Identifying Healthy and In-Demand Food and Beverages for Donation

Healthy, In-Demand Donations	What makes a food or beverage healthy?
Vegetables and Fruit	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh vegetables and fruit • Canned vegetables and fruit, including unsweetened sauces and purees • Frozen vegetables and fruit • Dried vegetables and fruit • 100% fruit or vegetable juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepackaged products listing a vegetable or fruit (not a sugar) as the first ingredient • Canned fruit packed in water or 100% juice • Canned vegetables and 100 % vegetable juices with little or no added sodium (<15% Daily Value) • 100% vegetable and fruit juices with no added sugar
Grain and Grain Products	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grains (e.g., quinoa, barley, brown basmati rice, wild rice) • Noodles or pasta, especially whole grain • Hot and cold cereals, especially whole grain (e.g., oatmeal) • Bread, especially whole grain • Crackers, especially whole grain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepackaged products listing a grain, especially a whole grain, as the first ingredient • Gluten-free options are welcomed • All products meets the restriction of 5% trans fat or less of total fat content
Meat and Other High Protein Foods	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh or frozen meat, poultry, fish, or seafood • Canned poultry, especially chicken or turkey • Canned fish or seafood • Eggs • Dried or canned beans, peas, and lentils • Nut and seed butters (e.g., peanut butter, tahini) • Nuts and seeds • Soy products (e.g., tofu, tempeh) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean or extra lean meats and poultry • Pre-packaged meat, poultry, fish, and seafood with little or no added sodium (<15% Daily Value) • Nut and seed butters with little or no added sugar and sodium (<15% Daily Value) • Nut and seeds with little or no added sugar and sodium (<15% Daily Value)
Milk, Dairy and Alternatives	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk, including powdered, canned (evaporated) and shelf-stable UHT • Fortified soy beverages • Yogurt • Cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk and milk alternatives with little or no added sugar
Cooking and Baking Ingredients	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsaturated vegetable oils (e.g., olive, canola, soybean, safflower) • Non-hydrogenated margarine • Grain flour, especially whole grain (e.g., whole wheat flour) • Baking powder and baking soda • Spices and herbs • Sauces and dressings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All soft spreadable margarine and oil meets the restriction of 2% trans fat or less of total fat content • All other food meets the restriction of 5% trans fat or less of total fat content • Gluten-free options

Appendix 2 – Checklists for routine and first time donations

Checklist for routine food donations

- o Confirm that un-sellable food is safe to donate (no safety issue with product)
 - o QA / manager confirmation
- o Assign food product to FDO
- o Paperwork for food product is completed (if required)
 - o Label
 - o Ingredients if not on existing packaging
 - o BBD
- o Contact FDO and confirm pick-up/drop-off
 - o Signage for FDO
 - o Site location
 - o Date and Time
- o Donation information is recorded
 - o for write-off
 - o for charitable tax gifts from inventory (invoice FDOs monthly)

Checklist for first time donations

- o Assign a liaison in your company
- o Investigate your local FDOs
 - o Meal program
 - o Food bank/pantry
 - o Kitchen
 - o Low-cost retail
 - o Social enterprise
- o What is their need/capacity in relation to your product availability?
- o Can they pick up? o Do they have refrigerated storage?
- o Do they have charitable status to issue tax receipts?
- o Determine what products from your inventory are suitable for your local FDOs
- o Establish relationships with FDOs
 - o Have face-to-face meetings
 - o Sign-off agreements/MOUs
 - o Discuss pick-up times/ Volumes/ Branding issues, etc.
- o Financial management and statistics
 - o Set up a spreadsheet for recording information/statistics
 - o Donated foods
 - o Food scraps recovery
 - o Key performance indicator statistics
 - o Consult your own accountant/lawyer on managing financial aspects of donations
 - o FDOs to invoice (charitable status)
 - o Write off donations