

Policy for Accepting and Transporting Foods



It's important to keep food safe while transporting it to the pantry. When you are picking up food from a food bank, a retailer, a community garden, or a farmers' market, several steps will help keep the food safe to consume.

Accept foods which meet nutrition and food safety standards

Individuals who are responsible for transporting food for the food pantry—either by picking food up at a food bank or perhaps through gleaning in the community—may need to communicate what foods the pantry is able to accept.

- Provide your driver(s) with the Food Pantry Nutrition and Food Safety Policies. Ask them to refer to these documents, if needed, when making decisions about food that is gleaned from the community.
- Regardless of whether the food pantry has a food safety policy in place, you **should not accept**:
 - Home canned foods
 - Foods prepared in a home kitchen
 - Food from an unlicensed food processor—the **exception** is fresh produce from a grower
 - Packaged foods that are not in their original labeled, sealed package.
 - Prepared foods are not packaged to prevent contamination. [Unpackaged food should not be transported in garbage bags, even for a short period of time, and even if the food is dry, e.g. bread. If necessary, arrange for delivery when the food can be properly packaged.]
 - Foods where the packaging is heavily soiled or damaged so as to put the contents at-risk.

- Obviously spoiled food.
- Hot/cold foods that are not temperature controlled.

Keep your transport vehicle and transport containers clean

A clean vehicle will help prevent the food that you transport from becoming contaminated.

- Keep your **vehicle(s) clean** of dirt, insects, and animals.
- If you are using a car to transport food, consider using a clean tarp or plastic sheet to cover the area where food will be placed. This will protect both the food and your vehicle.
- If you are using a dedicated truck or van to transport food, set up a schedule to routinely clean the vehicle to prevent cross-contamination.
- **Containers** such as totes or bins that are used to transport bulk items such as produce or bread should be dedicated for food transport and should be **cleaned after each use** to prevent cross-contamination.
- **Separate** items such as raw meats from ready-to-eat foods like bread and fresh produce.
- **Do not reuse disposable containers** to transport food. Do not pick up food that is packaged inappropriately, i.e. fruit juice in a used milk container.