



Shelf Life &
Food Safety
Guidelines

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SHELF LIFE GUIDE.....	3
GENERAL INFORMATION	3
SHELF STABLE FOODS GUIDE	4
BAKERY FOODS GUIDE	6
REFRIGERATED FOODS GUIDE	7
FROZEN FOODS GUIDE	8
FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES.....	10
MICROORGANISMS	12
FACTORS THAT CAN PREVENT FOODBORNE ILLNESS	13
TRANSPORTATION	14
RECEIVING.....	14
STORAGE	15
ALLERGENS	16
PERSONAL HYGEINE.....	17
HAND HYGEINE	18
SORTING AND EVALUATION.....	19
BABY FOOD DISTRIBUTION GUIDELINES	21
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES.....	22

Shelf Life Guide

Shelf Life Guide

This guide is to be used as a reference to determine whether or not products are nearing or past the date that they may be safely consumed.

Food products are dated in three ways.

1. Sell By Date - The Sell By Date determines how long a store should display the product for sale in retail outlets.
2. Best If Used By Date - The Best If Used By Date or Best If Used Before Date indicates the date that is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a final purchase or safety date.
3. Use By Date - The Use By Date is the last date recommended for use of the product while at peak quality. The manufacturer determines this date.

Product dating on food is not required by federal regulation except on infant formula and baby food which must not be distributed or consumed beyond the expiration date.

An expired date does not necessarily mean that the food needs to be discarded. The dates are used by stores to ensure that they rotate stock and keep it as fresh as possible and is also useful in the event of product recalls.

Some products will have coded dates. Food manufacturers have unique coding systems. Some manufacturers list day, month and year of production, while other companies reference only the year. These codes are usually imprinted on the top or bottom of the package. Other numbers may appear and reference the specific plant manufacturing or product information and are not useful to consumers. If specific product dates are needed most manufacturers offer a toll-free number to call for questions about food expiration dates.

Note: For month coding, if a number is used, numbers 1 through 9 represent January through September, and letters O for October, N for November and D for December. If letters are used, A=Jan. and L=Dec., unless otherwise noted.
Note: For year coding, 8=1998; 9=1999; 0=2000; 1=2001; 2=2002, etc.

Shelf Life Guide

Always use your best judgment when determining the safety of a product.

The best guideline for determining if a product should be distributed is:

a good knowledge and understanding of food safety, common sense, sound judgment and thorough examination for any kind of contamination or mislabeling of the product

Please refer to the following product shelf life guide when evaluating products.

Keep in mind that the

date extensions are the maximum to be distributed beyond the package date

and any questionable product should be discarded.

A good rule of thumb is:

‘When in doubt, throw it out!’

Shelf Life Guide

Shelf Life Guide, cont.

Shelf Stable Foods

		<u>Date Extension</u>
Baby Food		Package Use By Date
Baking Ingredients	Baking Powder	6 months
	Baking Soda	18 months
	Biscuit and Pancake Mix	15 months
	Cake, Brownie, Bread Mixes	18 months
	Chocolate, Unsweetened/Semi-Sweet	24 months
	Chocolate Syrup	2 years
	Cocoa	indefinitely
	Corn Meal, Regular Degerminated	12 months
	Corn Meal, Stone Ground or Blue	1 month
	Cornstarch	18 months
	Flour, White	12 months
	Flour, Whole Wheat	1 month
	Frosting, Canned	10 months
	Frosting, Dry Mix	12 months
	Gelatin, Flavored	18 months
	Gelatin, Unflavored	3 years
	Pudding Mixes	12 months
	Tapioca	12 months
Beans, Dried, Split Peas, Lentils		12 months
Canned Goods	Low Acid (such as meat, fish, gravy, stew, beans, pasta, carrots, corn, peas, potatoes, spinach)	4 years
	High Acid (such as juice, fruit, pickles, sauerkraut, tomato products, vinegar based)	18 months
Cereal	Ready to Eat	12 months
	Cook & Serve (Oatmeal, Cream of Wheat, Grits, etc.)	12 months
Coffee	Whole Bean, Non-Vacuum Bags	3 weeks
	Ground, Canned/Vacuum Pack	2 years
	Instant	12 months
Condiments	BBQ Sauce	12 months
	Cocktail & Chili Sauce	12 months
	Garlic, Chopped	18 months
	Gravy, Jars & Cans	5 years
	Gravy, Dry Mix	2 years
	Honey	12 months

Shelf Life Guide

Shelf Life Guide, cont.

Shelf Stable Foods, Continued

Date Extension

	Horseradish, jar	12 months
	Ketchup	12 months
	Jams, Jellies & Preserves	12 months
	Maple Syrup, Pure	12 months
	Marshmallows & Marshmallow Crème	4 months
	Mayonnaise	3 months
	Mustard	18 months
	Olives, Black & Green	18 months
	Milk, Canned & Evaporated	12 months
	Molasses	12 months
	Mushrooms, Dried	6 months
	Peanut Butter	9 months
	Pickles	12 months
	Salad Dressing	12 months
	Salsa/Picante/Taco Sauce	12 months
	Steak Sauce, Worcestershire	15 months
	Syrup, Pancake, Maple, & other	12 months
	Vinegar	2 years
Diet Powder Mixes		6 months
Fruit, Dried		6 months
Oils	Olive	6 months
	Nut Oils	6 months
	Vegetable	6 months
	Vegetable Oil Spray	2 years
	Shortening, Solid	8 months
Pectin		Package Use By Date
Soda, Carbonated Drinks, Mixers		
	Diet Soda, Bottles & Cans	3 months
	Regular Soda, Bottles	3 months
	Regular Soda, Cans	9 months
Snacks	Cookies, Packaged	2 months
	Crackers	8 months
	Nuts, Jars & Cans	12 months
	Popcorn, Jars	2 years
	Popcorn, Popped in Bags	3 months
	Popcorn, Microwave	12 months
	Potato Chips	2 months
Pasta	Without Eggs	2 years
	Egg Noodles	2 years
Potatoes, Instant		1 year

Shelf Life Guide

Shelf Life Guide, cont.

Shelf Stable Foods, Continued

		<u>Date Extension</u>
Rice	White or Wild Brown	2 years
	Flavored Mixes	6 months
Sauces	Spaghetti, Chili, etc.	2 years
	Cream Sauces with Milk	1 year
Spices	Extracts, Vanilla, Lemon, etc.	3 years
	Ground Spices	3 years
	Herbs, Dried	2 years
	Pepper, Paprika, Chili Powder	2 years
	Whole Spices	4 years
Sugar	Brown	4 months
	Granulated	2 years
	Confectioners	18 months
	Sugar Substitutes	2 years
Tea	Bags	18 months
	Loose	3 years
	Instant	2 years
Toaster Pastries	Fruit Filled	6 months
	Non-Fruit Filled	9 months
Tomatoes	Sun Dried/Oil Packed	12 months
	Cellophane Packed	9 months
Yeast		Package Use By Date
Water, Bottled		2 years

Bakery Items

		<u>Date Extension</u>
Bread	Croissants	1 day
	Flat (Tortillas, Pita, etc.)	4 days
	Rolls	Package Use By Date
	Sliced	4 days
Cakes	Angel Food, Chiffon, Sponge	2 days
	Chocolate	2 days
	Fruit Cake	1 month
	Pound Cake	4 days
Cookies		3 weeks
Doughnuts	Glazed, Cake	2 days
	Cream Filled	4 days
Pastries, Danish		2 days
Pies	Fruit	2 days
	Mincemeat	2 days
	Pecan	2 hours
	Pumpkin	2 hours
Quiche		4 days
Vegetable or Meat Filled		2 hours

Shelf Life Guide

Shelf Life Guide, cont.

Refrigerated Foods

Beverages

Juice in Cartons

Condiments

Pesto/Salsa

Sour Cream Based Dip

Dairy Products

Butter

Buttermilk

Cheese, Hard (Cheddar/Swiss)

Cheese, Soft (Brie, Bel Paese)

Cottage Cheese/Ricotta

Cream Cheese

Cream, Whipping

Cream, Whipped Canned/Aerosol Real

Cream, Whipped Canned/Aerosol Non-Dairy

Cream Half & Half

Egg Substitute

Eggnog

Eggs

Margarine

Milk

Pudding

Sour Cream

Yogurt

Deli Foods

Entrees Cold or Hot

Store Sliced Lunch Meat

Salads

Dough

Canned, Biscuits, Rolls, Pizza Dough

Pie Crust, Ready to Bake

Cookie Dough

Fish

Lean Fish (Cod, Flounder, Haddock, Sole, etc.)

Fatty Fish (Bluefish, Mackerel, Salmon, etc.)

Smoked Fish, Vacuum Packed

Shellfish

Shrimp, Scallops, Crayfish, Squid

Shucked Clams, Mussels, Oysters

Live Clams, Mussels, Crabs, Lobster, Oysters

Cooked Shellfish

Meat, Fresh

Beef/Lamb/Pork/Veal Chops, Steaks & Roasts

Ground Meat

Liver/Tongue/Chitterlings

Date Extension

Refrigerated

3 weeks

Package Use By Date

15 days

3 months

7 days

6 months

1 week

15 days

2 weeks

1 month

4 weeks

3 months

4 days

10 days

5 days

5 weeks

6 months

7 days

Package Use By Date

15 days

15 days

4 days

5 days

5 days

4 days

Package Use By Date

Package Use By Date

2 days

2 days

14 days

2 days

2 days

2 days

4 days

4 days

2 days

2 days

If Frozen

2 months

9 months

3 months

6 months

6 months

4 months

12 months

3 months

2 months

3 months

2 months

3 months

2 months

2 months

6 months

3 months

2 months

6 months

6 months

3 months

3 months

12 months

4 months

4 months

Shelf Life Guide



Shelf Life Guide, cont.

Refrigerated Foods, Continued

Meat, Fresh	Beef/Lamb/Pork/Veal Chops, Steaks & Roasts
	Ground Meat
	Liver/Tongue/Chitterlings
Meat, Smoked or Processed	Bacon
	Corned Beef (in pouch w/pickling juices)
	Ham, Canned
	Ham, Fully Cooked Whole
	Ham, Fully Cooked Slices & Halves
	Ham, Cook Before Eating
	Hot Dogs/Lunch Meat
	Sausage, Raw
	Sausage, Smoked Links & Patties
	Sausage, Hard (Pepperoni)
	Pasta, Fresh
Poultry, Fresh	Chicken or Turkey, Whole
	Chicken or Turkey, Parts
	Duckling or Goose, Whole
	Giblets
Poultry, Cooked	Chicken Nuggets/Patties
	Fried Chicken
	Ground Turkey or Chicken
	Lunch Meat
	Rotisserie Chicken

Date Extension

Refrigerated

If Frozen

4 days	12 months
2 days	4 months
2 days	4 months
7 days	1 month
7 days	1 month
9 months	
7 days	2 months
4 days	2 months
7 days	2 months
2 weeks	2 months
2 days	2 months
7 days	2 months
3 weeks	2 months
2 days	2 months
2 days	12 months
2 days	9 months
2 days	6 months
2 days	4 months
2 days	3 months
4 days	4 months
2 days	4 months
2 weeks	2 months
4 days	4 months

Frozen Foods

Bagels
Bread Dough
Burritos/Sandwiches
Egg Substitutes
Fish, Breaded
Fish, Raw
Fruit, Berries/Melons
Guacamole
Ice Cream/Sherbet/Sorbet
Juice Concentrates
Lobster Tail
Pancakes/Waffles
Sausage
Shrimp, Shellfish
TV Dinners/Entrees/Breakfast
Vegetables
Whipped Topping

Date Extension

2 months
Package Use By Date
2 months
12 months
3 months
6 months
6 months
4 months
4 months
12 months
3 months
2 months
2 months
12 months
3 months
8 months
8 months

Reasons to Promote Food Safety

Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and its network of feeding partners must work diligently to promote food safety practices primarily **to prevent foodborne illness and provide safe, wholesome food**. Proper food handling will ensure that the food we distribute is safe to consume.

A secondary reason to promote and practice good food safety policies is to **maintain and recruit new food donors**. Blue Ridge Area Food Bank must provide ongoing assurance that donated products meet safety standards throughout the distribution process.

Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is dependent upon donors and stocks its warehouse through food and non-food contributions. It also receives cash donations that are used to fund warehouse operations. Donors can be individuals or organizations and include grocery stores, national food suppliers, regional food growers, community organizations and individual community members participating in food drives.

Using proper food safety standards is necessary for BRAFB and its partner agencies to be good stewards of donations and maintain a positive reputation in the areas we serve and with our donors.

Risk management is another good reason for following these food safety guidelines. Careful attention to food safety policies will reduce the legal and financial risk associated with foodborne illness. Like other nonprofits, food banks are responsible for the safety and quality of food they distribute to clients.

In 1996, the federal government enacted a law that protects donors from liability when they contribute to food banks. This law, called the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, was established to encourage donation of food and grocery products to nonprofit organizations for distribution to needy individuals. Some food banks misinterpret this act, believing it protects them from liability. However, *this act does not protect the nonprofit organizations that receive donations and distribute food – only those making donations*. It also specifies that donor protections outlined in the act do not supersede state or local health regulations.

The discussion of the act below is also available at:

<http://www.feedingamerica.org/partners/product-partners/protecting-our-partners.aspx>

Why Food Safety Matters

Food can be potentially harmful and can cause illness and even death when handled improperly or in an unsafe manner causing food poisoning or foodborne illness. Foodborne illness happens when a person consumes a product that has spoiled or been contaminated by a harmful outside pathogen.

The food that we distribute comes from a variety of sources and, in some cases, endures two or three times the amount of handling and transport than food purchased at a grocery store which means we must make food safety a top priority. A good food safety program must keep food safe throughout the entire process and identify and remove unsafe food before it reaches the consumer.

Foodborne Illness is usually a result of food poisoning or foodborne infection.

Food poisoning can be caused by chemicals, bacteria, or certain foods like poisonous mushrooms. Symptoms, such as vomiting, can occur within hours of eating.



The most common foodborne illnesses are caused by foodborne infections. Foodborne infections are caused by microorganisms that grow inside of our bodies or in food. Diarrhea, fever, headache, stomach ache and vomiting are symptoms of foodborne infections.

There are four types of microorganisms that can contaminate food and cause foodborne illness: bacteria, viruses, parasites and fungi.

These microorganisms can be arranged into two groups: spoilage microorganisms and pathogens. Mold is a spoilage microorganism. While its appearance, smell, and taste are not very appetizing, it typically does not cause illness. Pathogens, like Salmonella and Hepatitis A virus may cause some form of illness when ingested. Unlike spoilage microorganisms, pathogens cannot be seen, smelled or tasted in food. Routine food safety practices are necessary to prevent contamination all the way from farm to table.

Microorganisms

Bacteria are of the greatest concern of all microorganisms. Understanding them and the environment in which they grow is the first step in controlling them.

- They are a living, single-celled organism.
- They may be carried by a variety of means such as food, water, soil, humans or insects.
- Under favorable conditions, they can reproduce very rapidly.
- Some can survive freezing.
- Some turn into spores which protects them from unfavorable conditions.
- Some can cause food spoilage; others can cause illness.
- Some cause illness by producing toxins as they multiply, die, and break down. These toxins are not typically destroyed by cooking.



Viruses are the smallest of the microbial contaminants. Viruses can't grow in food. However, once eaten they grow inside a person's intestines. Viruses are responsible for several foodborne illnesses such as Hepatitis A.

- They are not complete cells so they live on a living cell to reproduce.
- Some may survive cooler and freezer temperatures. They can be transmitted from person to person, from people to food and from people to food-contact surfaces.
- They can contaminate both food and water supplies.
- They usually contaminate food due to food handler's poor personal hygiene.

Parasites are much smaller than their hosts, show a high degree of specialization for their mode of life, and reproduce more quickly and in greater numbers than their hosts.

- They are living organisms that need a host to survive.
- They grow naturally in many animals - such as pigs, cats, rodents, and fish and can be transmitted to humans.
- Most are very small, often microscopic, but larger than bacteria.
- They pose hazards to both food and water.



Foodborne illness usually arises from improper handling, preparation, or food storage. Good hygiene practices before, during, and after food preparation can reduce the chances of contracting an illness. There is a general consensus in the public health community that regular hand-washing is one of the most effective defenses against the spread of foodborne illness. The action of monitoring food to ensure that it will not cause foodborne illness is known as food safety.

Food Safety Guidelines

Factors that can prevent foodborne illness include:

Temperature Control

Most food can be safely stored for extended periods of time when temperature control procedures are followed carefully. However, when food is not kept at safe temperatures, favorable conditions exist for dangerous pathogens to thrive. These pathogens can lead to unsafe contaminated food that otherwise might have been safe for consumption.



Cleanliness



Food handlers can cause illness when they transfer microorganisms to food they touch. Often these microorganisms come from the food handlers themselves, even when they are otherwise healthy. Maintaining proper personal hygiene and clean facilities and following hygienic hand practices reduce contamination by food handlers.

Identification of Cross Contamination

Cross contamination is the transfer of microorganisms from one food or surface to another. Food drive product arrives mixed and must be carefully sorted to avoid cross contamination. Juice boxes with leakage, dented cans and broken eggs are examples of product with cross contamination risk. Cross contamination can be prevented by creating physical and/or procedural barriers between products and by identifying contamination early in the distribution process.



Pest Control

Pests are another potential source of contamination. Insects, birds, mice, rats, bats and other rodents are all considered pests. They may carry foodborne pathogens and are attracted to places where food is stored. When they come in contact with food, the risk of contamination is high simply by their presence or droppings. There are several ways to prevent and control pests.

Identification of Spoilage

Mold is an example of a spoilage microorganism. Its appearance, smell and taste are not appealing, making it easier to identify. Spoiled product must be separated from usable product before cross contamination occurs.

Transportation

Food safety begins with transportation.

Vehicle Cleanliness is important to promote food safety during transport. The cab and storage areas of transport vehicles should be cleaned regularly and the box should be swept and free of debris while the cab and exterior should be washed and free of trash.

Temperature Control must be properly maintained at all times to ensure food safety. Temperatures should be tested before loading into the vehicle. Product that is not at proper temperature levels, is visibly contaminated or damaged beyond use should be removed from the order. Thermal blankets or coolers should be used to transport refrigerated and frozen products to aid in temperature control if a refrigerated vehicle is not available.



Receiving

Receiving is the first opportunity to inspect product for food safety issues.

There should be a person responsible for receiving product that ensures that food safety practices are employed throughout the receiving process. He/she should:

- Check product quality
- Check temperature
- Check for visible signs of contamination
- Ensure timely/proper storage of refrigerated and frozen items

Products that do not meet temperature requirements or are visibly contaminated should be separated from good product and marked as unusable.

Food Safety Guidelines

Storage

Proper storage is a critical element in food safety.

Timely transition to storage is a key component of food safety. product should be moved to the proper storage are within 24 while frozen and refrigerated products should be moved to cooler immediateltly.



Product placement is another important consideration when planning safe storage of food. Food items must be stored separately from cleaners, chemicals, petroleum based products, toxic and corrosive materials. Chemicals and other non-food items must never be stored above food and should be on separate pallets or shelving away from food. If pet food is in the facility it should be stored at least four feet away from food.

Products must be at least 6 inches above the floor and 4 to 18 inches away from walls.

Storage Temperatures



Frozen foods	zero degrees or lower
Refrigerated foods	41 degrees or lower
Cut Produce	41 degrees or lower
Fresh Produce	Room temperature but should be kept cool if possible
Dry foods	Room temperatures but should not be stored at temperatures above 85 degrees

All food storage areas should be neat, clean and free of debris.

Allergens are stored in specific areas of the warehouse and in a manner to prevent cross contamination.

Allergens

Allergen recognition and control are key components to food safety. Products containing allergens should be stored in a manner that eliminates the possibility of cross contamination. There are more than 170 different food items that can cause some form of allergic reaction.

The most common allergens are:

- Wheat
- Eggs
- Tree nuts
- Soy
- Peanuts
- Seafood
- Additives such sulphites, nitrites and MSG
- Dairy products



Allergic reactions may occur immediately or hours later. Symptoms may include breathing difficulty, swelling of the lips and tongue, vomiting, hives, rashes, and in extreme cases even death.



ALL FOOD DISTRIBUTED MUST HAVE INGREDIENT LABELS INCLUDING ANY ALLERGENS



Personal Hygiene

Food handlers can transfer microorganisms to food even if they appear healthy. In the distribution process, product passes through many sets of hands before reaching the consumer. Personal hygiene and hand washing in particular are important ingredients for promoting food safety and reducing contamination thus lowering the risk of foodborne illness.



Persons known to be affected with a communicable disease or a carrier of such disease should not work in a warehouse or product storage area where there is possibility contaminating food product with pathogenic organisms or transmitting disease to other individuals.

Gloves should be worn at all times by food handlers. Agencies should provide food safe disposable gloves for all distribution personnel. Heavy duty work gloves may be worn when lifting or carrying product in sealed containers (example: lettuce wrapped in cellophane). Disposable food safe gloves should be used when lifting or carrying product that does not have protective packaging (example: unwrapped open leaf lettuce). When handling different products in a sequence (eggs, then lettuce), disposable food safe gloves should be discarded and replaced after handling each type of product to avoid contamination.

Sores on hands and arms should be covered by a clean bandage when handling food. Make sure it keeps the wound from leaking. A single-use glove or a finger cot (a finger cover) over bandages on hands or fingers.

Clean clothing should be worn when handling food. Soiled clothing may carry pathogens that can cause foodborne illnesses.

Hair should be tied back to prevent loose strands from falling into product. Adequate hair restraints should be worn at all times.

Food and beverage should be consumed only in designated break areas away from the food distribution area and storage facility. Food scraps or containers must be disposed of properly. Smoking and chewing tobacco should not be allowed in the food distribution, handling or storage areas.

Hand Hygiene

Good hand hygiene can prevent the transfer pathogens to food. So you must care for them in ways that keep food safe. One critical practice is washing your hands the right way at the right times.

Steps for Proper Hand washing:

1. Use soap and running water (as warm as you can tolerate).
2. Wash vigorously for 20 seconds, making sure to give proper attention to fingernails and between fingers.
3. Rinse well.
4. Dry hands with paper towel.
5. Use paper towel to turn off water.
6. If in a lavatory, use paper towel to open lavatory door.

Hands Should Be Washed After:

1. Using the restroom
2. Coughing, sneezing or using a tissue
3. Eating or drinking
4. Smoking or chewing tobacco
5. Touching cuts, burns or open wounds
6. Handling dirty kitchen equipment or utensils
7. Handling raw meat or poultry
8. Taking out the garbage
9. Touching your hair, face or body
10. Touching clothing or apron
11. Handling chemicals, such as cleaning supplies
12. Clearing tables or busing dirty dishes
13. Touching anything else that may contaminate your hands, such as dirty surfaces, equipment, towels, money, etc



Sorting and Evaluation

Food from sources such as food drives and pickup from retail partners should be sorted and evaluated for food safety as soon as they are received.

The following is guidance to evaluate specific categories of containers or packaging in salvage:

Discard cans exhibiting serious defects including:

- Cans with bulged ends, with the exception of carbonated beverages and dry foods such as coffee and powdered beverage mixes.
- Cans with holes or any visible evidence of product leakage, as evidenced by stained labels.
- Pull top containers with obvious fractures or dents on the lid score lines or in the rivet area.
- Cans pitted with significant rust that shows a danger of imminent perforation.
- Cans dented severely at the juncture of the side seam and end seam.
- Cans severely dented on the double seam or score.
- Flippers (cans whose ends can be flipped back and forth by pressing on them) and springers (cans on which one end can be depressed but springs back), with exception of carbonate beverages, dry foods such as ground coffee and powdered beverage mixes, and acid foods.
- Cans with deep body dents (not affecting closure or score) where there is evidence of a fracture.
- Cans with improperly formed seams or with seam defects (e.g., vees and droops)

Cans with the following defects are safe to be distributed as salvaged food:

- Cans with moderate rim dents on the double seam not involving the juncture of the side seam and the end seam.
- Moderate body dents which may slightly reduce the height of the can, but not severe enough to distort the can or make it unstackable.
- Rust that will wipe off.
- Slight to moderate dents on or near the double seam, or slight dents involving the side seam juncture
- Slight to moderate paneling (flattened) on sides.
- Flat rim dents on the double seam that do not alter the contour of the container.

Sorting and Evaluation, continued

Labels on cans must be legible and must include a description of the product, an ingredient declaration, a new weight of contents, and the distributor.

- Discard cans from retailers or reclamation programs that are missing labels.
- Discard cans with labels that cannot be read due to stains or tears unless a new label can be attached to the can.
- Take steps to secure loose labels to cans.

Evaluate other canned products as follows:

- Discard home canned products.
- Examine pop top, pull top and key top for slight openings at the score line. Discard cans showing signs of dirt or contamination under the openings as they cannot be adequately cleaned.
- Discard aerosol cans missing the outer top if a replacement lid cannot be used.
- Discard containers composed of foil laminated to cardboard or plastic.
- Evaluate cardboard cans according to the guidelines under dry food product.
- Examine plastic cans for split sides and seams or seals.

Examine glass containers according to the following:

- Discard any home canned product.
- Discard any obviously defective glass container including those that are chipped, cracked or have missing tops.
- Discard any jars that show signs of leakage.
- Discard jars showing signs of dirt, mold etc under the lid.
- Test for tightness of the jar top. Discard any finger loose or if the seal is missing. Note that some products such as coffee have an inner seal. If the cap is loose, examine the inner seal for breakage, damage or discoloration. If none is found, the product is OK.
- Discard containers with raised center button caps.
- Discard glass containers that show evidence of foreign objects, mold, discoloration, or unusual product separation when under a light source. Note that some products separate naturally such as salad dressing.
- Discard fruit that exhibits mold or has clumps or stringy rope like growths.

Food Safety Guidelines



Baby Food Distribution Guidelines

- Baby food and formula cannot be distributed and should not be used past its use by date.
- These item should be treated with the same care as all other items while being sorted and evaluated.
- As with all food that is being evaluated the best guideline for determining if a baby food product should be distributed is:

a good knowledge and understanding of food safety, common sense, sound judgment and thorough examination for any kind of contamination or mislabeling of the product

There are some case s in which even though the baby food or formula product may still be within the code date they should not be distributed. Please refer to the chart below when sorting/evaluating these products.

Product Type	Package Type	Donation Form	Product Donation Source			
			Food Drive (Community, Store, or Individual)	Store Donation Program	Manufacturer	Distribution or Reclamation Center
Baby Food	Glass/Plastic Jars	Full Case W/Package Intact	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute
		Individual Jars	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute	Throw Out
Formula	All Packages, Can, Dry or Ready to Eat	Full Case W/Package Intact	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute
		Individual Packages	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute
Juice/Electrolytes	Bottles/Jars	Full Case W/Package Intact	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute
		Individual Bottles/Jars	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute	Throw Out
Dry Cereal	Cans	Full Case W/Package Intact	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute
		Individual Cans	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute
Dry Cereal	Boxes w/Cellophane Wrap	Full Case W/Package Intact	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute
		Individual Boxes	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute
		Individual Boxes w/damaged cellophane	Throw Out	Throw Out	Throw Out	Throw Out
Teething Biscuits	Boxes	Full Case W/Package Intact	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute
		Individual Boxes	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute	Distribute
		Individual Boxes w/damaged wrap	Throw Out	Throw Out	Throw Out	Throw Out

'When in doubt, throw it out!'

Food Safety Guidelines



Additional detailed shelf life information can be found at:

Food Marketing Institute's Web Site

<http://www.fmi.org/consumer/foodkeeper/index.cfm?fuseaction=category>

Still Tasty's Ultimate Shelf Life Guide

<http://www.stilltasty.com/searchitems/index/6>

USDA Web Site

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Factsheets/Food_Product_dating/#10

What's Cooking America Web Site

<http://whatscookingamerica.net/Information/FreezerChart.htm>

Virginia Cooperative Extension Web Site

<http://pubs.ext.vt.edu/348/348-960/348-960.html>