



FOOD RECOVERY & DONATION MADE EASY IN THE NORTHEAST KINGDOM

Food waste makes up more than 20 percent of our trash – over 38 million tons in the U.S. each year. What's worse – much of that food is edible and could feed people in need. In the Northeast Kingdom, approximately 1 in 5 households struggles with food insecurity. When you donate food, you can help feed people in your community and you can save money.

Why Donate Food?

- Helps families in need
- Reduces waste disposal costs since food is diverted from the landfill or compost facility
- Helps you comply with Vermont's Universal Recycling Law, Act 148
- Provides tax deductions for businesses that donate food to 501c3 non-profit organizations

Preparing Donated Food

As you prepare a food donation, remember that it is for people to eat and needs to be handled accordingly. This includes following temperature and storage guidelines – these differ depending on the type of food. For example, prepared food needs to be labeled and kept in protective packages, covered containers, or wrappings without any rips, tears, bulges, or leaks. Guidance is available at: www.nekwmd.org/pdf/donatingfood.pdf



Donors Are Protected from Liability

The *Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act* was passed by the U.S. Congress in 1996 and provides federal liability protection for the donation of food that was properly handled and stored before donation. Vermont has adopted similar liability protections. Under these Acts, as long as the donor has not acted with negligence or intentional misconduct, they are not liable for damage or illness.

The State of Vermont regulations provide liability protections for canned or perishable foods or farm products that are distributed free of charge to a charity or nonprofit organization (Title 12, Section 5762). They also have protections for farm owners for property damage or personal injury sustained by a person who enters the owner's land for recreational use, including "gleaning" (Title 12, Section 5793).*



*Note: "Gleaning" is collecting leftover crops from farm fields after a commercial harvest, or from fields that are not profitable to harvest because of low market prices. Sometimes the term describes the recovery of food items from farmers' markets, grocery stores, or other businesses.

NEWMOA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

What Foods Can I Donate?

Many types of food can be donated, as shown in this summary of the Vermont Foodbank donation guidelines.

TYPE OF PRODUCT	HANDLING & STORAGE REQUIREMENTS	CODE DATE REQUIREMENTS
Prepared meals (e.g., large pans or individual portions of a cooked meal, soup, and baked goods)	Food can never have left the kitchen or have been served to the public. Thawed meals must be refrigerated at 41° F or below and frozen meals must be kept at 0° F or below	Frozen meals can be donated within 3 months of being frozen, thawed meals must be donated within 3 days, and baked goods within 3-5 days
Packaged meats	Meat must be frozen at 0° F or below	Must be frozen on or before the code date and donated within 3 months after the date it was frozen
Perishable goods (e.g., dairy and produce like fruits and vegetables)	Dairy and pre-cut produce need to be refrigerated at all times at 41° F or below. Whole produce should be stored in a cool, dry area	Produce must be in edible condition – no mold. Liquid dairy, (e.g., milk) must be donated before the date code. Other dairy products (e.g., cheese and yogurt) can be donated up to 7 days past the date code
Non-perishable items (e.g., canned/jarred goods, and packaged dry goods like crackers and cereal)	Stored in original containers off the floor	Must be donated within 30 days after the code date

Source: Vermont Foodbank <http://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/materials-mgmt/food-donation/#Food-Donation-Guidance>

Note: If food looks or smells bad, is moldy, or has damaged packaging – do not donate it. Much of it can be composted – so don't throw it out. For composting questions, contact NEKWMD at (802) 626-3532 or check out NEWMOA's composting documents available at: www.newmoa.org/solidwaste/projects/food/publications.cfm.

Local Food Shelf Donation Options:

- Barton Area Senior Services - (802) 525-2424
- Danville ECC Food Shelf - (802) 684-2515
- Faith in Action Northern Communities, in Cabot and Lyndonville - (802) 563-3322
- Hardwick Area Food Pantry - (802) 472-5940
- Island Pond Food Shelf – (802) 723-5037
- Northeast Kingdom Community Action, Island Pond / Newport - (802) 266-7134 / (802) 334-7316
- Jay Food Shelf - (802) 848-3133
- HOPE, Lyndonville - (802) 626-3228
- Lyndon Area Food Shelf, Lyndonville - (802) 626-5586
- Onion River Food Shelf, Marshfield - (802) 223-6548
- Newbury Food Shelf - (802) 866-5527
- United Church of Newport - (802) 334-6033
- Kingdom Community Services, St. Johnsbury - (802) 751-8581
- Sheffield Food Panty - (802) 535-3338

Additional Resources:

- **EPA:** www.epa.gov/sustainable-management-food/reduce-wasted-food-feeding-hungry-people
- **Harvard Food Law and Policy Clinic:** www.chlpi.org/food-law-and-policy/about/
- **VT DEC:** <http://dec.vermont.gov/waste-management/solid/materials-mgmt/food-donation>
- **Vermont Foodbank:** www.vtfoodbank.org
- **Vermont Gleaning Collective:** www.vermontgleaningcollective.org

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