

Food Waste Prevention for Grocery Stores

Before utilizing edible food recovery and organics recycling as a means to divert organic materials from the landfill, grocery stores should prioritize the first line of defense against food waste: prevention. Food waste prevention can take shape in many forms. Use the tips below to start preventing food waste before it happens!

Analyze:



- **Identify types of food discarded** – when and under what conditions. Obtaining this knowledge is a critical first step in food waste prevention.
- **Conduct a mini-waste audit** by visually or manually inspecting the contents of the waste bins. Involve staff to increase their awareness.

Inventory:



- **Automate ordering systems** across departments in order to prevent over-ordering and inventory spoilage. This is especially important for perishable foods.
- **Stock imperfect produce** from suppliers. Arrange to receive the produce with cosmetic imperfections at a reduced cost.
- **Use expiration date tracking** technology to reduce effort and inaccuracy from manual tracking and to make it easier to rotate items and re-order appropriately.
- **Adopt standardized date labels** with your suppliers to minimize employee and customer confusion about expiration dates.

Display:



- **Train employees on food-handling best** practices including unloading, storing, transferring, and displaying. Proper care helps ensure food is not damaged and wasted.
- **Educate staff on their role in food waste prevention**, including the importance of shifting items on shelves to display the oldest items first and practice first in, first out.
- **Discount food** that is reaching expiration dates and create a **special section** that draws customers to these items.

Educate:



- **Provide customers with guidance** for reducing food waste, such as recipes for leftovers and meal planning tips.
- **Utilize different areas in-store to educate** on best food storage practices.
- **Share actions** the store is taking with customers and other stores to prevent food waste to increase awareness and promote sustainable food consumption.

Food Donation for Businesses

While 1 in 3 San Diegans are food insecure, 500,000 tons of food is wasted in San Diego every year. In order to address inequity, SB 1383 requires edible food recovery from businesses identified as **Tier One** and **Tier Two generators**. All food generating businesses are also encouraged to participate in food donation programs. Establishing a food recovery program, which donates edible food to food banks and pantries, is an important way to keep food out of the landfill and feed people in need. To support you, resource guides on the following topics are available:

- SB 1383 Food Recovery Requirements Overview
- Food Donation Liability Protections and Food Safety
- A Guide to Food Donation Tax Deductions
- Food Recovery Agreement Template
- Steps for Setting Up and Maintaining a Food Recovery Program

Visit your city's website to access the guides and for more information.



Requirements & Record-Keeping

To comply with edible food recovery requirements, Tier One and Tier Two generators must implement a food recovery program through the following actions:

- **Create a contract** or written agreement with a food recovery entity.
- **Donate the maximum** amount of edible food that would otherwise be disposed.
- **Maintain records** of food donation activities:
 - Contract or written agreement information for food recovery organizations and services
 - Schedules for food donation deliveries or collections
 - Quantity of food donated in pounds per month
 - Types of food each food recovery organization receives or collects

Your city will conduct inspections of businesses beginning January 2022, focusing on the largest food-generators first. These inspections aim to ensure food generating businesses are complying with program requirements and maintaining sufficient records of their donations. Food recovery program records will be reviewed during city inspections.

The food recovery services and organizations that you contract with have similar record-keeping requirements under SB 1383. These services/organizations must maintain records of food they receive through food donation programs and must annually report the total pounds of edible food recovered to the city in which their primary address is located. Work together to ensure all food donations are consistently tracked and recorded.