

Food Donation Acceptance Policy

Updated on March 14th, 2025

Introduction

The Greater Vancouver Food Bank (GVFB) is a charitable organization, registration 107449787 RR0001, with a mission to provide healthy food to those in need. The GVFB is committed to its vision of healthy communities through fair and effective food systems.

Application

The Food Donation Acceptance Policy for Inbound Streams (this Policy) is an internal document that has been approved by the CEO. This Policy addresses the safety, condition and nutrition of acceptable food donations.

This Policy acknowledges the [Industry Food Donation Guidelines](#) developed by the BC Centre Food Disease Control to help food businesses interested in donating food.

It is important for food donors to note that [BC's Food Donor Encouragement Act](#) relieves them of any liability, as long as they donate food in good faith.

This Policy applies to all food donations received through all food-raising activities including, but not limited to food drives, Food Banks Canada's National Food Share System, industry food donations, and donations from the general public.

Review

The CEO and appropriate departments shall review this Policy every year.

Principles

1. **Food Safety:** All donated food must be handled safely according to requirements set by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and provincial health authorities.
2. **Condition:** No more than 10% of the whole donation shipment may be inedible and/or require disposal.
3. **Nutrition:** Nutrient-dense foods are prioritized. The GVFB analyzes industrial donations using our Nutrient Criteria rankings developed in partnership with dietitians. We take a meal-based approach to menu planning for our clients, with high nutrition of the combined ingredients as the ultimate goal.

Nutrient Criteria

Top Choice – Nutritious foods and beverages in this category contain high levels of protein, whole grains, healthy fats, calcium and vitamins, and are low in sodium, sugars and unhealthy fats. Examples are fresh produce, 100% natural peanut butter, eggs, milk, lean meats, and selected pastas, sauces and mixed entrees.

Second Choice – Foods and beverages ranking lower in nutrients and higher in fats, sodium and sugar such as white rice, no salt added canned beans, fruits and vegetables, selected sauces, canned meats and beans and mixed entrees. Food categories with more prepared foods will fall into this section

Other Choice – Foods and beverages with the highest fat, sodium, or sugar such as candy and soda pop. GVFB does not accept many food donations in this ranking.

Food Donations from the General Public

As of January 2022, we do not accept food donations from the general public for the following three reasons:

1. **Unhealthy Food Donations** – the food we distribute is packed with nutrition and our menus are dietitian-designed; most of the food we receive from food drives is neither.
2. **Labour Intensive** – the support required for food drives is labour-intensive and an inefficient use of volunteer hours.
3. **Better Buying Power** – we can buy more food and better food with our buying power (averages 2:1), because of the industry partnerships we have and the volume of food we purchase.

The GVFB will make exceptions for school-organized food drives for educational purposes.

Food Donations from Food Industry Businesses

Food being donated for the first time by a food industry business (i.e., a grocery retailer, produce supplier) needs to undergo a nutritional analysis according to the GVFB's standard operating procedure.

Once foods have been accepted for donation, the GVFB may be able to pick-up food donations, or the business can deliver the donation to the GVFB warehouse: 8345 Winston Street, Burnaby, BC.

Food industry businesses must contact the Operations Department to receive donation approval and arrange delivery time (industrydonations@foodbank.bc.ca or 604-841-1662).

Food Items NOT Accepted from Food Industry Businesses

1. Foods served to patrons including pre-prepared foods from events, hotels and restaurants (i.e., leftovers) – whether opened or not
2. Foods deemed inedible by the manufacturer, i.e., burned, frostbitten, or having other damage
3. Foods left over from self-serve salad bars or other self-serve displays
4. Spoiled foods
5. Potentially hazardous foods left out for long periods without appropriate temperature controls
6. Insect or rodent infested or chemically contaminated foods
7. Bloated or significantly dented canned goods, or rusted canned goods
8. Foods in broken or damaged packaging where the contents have been exposed or the food label is missing
9. Candy, chocolate, and other confections
10. Soda pop
11. Health/nutrition supplements, including vitamins
12. Prescription or over-the-counter drugs
13. Pet food
14. Alcohol/tobacco items

Tax Receipts

Standard fair market value or wholesale value of an industry food donation is used for the purpose of issuing a tax receipt. Either an invoice will be provided to the GVFB, or the value will be assessed by the Director of Operations and the CEO. Any gift of food valued over \$10,000 requires sign off by the CEO for tax receipt purposes.