Powell River Action Centre Society Food Bank (PRAC Food Bank)
Food Operations and Safety

Food Operations Health and Safety - 2024

This policy covers the safe transport and storage of food items. This policy also covers the safety of the food bank employee, volunteer who is doing the work.
This policy will be reviewed and updated at a minimum of every three years, or at such time that storage and transportation methods change, and/or when new safety legislation and/or standards are created. Each new employee, volunteer, and board member will be briefed on this policy by way of their introduction to the policy binder when they receive their orientation. It will be expected that they read all policies and ask questions, give feedback, and acknowledge that they understand the policies of the PRAC Food Bank.

This policy can be considered as the written safety plan to follow inside the food bank and for the food safe operation of the vehicle. This policy/plan will be posted on the cork board in the employee area in the back of the food bank.
This policy/plan will be the standard for all persons working in the food bank centre and for all persons operating the food bank van.

Storage Racks:

When storing food in the food bank, shelving should follow these guidelines:

- **Distance from the ground**: Dry goods should be stored on shelves, racks, or pallets that are at least 15 cm (6 in) off the ground. This allows for easy access and pest control monitoring.
- **Distance from the wall**: Dry goods should be stored away from the wall. Note that an inside wall is preferable if there is no way to avoid storing against a wall. At a minimum, keep the dry goods a few inches away from the wall.
- **Protection**: All food items should be protected from physical, chemical, and microbiological contamination. No food is to ever be left open and unattended.
- Storage racks currently in use include both hand-built wood racks and commercially purchased metal storage racks. All are within proper specs for safety.
    - Each rack will be inspected by the Society Manger at a minimum of once per year.
        - Issues to look for are:
            - Wear and tear on the metal shelves
            - Loose nuts, bolts, screws etc.
            - Any chipping or breakage on the wood shelves
            - Any sagging of any shelves, indicating too heavy a load
    - No cleaning chemicals or cleaning supplies of any type will ever be stored near the food shelves. Natural, non-toxic cleaners will be used when cleaning the shelves.
    - No employee or volunteer will ever lift higher than their shoulders to stock or remove items from the shelves. A proper step stool or ladder must be used. A two-person method is preferable when dealing with heavy items that are stored on higher shelves. A case in point, leave the higher shelves for lighter items.
    - No employee or volunteer will store food anywhere near the floor. If there is not enough room where you have been told to put a food item, discuss the situation with the food bank manager.

Refrigeration:

- **Temperature**

Keep potentially hazardous foods at or below 40°F (4°C). Use an accurate thermometer to check the temperature of food when it's received and while it's being stored. Check and record daily the temperatures of all fridges and freezers.

- **Separation**

Keep raw and cooked foods separate in different containers, drawers, or shelves. Place meat, poultry, and seafood on the lowest shelf to prevent dripping onto other foods.

- **Packaging**

Use food-safe, airtight, and leak-proof containers. Inspect cans and containers for dents, cracks, rust, bulging, loose lids, or foul odors.

- **Rotation**

Use the "First In, First Out" rule to ensure older items are used first.

- **Frozen food**

Keep frozen food at or below 0°F. Frozen food lasts longer if it remains continuously frozen.

- **Donations**

Keep a log of food donations to verify that foods are properly labeled, in good condition, and at the proper temperature.

- **Refrigerator maintenance**

Clean the refrigerator regularly to remove spoiled food, odors, and bacteria. Don't overload the refrigerator.

Food Transportation and Storage:

- Always store raw foods below cooked foods
- Store food in covered containers
- Check use-by dates on food products
- Safely transporting perishable food in the van in a temperature-controlled food grade tote.
- Driving a route that goes from the source to the food bank without delay when transporting perishable food.
- Checking the temperature of food when taking delivery to ensure it has not been contaminated before receiving.
- Checking temperature of farm donated food totes to ensure they have not exceeded the safe temperature for produce.
- Immediately refrigerate food that requires it.
- Follow all Food Safe Regulations and legislation.
- Any vehicle used to transport food to and from the food bank must be maintained in a manner that is sanitary to prevent cross contamination of food.
- Food items that require refrigeration should be maintained at 4° C (40°F) or colder during transportation.
- Food items that are frozen should be maintained at -18° C (0° F) or colder during transportation.
- The containers holding the packaged food items must be kept clean and sanitary.
- All food should be kept covered during transportation.
- Ensure steps are taken to monitor and address any signs of pests.
- For rotation of stock use FIFO: first in first out method.

At minimum one person on site will hold a valid Food Safe Certificate. At minimum one person on site will hold a valid Emergency First Aid ticket.