



F.R.E.S.H. Modules

Food Recovery Enhanced Safety Handling

Table of Contents

Module 1	
Intro to Abound Food Care and F.R.E.S.H.	2
Module 2	
Field encounters that challenge safety: the basics	4
Module 3	
Food safety and CDC risk factors	5
Module 4	
Labels, expiration dates, and FoodKeeper	7
Module 5	
Field food recovery challenges and tools	9
Module 6	
Field encounters that challenge safety: in-depth	10

Bountiful harvest.
Boundless possibilities.

Module 1

Intro to Abound Food Care
and F.R.E.S.H.



Abound Food Care

ABOUND FOOD CARE'S HISTORY: HELPING TO END HUNGER & FOOD INSECURITY



Abound Food Care was formed in 2012 as Waste Not OC, a true public-private partnership. Dr. Eric Handler, former Orange County Public Health Officer and cofounder, wanted Environmental Health to be an integral part of the coalition. This is what sets Abound Food Care apart from other coalitions. For the first time, a health department was leading the charge to end food hunger and food insecurity.

Environmental Health plays several pivotal roles as part of the coalition. Health Inspectors serve as the “referees” in determining whether food is suitable and safe for donation. They also serve as an educational resource in supplying food safety guidelines and leading specialized trainings, like FRESH. These can assist volunteers in making wise food safety choices, and assure the food donors that the recipient will not become ill from the food provided.

Module 1

Intro to F.R.E.S.H.



Abound Food Care

SO WHAT EXACTLY IS F.R.E.S.H.?

FRESH is a specialized food safety training program designed specifically for you, the volunteer. **FRESH** is based on several different studies that suggest additional specialized food safety training needs be given to volunteers that handle donated foods.

Many non-profits require their volunteers (who handle various food product) to take and pass food handler training programs. These are the same training programs that food workers in restaurants must take.

So, isn't that enough? If it is good for restaurant workers, why the additional training from FRESH?

The reason is that FRESH will not only cover basic food safety training; it will also cover specialized training that only the volunteers who handle donated foods will encounter. Your environment, as a volunteer, in picking up and transporting donated food is more complicated than in ways food handlers in restaurants do not experience.

In a recent study, brand image is a major concern for companies, and determines whether they choose to donate.



Module 2

Field Encounters that Challenges Food Safety



Abound Food Care

FOOD SAFETY TRAINED VOLUNTEERS EQUAL CONFIDENT DONORS

Even though there are Good Samaritan laws written to protect donors from liabilities associated with donating food, donors do not want to risk their own brand image. Larger companies that donate food spend a lot of money on internal food safety programs just to protect brand image.

Donors feel much more confident if the volunteers who handle their donated foods are well trained in food safety. The FRESH program will train you in basic food safety principles, as well as prepare you to recognize food safety challenges encountered explicitly with donated food products. You will be able to recognize if a dented canned food product or a box of cereal 30 days past the expiration date are acceptable to donate.

This training will not only help you as a volunteer to make good decisions, it will instill confidence in the donor that their food is handled with the same

attention to detail as in their establishment. As a volunteer, you play a critical role in protecting the health of the recipients of the food as well as the brand and image of the food donor.

THE PEOPLE SERVED ARE AT GREATER FOOD SAFETY RISK!

The children, the elderly, and the immune-compromised are vulnerable populations susceptible to foodborne illnesses more so than the general public. These groups become even more susceptible when they suffer from hunger or food insecurity.

It is so important then to take special precautions when selecting, transporting, storing, preparing and then ultimately serving foods to this vulnerable population of food insecure individuals. As a volunteer, taking this specialized food safety course places the health and safety of the food insecure literally in your hands. Volunteers play a special and important role in helping this group.



Module 3

Food Safety: The Basics



Abound Food Care

INTRO TO FOOD SAFETY

Food safety is relatively straightforward if you know the main reasons why people become ill from food and then know how to reduce the risk. Food safety involves more common sense than you would think. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) in conjunction with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have provided us with the top six factors, collectively referred to as the “CDC Risk Factors”. In an original nationwide survey, the CDC identified these factors as the major contributors to foodborne illnesses. Next, we will take an in depth look at these risk factors and show you simple ways to control them. By doing so, we can reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses.

VERMIN CAN EASILY TRANSMIT DISEASE

- 1:** Rodent droppings found on cans of food or in boxes of food products need to be removed.
- 2:** If the packaging has been gnawed or opened, it must be discarded.
- 3:** For canned products, all contaminated surfaces must be thoroughly washed and sanitized.



YOU WANT TO HELP, BUT YOU DON'T FEEL WELL?

Follow these **DOs** and **DON'Ts**:

DO report your illness to your coordinator or supervisor

DON'T handle or transport any food products when you feel ill

DON'T handle any food if you are vomiting and/or have diarrhea—illnesses stemming from these symptoms can spread easily

Module 3

CDC Risk Factors



Abound Food Care

CDC RISK FACTORS: HOW TO MAKE FOOD SAFER

1: Poor personal hygiene

Wash those hands! Use soap and warm water, rub hands together for 20 seconds, rinse and dry with a disposable paper towel. When soap and water are not available, carry and use hand sanitizers, the next best thing.

2: Improper holding temperatures

Bacteria find it easier to grow between 41°F and 135°F. This is otherwise known as the “Danger Zone”. You can use a thermometer to check for proper temperature ranges. Placing ice packs on top of food in an ice chest or inside insulated containers will keep food out of the Danger Zone. See the image to the right to learn more.

3: Contaminated equipment or surfaces

Dirty surfaces transfer germs! Proper care must be taken to prevent cross contamination. Any equipment or surface that contacts food must be cleaned and sanitized using appropriate procedures.

4: Food from unapproved sources

A basic and essential component for food safety is knowing where the food comes from. Not only can it affect the overall safety and quality of the food, but also the Good Samaritan laws do not apply if the food comes from an unapproved source, such as a personal household.

What are the “approved sources” donated food may come from? Restaurants, markets and churches with a health permit, schools, and special events that have been catered from a licensed food vendor.

5: Inadequate cooking and cooling

Take a look at the chart below for proper cooking temperatures.

temperature should be maintained for a minimum of 15 seconds to kill harmful bacteria

165°F Anything cooked in a microwave oven, raw poultry

155°F Ground beef and pork

145°F Eggs, pork, whole pieces of beef and lamb

135°F Hot held foods

6: Physical and chemical hazards

Keep pesticides, cleaners, degreasers, and other harmful chemical agents separate from food during storage, transportation, and preparation. If you suspect food has come in contact with chemicals, discard the food.

Physical hazards that come in contact with food can also be a danger. Inedible objects such as bandages, rags, and foliage cannot be in ready-to eat food. Remove the physical hazard and clean the product if possible.



Since the quality and safety of the food cannot be guaranteed, Abound Food Care does not accept any house donations.

Module 4

Labels and Expiration Dates



Abound Food Care

DID YOU KNOW “EXPIRED” FOOD DOES NOT MEAN UNSAFE FOOD?

Food product labels have various code dates that are intended to convey product freshness or quality. Many people aren't aware that the vast majority of “expired” foods do not represent a safety hazard! Code dates represented with “Sell By”, “Use By” or “Best If Used By” labels have no impact on food safety, with the exception of Infant Formula and Baby Food.

Federal, State and local food safety regulators do not require food manufacturers to place “expired by”, “use by” or “best before” dates on food products.

This information is entirely at the discretion of the manufacturer.

Most people think the various expiration dates refer to when a food will “go bad” or becomes “spoiled,” but the dates are simply an indication of quality and not food safety in most cases. Meats and dairy products can be safely donated even past their “expiration” dates.

Contrary to popular belief, canned foods do not last forever. The product within the can may stay food safe for a few years, depending on the product, but over time it will lessen in quality and become inedible.

FREEZE IT TO KEEP IT!

Freezing a food product can extend its usable life by months.

Food quality will be reduced significantly if frozen food is thawed and then refrozen.



True or False?

Cartons of eggs in a refrigerator have a ‘sell by’ date of January 1st. It is January 15th. The eggs can still be donated safely.

Answer:
TRUE!

Module 4

FoodKeeper



Abound Food Care

So how long past the expiration date can a food product be used?

The food eventually has to go bad, doesn't it?

But with so many different foods, how do you know when an expired food product is too expired? The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has an app for that! Called "FoodKeeper", this app has an extensive list of various food products that will have corresponding time frames past "expiration" date labels where foods are still safe to consume.

Use these links to get access to the FoodKeeper website or download an app for your phone.



FoodKeeper Website



Android FoodKeeper App



IOS FoodKeeper App

FROM FOODKEEPER:

Highly acidic foods, such as tomato sauces and fruits, stay food safe for 12 to 18 months



Module 5

Field Food Recovery Challenges and Tools



Abound Food Care

HANDLING DONATED FOOD FOR DELIVERY IN A SAFE MANNER

Food runners are the volunteers who pick up foods from the donor and transport the foods either to a food bank or a pantry. They play a critical role in food safety. In order to limit liability to the donor, all donated food must be maintained wholesome, or fit for consumption. You, as the food runner, will determine what can be accepted and what should not be donated due to safety concerns.

STEPS AND TOOLS FOR THE FOOD RUNNER:



1: Load the "FoodKeeper"

application on to your phone or have a physical print out of various foods with dates and times past an "expiration" date the food can still be considered safe and usable. Refer to the guide frequently.



2: Keep yourself and your vehicle

clean. Do not transport donated food and pets together. The job of the food runner is to maintain the condition of the food from pick-up to drop-off. Dirty hands or outer garments and an unkempt appearance can make a donor think twice about donating their food. Don't forget your volunteer pickup kit!



3: Wash your hands as frequently as

possible. Always wash your hands after using the restroom and handling trash or other contaminated items.

If soap, running water, clean towels, or air dryers are not available, utilize hand sanitizer.



4: Know your food products.

Is the food you are picking up "shelf stable", meaning no refrigeration is needed? Or does it require refrigeration? Do you have a thermal bag or blanket to maintain food

safety temperatures? Time temperature logs and thermometers to check the food temperatures and record them can mean the difference between serving a healthy meal to those in need or placing the recipients at risk of a foodborne illness.



5: Know the quickest route

from the pick-up point to the delivery point. The more efficient and swifter you are with your deliveries, the less chance of food spoiling and becoming food waste. For certain time-temperature controlled food, this can make a big difference!



6: When in doubt, leave it out!

Not every condition or possible hazard can be covered in this list, so if you have a question or something doesn't seem safe, ask an Abound Food Care staff member or contact your local environmental health office. The only bad question is the one not asked, especially when it comes to food safety!



STOP

Do you have your Volunteer Pick-Up Kit?

What should your kit include?

1. Ice Chest, Freezer, or Freezer Blanket
2. Hand Sanitizer
3. Alcohol Wipes
4. Disposable Gloves
5. Thermometer
6. A mean to record the time and temperature of the food

Module 6

Field Encounters that Challenge Food Safety



Abound Food Care

SERIOUS YET UNRECOGNIZED FOOD SAFETY ISSUES

1: Dented or damaged packaging

Severely dented, leaking/oozing or any bulging cans are all signs of spoilage or failure of the can. This damage allows serious harmful bacteria to grow. These hazards can be deadly! As a food runner, take caution in even handling these cans. Immediately wash your hands and do not touch your eyes or mouth. Ensure these cans are properly disposed of.

- Stained labels can be a sign of a leaking can
- Small dents on the sides (**not lids or seams**) of a can are not serious and the item can be donated



2: Vacuum packaged foods

Vacuum packaging is not exempt from proper refrigeration, so it is important to check the labeling on the package. If the label reads; **“Perishable- Keep Refrigerated”**, the product must remain refrigerated at or below 41°F. The word **“Perishable”** on the label is key. If the label only states **“Keep Refrigerated After Opening”**, this is for the quality of the product and it is not for the Safety of the product. Without the word **“Perishable”** on the label, the product would not require refrigeration.

SPECIAL NOTE:

Perishable vacuum packaged foods that have expiration dates should be **frozen prior to their expiration date**



Module 6

Field Encounters that Challenge Food Safety



Abound Food Care

SERIOUS YET UNRECOGNIZED FOOD SAFETY ISSUES CONT'D

3: Re-used food

Determining what re-used foods can be donated depends on how the food was handled in service. For example, the photo to the right shows a self-serve buffet line with no food service worker or sneeze guard present. In general, open food that has been served to the general public cannot be donated. This would include plated and served uncovered plates of food to tables at a banquet.

However, there are circumstances where food that was offered to the public can be donated. Open foods served buffet-style [pictured below] must have sneeze-guard protection, are wrapped or covered or served to the consumer by attended servers. In these cases, the food items can be donated safely. Without these "barriers", exposed food to the public can be sneezed or coughed on, or mishandled causing *cross contamination*¹.



Buffet-style food must have sneeze-guard protection, be wrapped or covered, or served to the consumer by attended servers to be able to be donated



RIGHT TO REFUSE UNWHOLESOME FOOD

- Don't accept donations if you notice the food is rotten, spoiled, or moldy
- Rule of thumb: if you wouldn't feed it to your family, don't take it!
- We don't want to put the vulnerable population at risk to foodborne illness

*1 *Cross Contamination*: the process by which bacteria or other micro-organisms are unintentionally transferred from one substance or object to another, with harmful effect.

Module 6

Field Encounters that Challenge Food Safety



Abound Food Care

SERIOUS YET UNRECOGNIZED FOOD SAFETY ISSUES CONT'D

4: Time as a public health control

Hot foods are maintained at or above 135°F and cold foods are maintained at or below 41°F.

Time & Temperature work together in a dependent, but inverse relationship: Control one and the other is not as important to control; however, both are extremely important in the food safety equation.

This is especially important when picking up and delivering prepared foods

Hot foods may not need to be rapidly cooled if it is intended to be reheated and served within 4 hours. This example utilizes TIME as a control.

Cold foods can be placed in an ice chest during transportation and then moved into a refrigerator if the food will be served the following day. This example utilizes TEMPERATURE as a control.



SPECIAL NOTE:

- Communication between the donor and the end recipient is key to food safety
- The food runner must be able to accurately relay vital food information to the recipient, including the time it took transport the food, the temperature and overall condition of the food at the time of pickup



**REMEMBER:
WHEN IN DOUBT,
THROW IT OUT!
IT'S NOT
WORTH THE RISK!**