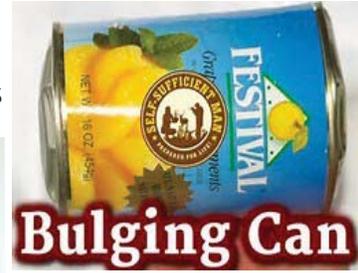


Here are some of the serious, sometimes unrecognized, food safety issues

1. Dented or Damaged Packaging

Severely dented, leaking/oozing or bulging cans are all signs of spoilage or failure of the can allowing serious harmful bacteria like Botulism 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.⁽⁸⁾



2. Vacuum Packaged Foods

Mechanically removing air from a packaged food can extend the shelf-life of the food but it can also allow rapid growth of very harmful bacteria if not carefully controlled. Vacuum packaging or "Reduced Oxygen Packaging" (ROP) alone does not mean the food shouldn't be held under proper refrigeration. 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 41F. 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 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 or unpackaged** prior to their expiration date.

3. Re-Used Food

As shown in the photo to the right, where no food service worker is attending and no sneeze guards are present, the food CANNOT be donated. 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, as shown in the photos below, where food that was offered to the public can be donated. Open foods served buffet-style, can have sneeze-guard protection, can be wrapped or covered or be 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 mis-handled causing cross contamination.

WASTE NOT OC & THE FRESH PROGRAM
MODULE 6— Field Encounters
That Challenge Food Safety

