

Basic Food Storage Guidelines

1. Store food in a clean, dry, secure, and well-ventilated place. **Dry goods should be kept at 50-70 degrees F.**
2. Store all products at least **six inches from the floor** and **away from the wall** in order to deter insects and/or rodents.
3. Do not stack case lots of food up to the ceiling.
4. Be sure to keep food storage areas clean. Floors should be swept and shelves should be washed regularly, as bacteria tend to flourish in dust and dirt.
5. Rotate your stock, and institute a **FIFO** ("first in, first out") system. Be sure to check dates, especially on items such as baby food and infant formula.
6. Keep your refrigerator and/or freezer clean, defrosted, and in good working order. All refrigerators, freezers, and walk-ins must have thermometers. **Refrigerators should be kept at 35-41 degrees F. Freezers should be kept at 0 degrees F or below.**
7. **Store non-food items separately from food items** in order to avoid contamination or spills. If a separate area or room is not available, store non-food items on shelves below the shelves holding food. In the refrigerator, store raw foods on shelves below cooked foods.
8. If necessary, wash cans and jars before distributing or opening.
9. Throw away anything that is infested, is discolored, smells bad, bulges, leaks, is rusty, has mold on it, or just doesn't seem right to you. **"When in doubt, throw it out."**
10. Do not access more food than you can safely distribute or use within 90 days.
11. If your agency prepares meals on site, we strongly suggest that a staff member is certified in food safety guidelines. All staff or volunteers who prepare meals should have basic food handling skills. should have basic safe food handling skills.