



Client Safe Food Transportation to Home

The following is advice from the BC Centre for Disease Control and Food Banks Canada regarding the safety of perishables and frozen foods received by clients.

Centre for Disease Control:

There is a general consensus of transporting perishable foods home within 1-2 hours. Included is the US Department of Agriculture information as an example (see below).



BC Centre for Disease Control
An agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority

The following are general and practical recommendations for your consideration. These would be equally applicable to consumers shopping at the grocery store.

1. Shop for perishable foods last.
2. Perishable foods should be prepared, or returned to refrigerated/frozen storage within 1-2 hours.
3. Food safety is maintained if the food temperature does not exceed 4°C. Frozen foods should remain hard frozen.
4. Precautions should be taken to prevent raw products (i.e. raw meat juices) from contaminating other foods during transportation (i.e. double bag or place foods in sealed bags)
5. Use coolers, cooler bags, ice, or ice packs if you know that it will take longer than 1 hour to transport the foods home. Pack frozen/refrigerated foods together (remember #4 above) to help keep foods cool.
6. Awareness and education could be communicated at the time of food distribution to assist the recipient to make an informed decision (hopefully this would assist the recipient with planning at a future visit).

USDA: Basics for handling food safely

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/basics-for-handling-food-safely>

Shopping:

- Purchase refrigerated or frozen items *after* selecting your non-perishables.
- Never choose meat or poultry in packaging that is torn or leaking.

Storage:

- Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours - 1hour when the temperature is above 90 °F (32.2 °C).
- Check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer with an appliance thermometer. The refrigerator should be at 40 °F (4.4 °C) or below and the freezer at 0 °F (-17.7 °C) or below.
- Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, ground meats, and variety meats within 2 days; other beef, veal, lamb, or pork, within 3 to 5 days.
- Perishable food such as meat and poultry should be wrapped securely to maintain quality and to prevent meat juices from getting onto other food.
- To maintain quality when freezing meat and poultry in its original package, wrap the package again with foil or plastic wrap that is recommended for the freezer.
- Canned foods are safe indefinitely as long as they are not exposed to freezing temperatures, or temperatures about 90 °F. If the cans look ok, they are same to use. Discard cans that are dented, rusted, or swollen. High-acid canned food (tomatoes, fruits) will keep their best quality for 12 to 18 months; low-acid canned food (meats, vegetables) for 2 to 5 years.



Food Banks Canada – Dr. Brita Ball, Food Safety

Frozen and perishable food like eggs, meat or dairy can be safely distributed during the summer months and it is not necessary to restrict distribution.

A good food safety practice would be to explain to clients who receive frozen meat that they should:

- Take it home immediately
- Put it in the refrigerator as soon as they get home
- Use it within a day. (This is because the meat would be close to code when it was frozen in the first place and could spoil to make it not usable)

Eggs don't have to be used within a day but should be taken home immediately and put in the refrigerator right away. Other perishables such as dairy products, and fresh leafy greens and other perishable produce needs to be handled this way too.

Additionally liability could be expected to be covered through the Good Samaritan Act or equivalent in BC and would cover a food bank that distributes these items, especially if clients are told how to handle it safely.