



Members' Standard of Care

Introduction

The vision of Food Banks BC is a hunger-free future for BC. Our mission is to inspire, empower and support our members to achieve hunger-free communities.

Within that mandate we acknowledge the different, unique and creative ways that our network of member food banks individually seek to contribute to these hunger free communities. We recognize that BC cities, towns and communities each face challenges specific to them and that the response by food banks within our network has developed to meet those unique challenges in the best way possible.

For example, universally, our network deals with day to day operational tasks such as distribution of food, screening of clients, receipting of donations, in ways based on best meeting the needs of their own community. As a result, operational procedures have significant variance from one community food bank to the next.

Regardless, as a network and association of food banks linked together in membership with Food Banks BC, there are occasions when the operations or actions of one food bank may affect, or adversely shape the perception of all food banks.

Our Members' Standard of Care for food banks within our association therefore safeguards the integrity and legitimacy of the entire linked network.

Specifically, these standards of care:

- Demonstrate our collective strength
- Foster an alignment of purpose
- Bring assurance to donors and partners
- Safeguard the integrity and reputation of all food banks in the network
- Create accountability and maintain service levels within individual food banks
- Improve communication and understanding of expectations
- Bring credibility to all food banks collectively

Values

Our food banks differ significantly in their operations, however we share common core values which we use to shape and influence those operations. These are our collective values and they guide us in our day to day operations and are reflected in the strategic decisions we make to best serve our communities.

- **Integrity** - We react and respond to circumstances with honour, respect and trust.
- **Dignity** - We see the inherent value and worth of every individual.
- **Accountability** - We act with transparency and fairness.
- **Collaboration** - We share and work together towards common goals.
- **Justice** – We practice advocacy and believe in an equal voice for all.

Terminology

As individual and unique organizations have developed, so have the terms and vocabulary of those organizations. Although not exhaustive, APPENDIX A contains a collection of common terms standard for our network of food banks and form the foundation of common understanding.

Client Means' Testing

Our Food Banks BC network is committed to dignified and respectful access for all people who require the services of a food bank.

We acknowledge that food banks have varying methods of client means' testing, however we advocate and recommend a 'low barrier' approach on all means' testing for accessing food bank services. In response to stakeholder concerns of multiple food bank use, or income levels, our recommendation provides an appropriate balance between access and dignity.

For example, we recommend it is reasonable for individuals to show:

1. A valid piece of ID (example: Driver's license, care card etc.) and
2. Proof of residency (Rental receipt, recent mail etc.)

Any further means' testing which could include examination of bills, bank statements, tax returns etc. to determine income, debts or spending, is discouraged.

We also recommend that for individuals unable to provide either of the above requirements, accommodation be made by the food bank by providing:

1. One-time immediate assistance
2. 'Transient' hampers for those self-identifying as homeless or with no fixed address
3. Referral to agencies able to provide meals

Confidentiality

We value the privacy of every individual that seeks assistance from our food bank network.

To ensure that the staff, volunteers and board members of each food bank within our network safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of every person seeking assistance, each of these must sign APPENDIX B, the Food Banks BC confidentiality agreement.

For storage, management and sharing of personal information we expect adherence to the Personal Information and Privacy Act (PIPA) to which all charities are bound:

http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_03063_01

Core Services

As a core function, members of Food Banks BC must operate as a food bank, defined as follows:

FOOD BANK DEFINITION: an organization that regularly provides food hampers at no cost; multiple days' worth of food/groceries for people to take home.

Organizations who operate as a soup kitchen (which provides meals consumed on site, usually served during normal meal times), and do not meet the above definition as a core function, are not eligible for membership within the food bank network.

Accessibility

Timely and immediate response by a food bank member is often essential. This response may be for administrative purposes such as funding or reporting requirements by the Food Banks BC office, or it may be for community food bank service purposes such as emergency need by someone in the community. To ensure appropriate and timely access to the food bank, Food Banks BC requires the following from all food bank members:

- a) Contact info for FOOD BANKS BC - Food Banks must provide a telephone and email address for administrative use for Food Banks BC. Food Banks must respond to requests by Food Banks BC within 3 business days.
- b) Contact info for CLIENTS, current and potential – Food Banks must provide a minimum of one of the following for client access:
 - Publicly accessible telephone number with an answering machine. This includes a system by which calls and messages, including emergencies, are responded to within 3 business days.
 - Publicly accessible email address and/or website information which provides information about services including emergency access.
- c) Visits per month – Minimum visits per month: is once per client.
- d) Days of Operations – Regular, consistent days of operation must be maintained.

- e) Hours of Operations – Regular, consistent hours of operation must be maintained.
- f) Seasonal accessibility – Any periods of time that the food bank must be closed, must be off-set by access to emergency help for clients, by telephone or email and response times for emergencies within 3 business days.

Food Distribution

Food quality, quantity, value, dietary sensitivities and cultural appropriateness are examples of factors to be considered when determining the contents of a regular food hamper or other methods of food distribution. We recommend the following baseline criteria be considered before any food is shared:

1. Nutrition
2. Condition
3. Safety

Within that context, the expectations for food distribution within the food bank network is to provide:

- Nutritionally balanced food that includes a healthy combination of protein, grain, dairy and produce, based on availability.
- Food that supplements the dietary needs of an individual by providing a minimum of 1 or 2 days of groceries, based on availability
- Food that is a mix of perishable and non perishable foods, based on availability.
- Food which takes into account food allergies and cultural or dietary preferences when possible.
- Provide food that is fresh, palatable, and within best before dates when possible or at least complies with Food Bank Canada's Best Before Policy.

Payment for Services

Members of the Food Banks BC network shall not require or request payment or donation in exchange for food from any individual or person.

If a food bank wishes to provide an opportunity for a general donation from an individual receiving food/groceries, it must be done in such a way that promotes dignity and respect.

For example, a donation can or other receptacle must be placed in a private area away from any food distribution, and that assures no one else may observe a donation taking place.

Safe Food Handling Standards

Food Banks BC requires members to be in compliance with national standards for Safe Food Handling as well as compliance with all local health authorities.

For more information on standards and assistance, please see Appendix C.

Geographic Coverage

Food Banks BC values healthy, positive, respectful relationships between all members of our food bank network.

We encourage members to focus on an abundance of resources rather than scarcity and seek to assist fellow members through sharing resources whenever possible.

- **Geographic Jurisdictions** - Members of Food Banks BC are expected to communicate with nearby/adjacent food banks and mutually agree on appropriate areas of for both service and fundraising. Respect and adherence to these established boundaries and jurisdictions are essential for the healthy, positive relationships required in our network.
- **Single and Multiple Depot Food Bank Models** – Members of Food Banks BC may choose to operate a single or multiple model of food distribution within their operations and within their geographic jurisdiction. Where a member conducts their operations under a single CRA Charitable Registration Number, this member is treated as a single member food bank regardless of the number of depots or distribution points they operate.

Board of Directors

Each individual Board of Directors for all Food Banks BC Members have a legal and fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the interests and purposes of their own Society are adequately fulfilled.

This includes adequate oversight of their financial, operational, and legal obligations.

To ensure that each Director of the Board fully understands their responsibility, Food Banks BC recommends that Food Bank Members require the following from their Board of Directors:

- Full understanding and compliance with the Canada Revenue Agency and the BC Societies Act requirements.
- All Director's fully covered by Director's Insurance.
- Access to, understanding of, and compliance with, their Society's Constitution and By-Laws.
- Ongoing and thorough Review and Understanding of all monthly financial statements and oversight that donations are used with full accountability.
- Establishing policies that give guidance to the Board and Staff.

Data Collection and Reporting

Accountability to stakeholders is a critical aspect of membership with Food Banks BC.

Donors and partners need to fully understand the impact of their own support to our network and this is accomplished through the collection of information by members of Food Banks BC.

All members of Food Banks BC are required to participate in the following Network initiatives:

- Annual National Hunger Count Survey
- Food collections totals when partnered with retail stores per the requirements of those stores
- Impact reporting when required on any food or monetary donations as required for regional or provincial initiatives.

Media and Public Relations

Circumstances and situations within our province can widely vary from location to location. For this reason, food banks should be aware that general comments made which include other areas, regions or specific food banks can be misleading.

As a network of food banks operating over the province of BC, the following media and public relations guidelines are expectations for all food bank members.

- **Provincial or Regional** – Any media or public comments regarding a provincial and/or regional situation should be referred to Food Banks BC. Food banks are expected to refrain from commenting on any issue or circumstance that is outside of their geographic service area. The Executive Director of Food Banks BC is designated as Media Spokesperson.
- **Local** – Any media or public comments regarding a local situation should be handled by the designated food bank member operating in that area. Food Banks BC will refrain from commenting on any concern, issue or circumstance that is local in nature unless specifically requested by that member food bank. Each food bank should designate a specific Media Spokesperson and inform Food Banks BC of their contact information.

Accountability to Standard of Care

The members of Food Banks BC are expected to operate in a way that demonstrates integrity, dignity, accountability, collaboration and justice. When a member fails to uphold the standard of care set by the network the possible consequences for this may be any of the following and are dependent on the specific circumstance:

- Probation
- Suspension
- Loss of membership in Food Banks BC

Food Banks BC commits to support members to abide by the network standard of care which may include educational materials, coaching or other means suitable to ensure the member is aware, able and equipped to fulfill these standards.

Appendix A - Glossary of Terms

Advocacy – Speaking up and out to make a difference. Support for food banks and/or their clients in areas that include but are not limited to; public awareness, policy or education.

Agency - Any social service organization that may prepare or provide meals and/or snacks. For example, a soup kitchen or school lunch program.

Best Before Date - Product manufacturer's date until which the unopened product will retain its durable life if properly stored. * does not necessarily indicate food is unsafe or not fit for consumption.

Bins - A collection of food usually by a grocery store - these vary in size and weight.

BCCDC – The BC Centre for Disease Control is an organization that addresses health care needs, food recalls and other health specific concerns.

CFIA - The Canadian Food Inspection Agency, is a regulatory body dedicated to safeguarding food, animals, and plants, which enhance the health and well-being of Canada's people, environment and economy.

Client - Often refers to the individuals that access the food distribution services of a food bank, may also be referred to as members or recipients.

Depot - Any location or outlet where a food bank distributes food and runs operations.

Donor - An individual, business, government, farmer or other stakeholder that make a donation of money, food, non food items or time.

Expiry Date - The date which the quality of a product remains acceptable for its intended use and is unsafe for consumption. Usually applied to drugs, infant foods and supplemented nutrition for seniors.

FIFO - First in - first out - Method whereby goods first received are used or distributed first.

Food Bank - an organization that regularly, provides food hampers at no cost; multiple days' worth of food/groceries for people to take home.

Food Insecurity: Marginal – Worry about running out of food and/or limit food selection because of lack of money for food.

Food Insecurity: Moderate - Compromise in quality and/or quantity of food consumed due to a lack of money for food.

Food Insecurity: Severe - Miss meals, reduce food intake and at the most extreme go day(s) without food.

Food Recovery - Collection of all surplus food and redirecting it to best and most appropriate use. (human, animal, compost)

Food Safe - Certification to ensure knowledge of safe food handling.

Food Secure - Enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.

Food Security - Reliable, consistent access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.

Food Sovereignty - The right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems

Governance - Method by which a Board of Directors uses for the administration of its purposes.

Gleaning - The harvest of fruit trees or gardens when surplus is identified.

Gluten - A substance present in cereal grains particularly wheat and may cause illness in individuals with celiac disease.

GMO - Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are living organisms whose genetic material has been artificially manipulated in a laboratory through genetic engineering. Canadian law does not require mandatory labelling of GM products.

Green Waste - Generally consists of biodegradable waste which may be directed to animal, or compost.

Hamper - Perishable and non-perishable food items included in a weekly/monthly food bank distribution.

Lot Number - Numbers of codes used to identify when and where a product was made.

Non-Perishable Food - Food that does not require freezing or refrigeration, generally dry or canned and has an expected shelf life of greater than 90 days.

Nutrient Label - A label required on all prepackaged food products that list the amount of 12 core nutrients and energy

Nutrition - Providing or obtaining food necessary for healthy and growth.

Perishable Food - Food that requires freezing or refrigeration and has an expectation of less than 90 days of viability.

PIPA - Personal Information and Privacy Act – Describes how charities must handle the personal information of employees and clients as well as regulations as to how and what information may be shared.

Potable - Safe to drink and use in food preparation

Product Code - The date marking on food packaging, to show its safe shelf-life within which time it should be consumed

Recall - The ability to recover (bring back) harmful or substandard product

Repacking - The act of taking large amounts of a product and portioning into smaller amounts for distribution.

Risk - The estimate of the probability of a hazard occurring.

Safe Food Handling - Ensuring that foods are processed, prepared, handled and distributed in such a way as to prevent contamination or illness.

Skids - Generally refers to pallets of food or product.

Soup Kitchen - an organization which provides meals which are consumed on site, usually served during normal meal times.

Surplus Food - Any foods that may be close-dated, past the best-before date, overstocked, damaged packing, changed packaging, cosmetically undesirable, mislabeled, recovered from bulk packaging where only a portion is inedible, unharvested fields or orchards.

Stakeholder - Anyone that is impacted by or contributes to a food bank initiative. For example, food bank, donor, client, grocery, farmer, municipal government, waste management company.

Vegan - A diet that uses no animal products including dairy products.

Vegetarian - A diet which uses no meat products but may include dairy products.

Waste - Any product that is directed to the landfill.

Zero Waste - Ensuring that food products are recycled in such a way as to avoid a land fill.

Appendix B – Confidentiality Agreement

All Members, Clients, Employees, Staff, Volunteers, Donors, Partners and Board Members are entitled to have their personal information kept confidential.

This Confidentiality Agreement is designed to ensure information received or observed about Members, Clients, Employees, Staff, Volunteers, Donors, Partners and Board Members, as well as the Affairs and Operations of this Society are considered strictly confidential, privileged and to be disclosed only when necessary for the administration and operation of the Society and when properly authorized to do so and in accordance with the PIPA (Personal Information and Privacy Act)

Considered Entitled to Confidentiality by this Agreement:

- Anyone accessing the services of the Food Bank and their families
- Employees and Staff
- Volunteers
- Donors, Supporters and Partners
- Suppliers and Businesses
- Members of the Board of Directors of the Society

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I understand the above and as a condition of my service or employment with the _____ Food Bank/Society, agree to the following:

1. I will not discuss observations, documentation, or other sensitive or confidential information to which I have access, with any person unless directly required for the administration or operation of the Society. When required by Law, I may be directed by my supervisor to disclose certain information to the appropriate authorities where it pertains to the safety or well-being of a child or other individual.
2. I will conduct myself in such a way as to ensure anyone accessing our services is treated with the utmost dignity, respect and privacy. This includes speaking and operating within the physical constraints of our operations in such a way that ensures names and identities are kept private from anyone within proximity.
3. I understand that failure to comply with any part of this Confidentiality Agreement may result in dismissal or other legal action undertaken against me.

I have read this entire Confidentiality Agreement, fully understand it, and I agree to be bound by it. If I am under 18 years old on this date, my parent or legal guardian has read and signed this form.

Name

Position or Title

Signature

Dated: the ____ day of _____ 20 ____

Appendix C – Safe Food Handling Resources

1. National Standards – Food Banks Canada

<https://www.foodbanksCanada.ca/Resource-Centre/Resources/Safe-Food-Handling.aspx>

User Name: **foodbanks**

Password: **intranet**

2. Food Recall – Canadian Food Safety System

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/about-the-cfia/newsroom/food-safety-system/food-recalls/eng/1332206599275/1332207914673>

Sign up for Email Alerts for food recalls

Procedures for recall: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/safe-food-production-systems/food-recall-and-emergency-response/retailers-guide/eng/1376318261025/1376318389425>

Infographic for customers: <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/food/information-for-consumers/fact-sheets-and-infographics/what-to-do-when-food-is-recalled/eng/1462293299849/1462293335944>

Food Bank example: <http://www.akroncantonfoodbank.org/agency/recalls>