



FOOD SAFETY FOR PANTRIES

NON-PERISHABLE FOOD STORAGE

- **Wash hands with soap and warm water each day before you begin work and after handling food donations. Dry hands on disposable paper towels.**
- **Don't distribute damaged or unsafe canned goods (see following slide).**
- **Keep ALL food storage areas CLEAN! Cabinets, counters, shelving, freezers, refrigerators, tables, etc.**
- **Sweep and mop often. Small pieces of paper, cardboard and food attract rodents and bugs. These pests are a health hazard.**
- **Cover trash bins and barrels and empty them frequently.**

CANS TO AVOID



Dented at junction



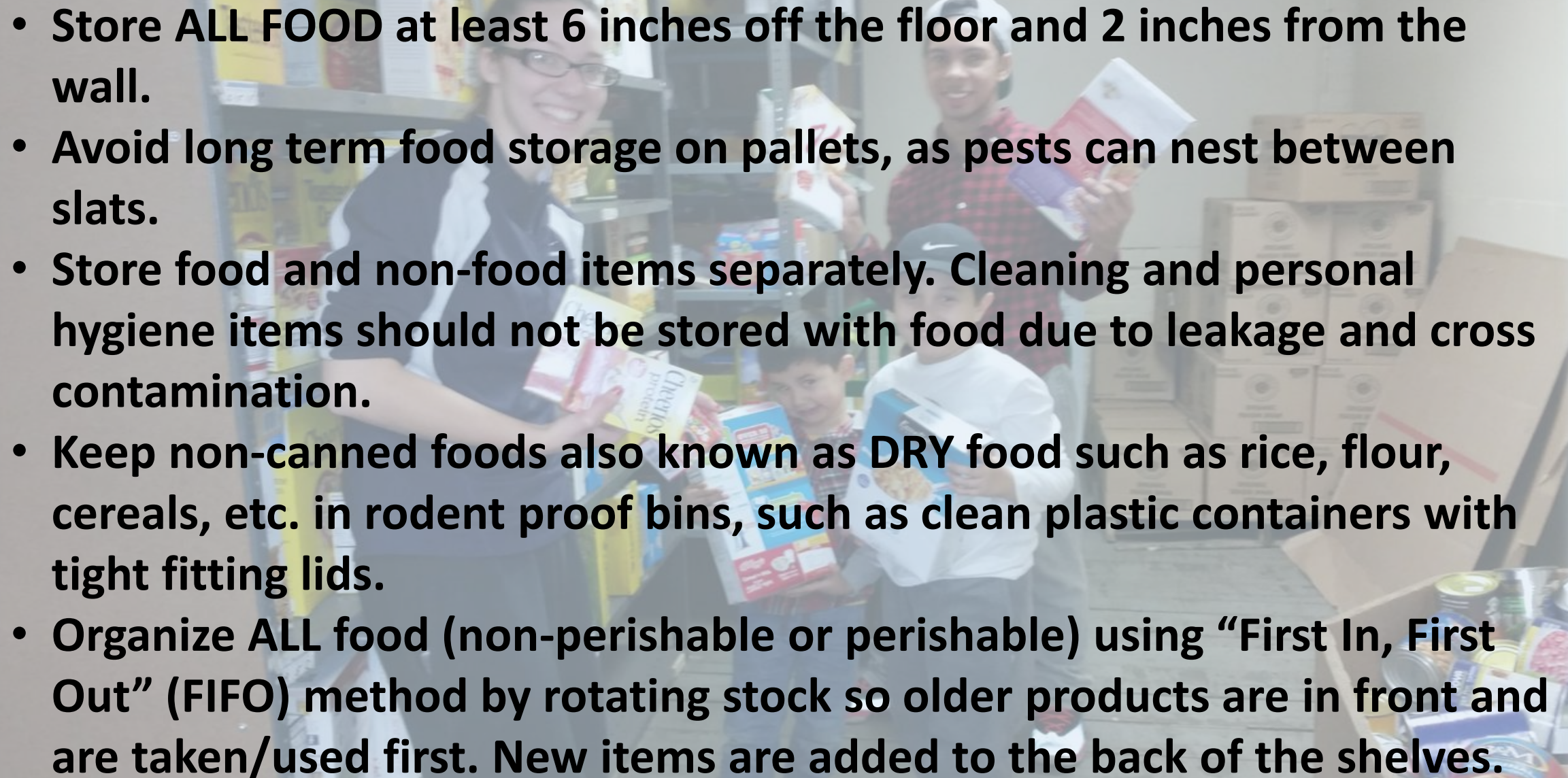
Swollen or bulging



Rusted or leaking



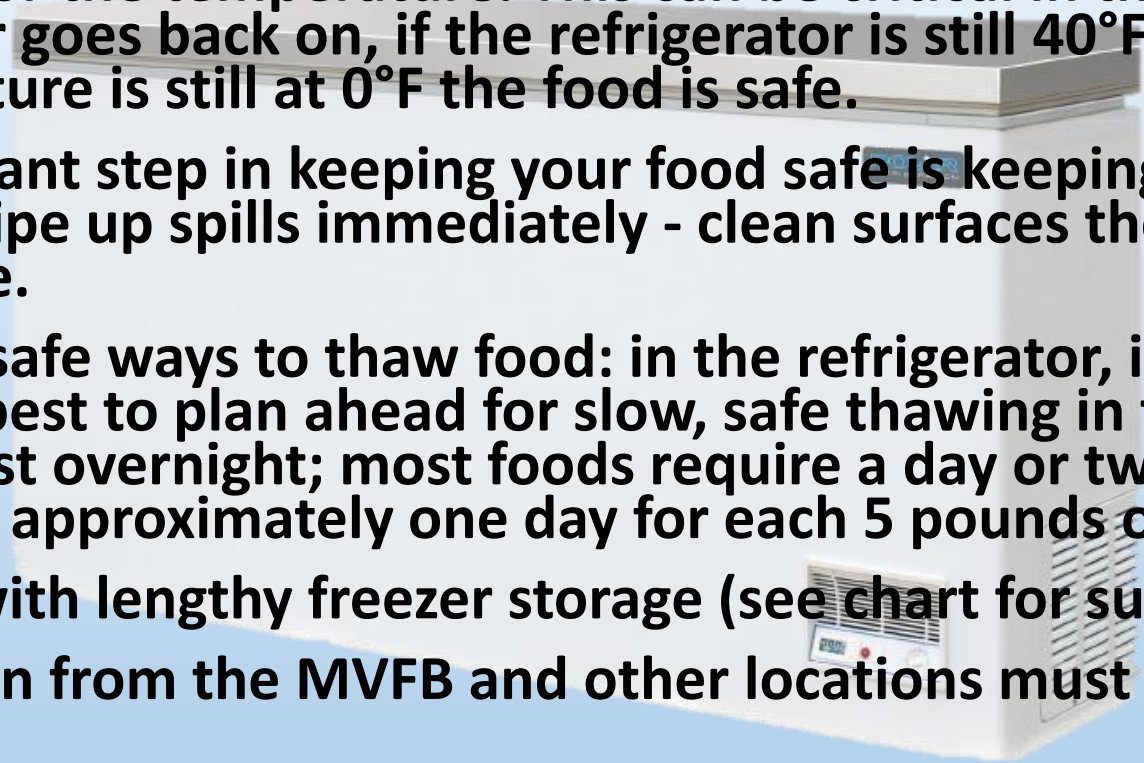
Have sharp dents on a seam

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- A woman with glasses and a dark shirt is smiling and holding a box of cereal. Three children are also smiling and holding various food items, including cereal boxes and bags of rice. They are standing in a room with shelves filled with food items and boxes. The background shows more shelves and boxes, suggesting a food storage area.
- **Store ALL FOOD** at least 6 inches off the floor and 2 inches from the wall.
 - **Avoid long term food storage on pallets**, as pests can nest between slats.
 - **Store food and non-food items separately.** Cleaning and personal hygiene items should not be stored with food due to leakage and cross contamination.
 - **Keep non-canned foods also known as DRY food** such as rice, flour, cereals, etc. in rodent proof bins, such as clean plastic containers with tight fitting lids.
 - **Organize ALL food (non-perishable or perishable) using “First In, First Out” (FIFO) method** by rotating stock so older products are in front and are taken/used first. New items are added to the back of the shelves.

PERISHABLE FOOD STORAGE

- Produce does not need to be refrigerated. A cool dry storage space is ideal until distribution.
- The temperature in a refrigerator should be 40°F or below throughout the unit. Don't store perishable foods in the door, as the temperature of the bins in the door fluctuate.
- The freezer temperature should be 0°F or below throughout the unit.
- Raw meat, poultry, and seafood should be in sealed containers or wrapped securely to prevent raw juices from contaminating other foods.
- It is safe to freeze meat or poultry directly in its original packaging.
- Once a week, make it a habit to throw out perishable foods that should no longer be eaten. A general rule of thumb for refrigerator storage for cooked leftovers is 4 days; raw poultry and ground meats, 1 to 2 days.
- Food that has been stored too long in the refrigerator or freezer may be of lessened quality, but most likely would not make anyone sick. However, some bacteria such as *Listeria monocytogenes* thrive at cold temperatures and if present, could cause illness. Reduce the risk: Avoid unpasteurized foods, cook foods thoroughly, fully rinse fruits and vegetables before consuming. For more ways to prevent *Listeria* infection please see <http://www.about-listeria.com/>.

- Food that has been left too long on the counter may be dangerous to eat, but could look fine.
- MVFB Members are required to keep appliance thermometers in the refrigerator and freezer to monitor the temperature. This can be critical in the event of a power outage. When the power goes back on, if the refrigerator is still 40°F the food is safe. If the freezer temperature is still at 0°F the food is safe.
- One very important step in keeping your food safe is keeping your refrigerator and freezer clean. Wipe up spills immediately - clean surfaces thoroughly with hot, soapy water; then rinse.
- There are three safe ways to thaw food: in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave. It's best to plan ahead for slow, safe thawing in the refrigerator. Small items may defrost overnight; most foods require a day or two. Large items like turkeys may take longer, approximately one day for each 5 pounds of weight.
- Quality suffers with lengthy freezer storage (see chart for suggested storage periods).
- Frozen food taken from the MVFB and other locations must be stored in a freezer until distributed.
- The freezing process does not destroy nutrients. In meat and poultry products, there is little change in nutrient value during freezer storage.
- Find additional information and resources at www.fsis.usda.gov/foodsafety.



SUGGESTED STORAGE PERIODS FOR FREEZING FOOD*



Item	Months
Bacon and Sausage	1 to 2
Casseroles	2 to 3
Egg whites/Egg substitutes	12
Frozen Dinners/Entrees	3 to 4
Gravy, Meat or Poultry	2 to 3
Ham, Hotdogs and Lunchmeats	1 to 2
Meat, uncooked roasts	4 to 12
Meat, uncooked ground	3 to 4
Meat, cooked	2 to 3
Poultry, uncooked whole	12
Poultry, uncooked parts	9
Poultry, uncooked giblets	3 to 4

****Note: Frozen foods are safe indefinitely. These guidelines are for quality only.***

FOOD SAFETY

- While the US food supply is one of the safest world wide, food borne illness still continues to be a public threat.
- Reducing your risk of possible food borne illness or “food poisoning” is simple!
- Who’s at high risk? The elderly, people with compromised immune systems, children, and pregnant women
- **Main steps in maintaining food safety:**

Check

Cook

Chill

Clean

Separate

Throw away

TRANSPORTING TIPS

Going on a trip or long drive? Transporting food to or from a location?

Here are some tips for maintaining food safety:

- 1. Make sure vehicle and coolers are CLEAN to protect food from contamination.**
- 2. Use ice or cold packs and fill cooler with food.**
- 3. Load perishable items LAST to ensure they are the FIRST out of vehicle.**
- 4. Keep perishable items below 40°F - use coolers and ice packs when necessary.**
- 5. Limit travel time between donation pickup from the Food Bank and other locations and delivery to the food pantry, shelter or meal program.**
- 6. Unload perishables FIRST into areas with appropriate temperature (refrigerated items into refrigerators and frozen items into freezers immediately).**
- 7. Ensure that there are enough staff and volunteers to unload food upon arrival.**

TIPS FOR AGENCIES PREPARING FOOD

BACTERIA AND FOOD BORNE ILLNESS

- Bacteria are small microorganisms that play an integral role in our every day lives.
- There are both good and bad bacteria that we come into contact with.
- Food borne illness occurs when bad bacteria or a virus from food is ingested and infects a person.
- There are many ways to prevent food borne illnesses and awareness is the key to avoiding getting “food poisoning.”

THE SICKLY SEVEN

E. Coli

Campylobacter

Salmonella

Clostridium

Listeria Monocytogenes

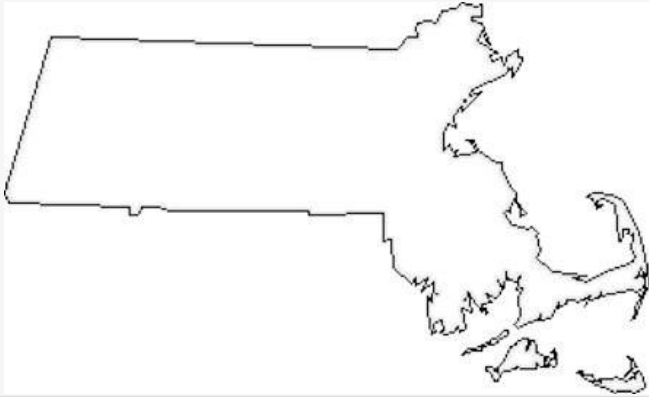
Staph

Norovirus



MASSACHUSETTS FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATION

State Regulations



Each food establishment must have at least one on-site person in charge who is a certified food protection manager through passing a food safety certification test from an accredited program, such as ServSafe or Prometric.

Certification Exam

Mandatory

Approved Certification Exams

ServSafe, Prometric, NRFSP and 360 Training

Food Safety Training Requirement

No

Certificate Renewal

5 years

Additional Requirements

No

CHECK



- Check to make sure fresh fruits and veggies are washed and any bruised areas are removed before serving or eating.
- Check that fresh cut fruits and veggies like packaged salads and pre-cut fruit have been refrigerated.

CHILL

- Refrigerate all cut, peeled, or cooked fresh fruits and veggies within two hours.
- Cold temperatures slow the growth of bacteria so be sure to set your refrigerator at or below 40°F. Your freezer should be set at 0°F.
- Be sure to marinate food in the refrigerator and NOT at room temperature.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator and NOT at room temperature. You may also thaw food under cold running water or in the microwave but make sure you **COOK THAWED FOOD IMMEDIATELY!**

THROW AWAY

- Throw away fruits and veggies that have not been refrigerated within two hours of cutting, peeling, or cooking.
- Remove and throw away bruised or damaged areas of fruits and veggies when preparing to cook them or before eating them raw.
- Throw away any fruit or veggie that will not be cooked if it has touched raw meat, poultry, or seafood.

**WHEN IN DOUBT,
THROW IT OUT!**

