

A Guide to TEFAP for Outlets

*Program responsibilities and standards for Wisconsin food pantries,
meal sites and shelters participating
in The Emergency Food Assistance Program*

2008



**Prepared by
The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services in collaboration with the
Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP)**

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TEFAP Administration

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a Federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income households by providing them with nutritious food at no cost through participating food pantries, meal sites and shelters nationwide.

TEFAP was first authorized as the Temporary Emergency Food Assistance Program in 1981 to help reduce Federal food inventories and storage costs and provide nutrition assistance to low-income families. It was changed to The Emergency Food Assistance Program in the 1990 Farm Bill.

The Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) has responsibility for administering both the administrative funds and commodities made available through TEFAP in Wisconsin. Within DHFS, TEFAP is assigned to the Bureau of Community Health Promotion in the Division of Public Health. The coordinator for this program is Robin Soileau. The address for the Bureau of Community Health Promotion is PO Box 2659, 1 West Wilson St., Madison, WI 53701-2659. Ms. Soileau can be reached at 608-267-9071 or e-mail at soilerr@dhfs.state.wi.us.

DHFS contracts with 16 regional organizations referred to as Emergency Feeding Organizations (EFOs) to coordinate local distribution to 238 food pantries, 38 meal sites and 30 shelters that directly serve the public. These 16 EFOs have primary responsibility for the distribution of TEFAP in their regions, which range from 1 to 11 counties. (Visit DHFS' webpage <http://www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/programs/nutrition.htm> for a current listing of regional EFOs). Their tasks are to train and monitor existing outlets, identify new outlets, order food, coordinate monthly delivery, collect and report data, maintain records, coordinate food drives and food recovery projects, conduct fund-raising, prepare grants for food or equipment, and coordinate volunteers. Some EFOs directly operate their own outlets, while others provide support to outlets operated by churches or other community organizations.

Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) has a contract with DPH to manage statewide food ordering and monitoring of outlets. DHFS also contracts with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to deliver commodities to county drop-off sites with the same trucks that deliver USDA commodities to schools.

TEFAP Commodities

Are all TEFAP commodities surplus food? TEFAP includes non-surplus products – referred to as “Entitlement” food, as well as surplus commodities – known as “Bonus” food. USDA commodities may include meats, vegetables, fruits, juices, beans, cereals, grains and nuts.

- *Entitlement food.* Each year the USDA provides funds to each state for the purchase of commodities. Every quarter the USDA releases a menu of about 60 available entitlement food items that states can order. WISCAP surveys the 16 regional EFOs quarterly for their recommendations on which specific entitlement foods to order, the quantities and shipment dates.

- *Bonus Food.* The USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) regularly purchases surplus domestic agricultural products as part of its price stabilization program. Wisconsin TEFAP receives a portion of these “Bonus” products for distribution to emergency food providers. Unlike Entitlement food, states have very limited influence on the type, quantity, and delivery dates of Bonus foods that AMS purchases.

Outlet Eligibility

What are the basic criteria for outlets to receive commodities in Wisconsin? Food pantries, meal sites and shelters that distribute commodities to low-income families must meet the following criteria.

- *Provide Service to all who qualify.* Provide food to all households who are eligible: eligibility is determined by current year income guidelines and other criteria or judgment calls can not be used to determine need and access. The foods must be provided to all who qualify and service cannot be tailored to a specific group per Civil Rights requirements.
- *Hours of operation.* The Division of Public Health requires that each TEFAP outlet will be open once a month. However, outlets should make every effort to be open at least one regularly scheduled day per week to ensure households have reasonable access to food. Other service providers in the area can be considered to help ensure access. Regional EFOs will work with TEFAP outlets that are unable to meet this goal to explore whether there are manageable ways to expand hours.
- *Minimum level of non-USDA food.* The goal of the Division of Public Health (DPH) is that at least 50% of all food distributed by a TEFAP outlet will be privately donated or purchased food when measured over the course of a year. Regional EFOs will work with TEFAP outlets that do not meet this goal to explore strategies to expand the amount of private food they distribute. The reason for the 50% goal is that TEFAP is intended to supplement the privately donated and purchased food already distributed by emergency food providers rather than serve as a primary source of food. Using TEFAP as a supplement reduces the impact on outlets and families when the volume of commodities inevitably fluctuates. This improves the nutritional quality of food packages, increases the variety and amount of food distributed and reduces the impact on outlets and families when the volume of TEFAP commodities fluctuates.
- *Emergency Access.* Outlets must post emergency instructions for obtaining access to food when the outlet is not open. This could include instructions for contacting the pantry coordinator or a community referral agency (i.e., First Call for Help, 211, social services, law enforcement, etc.).
- *Non-profit status.* Outlets must be charitable organizations, government agencies or 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations.
- *Two years of operation.* DPH prefers outlets be in operation at least two years prior to distributing commodities, but may make exceptions for new outlets in underserved areas.

- *Defined service area.* Outlets must have a geographically defined service area, such as a school district, county, zip code, or neighborhood. Service areas help ensure that as many low-income families as possible in each county have access to emergency food without duplicating services.
- *Adequate facility, equipment & storage capacity.* Outlets should have at least one freezer, one refrigerator, good quality shelving, and an adequate, well-maintained facility, storage area and equipment. (See Food Storage, page 11).
- *Maximize Access to Disabled.* Outlets must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act that requires removal of architectural or structural barriers if this can be easily accomplished without great difficulty or expense.
- *Ability to meet program requirements.* Outlets must be able to process client eligibility for TEFAP, provide services and maintain records in accordance with program standards.

What if “privately donated and purchased food” amounts to less than half of all the food we distribute? If your outlet is unable to obtain enough privately donated or purchased food to meet the 50% minimum goal despite significant efforts, DPH may approve participation in TEFAP as long as the outlet works with the regional EFO to increase the amount of privately donated and purchased food distributed.

How do EFOs decide whether or not to approve a new outlet for TEFAP? Regional EFOs always welcome inquiries from new or existing pantries, meal sites and shelters that want to know more about TEFAP. EFOs base their decisions to approve new outlets in part on the outlet’s ability to meet the above criteria. However the EFO may also consider if commodities are already available in the area, outlet location, local need, and if there are sufficient commodities to support new sites.

Client Eligibility

Who is eligible to receive TEFAP from food pantries? Participants must meet basic income and residency requirements.

- *Income limits.* Income eligibility is determined by self-declaration. The income levels that determine if households are eligible are indicated on the TEFAP certification forms. The client reviews this information on the certification and then signs the form declaring that they are within the guidelines. Participants are not required to show proof of income. To receive commodities in Wisconsin Participants must have monthly income below 185% of the federal poverty level for their household size. (Current household income limits are available on the Internet at <http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/health/nutrition/hunger>. Copy and paste this in your browser if this link doesn’t open the website.
- A household can be a single person or a group of persons (related or not) who live as one economic group and customarily purchase and prepare food together. Assets are NOT counted. Participants must sign the DPH 40059 form each time they receive food to confirm they meet income limits and agree not to re-sell exchange or otherwise profit from the food. Client signatures on the DPH 40059 form also make them legally liable for the accuracy of their declarations – not outlet workers. Pantry workers may read the DPH 40059 form to any

client who is unable to read. (See below for eligibility for migrant, non-English speaking, and self-employed persons).

- *Income Eligibility Forms.* DPH updates forms every spring with the new guidelines. These forms are available from your EFO and are also available at the TEFAP website. New forms must be in use by the beginning of the new federal year (Oct. 1st). Forms must be replaced even if forms currently in use have not been completed because Participants do not get food every month.
- *Residency.* Recipients of commodities must be Wisconsin residents and should reside in the pantry's service area, although there is no minimum length of stay. Pantries should not deny services to those who lack evidence of residency, such as new residents, homeless persons or migrants. During the client's first visit to the pantry, staff should ask to view recent bills showing an address, or a driver's license or a state ID card to prove residency. Once residency is established, pantries do NOT need to re-verify at each visit, but should ask whether any information has changed since the last visit. Homeless persons may use the local Social Services office for their address.
- *Identification.* Pantry staff and volunteers should request ID from Participants unless they personally know who they are. You may ask for some proof of dependents. ID can be a Driver's license, a State ID card, another form of a picture ID, or another form that proves identity.
- Pantries however cannot require Participants to give social security numbers as ID. Participants who will not give a social security number cannot be denied food assistance.

Who is eligible to receive meals from meal sites and shelters? The USDA automatically assumes that all people are income eligible if they seek meals at meal sites, homeless shelters and domestic violence shelters that serve predominately needy people. People who come to meal sites and shelters do not need to declare household income, document residency or provide identification to receive meals. Citizenship status is irrelevant.

Can TEFAP pantries impose other eligibility criteria? Food pantries that distribute commodities agree to only use household income and residency as the basis for determining eligibility for all food they distribute. Civil Rights Laws prohibits discrimination in the delivery of services on the basis of race, color, age, national origin, sex, age, or disability. The only time it is reasonable to decline food assistance to a person who is otherwise eligible is if they act in a belligerent or threatening fashion, appear to be intoxicated or using illegal drugs. Persons exhibiting irresponsible behavior may be invited to return when they can be cooperative.

Are migrant families eligible for TEFAP at food pantries? Yes, migrant families that meet TEFAP income limits are eligible. Because migrant earnings fluctuate widely throughout the year migrant households may use either monthly or annual gross income to meet income limits. For this reason, the Spanish version of the DPH 40059 form shows both monthly and annual income limits. Pantries should keep a current Spanish version of the DPH 40059 form on hand.

Can farmers or other self-employed persons use NET income (income after paying business expenses) to qualify for TEFAP at food pantries instead of GROSS income? The USDA

requires states to determine financial eligibility for commodities using only GROSS income. DPH encourages pantries to provide non-USDA food items to needy households whose income is above the TEFAP income limits.

How do food pantries serve non-English speaking people who request food assistance?

Generally, service must be provided – but there can be flexibility in how it is provided.

Volunteers may be used, but make sure they understand client confidentiality. Contact your EFO if you need an interpreter for a participant. Outlets are required to develop methods for ensuring meaningful and accurate communication for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) groups in the outlets service delivery area. Contact your EFO for TEFAP certifications in Russian, Spanish and Hmong.

Different treatment based on a person's inability to speak, read, write, or understand English may be a type of national origin discrimination

How can food pantries serve home-bound participants and determine eligibility? There are several ways food pantries can serve low-income people who are homebound due to illness, age or disability or who simply cannot come to the pantry during regular hours because of work.

- All pantries must allow authorized persons (proxies) to pick up food for participants if they present a valid proxy note. The note, signed by the client, designates another person as the client's proxy and states the client meets TEFAP income limits. The proxy must show identification and sign the DPH 40059 form attesting to the receipt of food on the client's behalf. The proxy note should be filed with the DPH 40059 form.
- For outlets that make home deliveries, the client simply signs the eligibility form.

Can outlet staff and volunteers receive commodities? Pantry staff and volunteers may receive commodities if they meet TEFAP income and residency requirements. They must complete the TEFAP eligibility form just like any other participant. They cannot receive preferential treatment or larger food packages than others. Staff and volunteers at meal sites and shelters may receive meals prepared with commodities if it is the outlet's practice to serve meals to workers and the site serves predominately low-income people.

What if a client lives outside a pantry's service area? It is the policy of the Division of Public Health that participants seeking food assistance at TEFAP outlets must be provided food assistance at the first visit. At that time, they should be given information about pantries serving the area where they live for the second visit. If they return the following month, you may decline to serve them at your discretion. Participants from outside your service area may sometimes ask to receive only commodities because their regular pantry doesn't have them. TEFAP pantries should not do this because it encourages participants to disregard pantry service boundaries and commodities are intended to be integrated with private food packages. Although TEFAP is widely available in Wisconsin, DPH cannot guarantee commodities will be available in every community.

What if you suspect a pantry client is misrepresenting their income or residency? If you have sound reasons to suspect someone is deliberately misrepresenting their income or otherwise

providing false information to take advantage of the program, you may request proof or refer the issue to your regional EFO for their help. However, income eligibility is intended to be self-declared, and requiring proof must be reserved only for instances when there are solid grounds – not just suspicions - for doubting a client's truthfulness.

Client Confidentiality

State Statutes require that client confidentiality is acknowledged and maintained at all times. Participants seeking food assistance are providing household information at the time they complete eligibility certifications. This information is confidential and every step should be taken to ensure that the information is protected. Only immediate staff and volunteers should have access to this information. Outlets must ensure that there are procedures in place to respect participant confidentiality when seeking food assistance. Participant names should not be yelled out during the food distribution nor should participants names be visible to others during the signing in process.

These actions must be taken to ensure that the client confidentiality is maintained

1. Participants' files must be maintained in locked files and /or in rooms that can be locked and are secure from unauthorized entry.
2. When files are used during pantry visits, they must be handled in ways to maintain participant confidentiality; e.g., so that participants cannot read another person's file, nor may the files be left unlocked or unattended.
3. Files must not be taken home or to other places except as required for travel to commodity distribution sites. During such travel, file should be transported in such a way to maintain confidentiality and will be in the possession of pantry staff at all times.

Services to Participants

Are there guidelines for how participants should be treated? Pantry staff shall treat participants politely and without condescension. Many participants don't find it easy to be in a situation where they must ask for food assistance and the manner in which pantry workers treat them can help make the experience easier. Client sensitivity should be part of any orientation for new volunteers and outlets should periodically review the principles with existing workers. Occasionally it may be necessary to reassign volunteers to duties without client contact if they are unable to meet these standards.

Are private interviews required? Interviews afford an ideal time to learn more about a client's circumstances and needs, and to give referral information. Some pantries have sufficient space to interview participants in private rooms, while others do not. In either case, all pantries must have sufficient space between waiting areas and interview areas so participants can provide personal information to workers without being overheard by others. Client information IS confidential and workers must treat it as privileged. Client circumstances must not be shared with other pantry staff unless necessary and never with unauthorized persons.

Are there guidelines for preparing food packages? Yes. Food packages should be as nutritionally balanced as possible and should ideally contain a 3-5 day supply that is adjusted for the size of the household. The actual amount and type of food in each package will of course depend on exactly what and how much food is in storage. Pantries should ask whether participants have dietary restrictions and provide foods that meet the cultural, dietary, and religious needs of the household. Do consider appropriate foods for individuals with reduced ability to prepare foods (i.e., persons with disability), inadequate cooking facilities and for homeless individuals.

What is a “nutritionally balanced” food package? A nutritionally balanced food package contains a meat or protein, fruit and/or fruit juice, vegetables, and grain (bread, rice, cereal or pasta). The USDA’s food guide pyramid is available on the Internet at <http://www.usda.gov/cnpp/pyramid.html> and includes an explanation of the basic food groups and how much of each group constitute a healthy diet.

Can pantries decide whether to give fixed food packages or let participants choose the food? It’s up to the pantry to decide what works best for them. Some food pantries prepare fixed packages ahead of time so distribution goes quickly. Many pantries have become “Client Choice” - allowing families to choose the food they want within limits set for each household size. “Client Choice” pantries usually find that there is less waste because participants take only the food they can use. These pantries may give participants a menu of available food (by category) which the client marks with their choices. A pantry worker then fills the order. Some pantries with sufficient aisle space allow participants to walk through with a volunteer and a cart to select food.

When our pantry prepares food packages do we mix commodities with private food or bag them separately? You may do it however you want. But unless you are serving lots of participants whose income exceeds TEFAP income limits (see below), there’s no reason to stock or bag commodities separately from private food. There is also no requirement that individuals receive a certain percentage of commodities or private food in a particular food package. The important thing to consider is to provide food packages that are nutritionally balanced and contain a variety of foods.

How often can participants be served? TEFAP pantries must serve income eligible participants at least once a month. However pantries may serve participants more often than that if they choose. Regardless of how often in a month you serve participants, all food packages you distribute may contain TEFAP commodities. This does not concern meal sites and shelters which usually serve all participants multiple times in a month.

If a household has an exceptional need for food, can we give them more than our standard package? Yes, you can give them a larger quantity of food than your standard package or you can invite them to return again later in the month. Food pantries that provide extra food in the same month to families in crisis should have some criteria for deciding if a household’s financial situation warrants extra food. All households should be made aware of the policy and pantries should be careful to apply it in a fair and a non-discriminating manner.

What if a household needs food assistance but their income is too high for TEFAP? Your food pantry may serve households whose income is higher than 185% of poverty – but you cannot include TEFAP commodity items in the food package. Although there are many reasons why a higher income family may require food assistance, federal law requires states to set a GROSS income limit for receipt of commodities. This standard does not apply to persons who visit meal sites and shelters because the USDA assumes that anyone seeking a meal at these locations is automatically income eligible.

Outreach & Referral

Are outlets required to publicize their services? All outlets must post an exterior sign noting the days and hours of operation, the main phone number, and where to call after hours in an emergency in both English, and in languages of the LEP groups in the Outlet's service area; and in alternative formats for the visually impaired. The hearing impaired should be given information by a signage interpreter. Outlets should also make reasonable efforts to inform low-income people in the community of their services, hours, and eligibility criteria. Examples of outreach include articles in organizational newsletters and newspapers, public service announcements in the media, contacting community agencies that make referrals like social services, school counselors, churches, police, and other low-income serving organizations, placing posters in stores, Laundromats, and libraries, etc. Outreach to potential participants is especially important when an outlet has a large service area or serves people in more than one community.

Why is client referral so important? Households seeking food assistance are frequently eligible for other assistance programs that may provide much needed resources and reduce the need for emergency food. This includes nutrition programs (food stamps, WIC, school meals, elderly meal sites, meals-on-wheels, SHARE), as well as non-nutrition programs like health care, energy assistance, W-2 cash assistance and child care, child support, disability assistance, and tax credits. Participation in non-nutrition programs can improve household food security by reducing other expenses and leaving more money in the household budget to purchase food at grocery stores.

DPH encourages all TEFAP outlets to schedule brief private interviews with all new participants and to visit with existing participants at least once a year to learn about their needs and to provide referral information. Outlets must provide participants with written resource materials or distribute them in with food packages on a regular basis. When pantry workers encourage participants to apply for programs it helps them to overcome stigma and reluctance.

Where can I get eligibility information on federal assistance programs? You can always contact your local Health and Human Services office or Community Action Agency. In addition there are several excellent resources on the internet:

- ACCESS is *the* Department of Health and Family Services website where *people* can find out in less than 15 minutes if they may be eligible for important federal health and nutrition programs. Visitors to the site simply type in basic information about the people in their household, their income and expenses, and ACCESS determines if

they might qualify for *Food Share* (food stamps), WIC, medical assistance, BadgerCare *Plus*, SeniorCare (help buying prescription medicines for seniors), and other programs. *People can also use ACCESS to apply for benefits, check their benefits, and report changes.* If your pantry, meal site or shelter has internet access you *can* assist participants to use the site or provide a computer terminal where they can use ACCESS themselves. The address is: <http://www.access.wi.gov>

- *Wisconsin Connections* is a useful guide containing 20 one-page summaries of key assistance programs that many participants are eligible for. Pantries, meal sites and shelters can give participants information on one or more programs or the entire packet. It is also useful for educating staff and volunteers. The Guide was prepared by the Wisconsin Community Action Program Association (WISCAP) and UW Extension and is updated annually. You can download single programs or the entire packet at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/connections>. You can also download a one-page telephone reference sheet for each county listing where to call for each program.

Delivery to Outlets

How often do outlets receive commodities? Food is delivered once a month except in July when DPI conducts an inventory of its warehouses in Eau Claire and Madison.

How do EFOs determine the amount of food an outlet receives? Each county is offered a percentage of the commodities available to the entire state based on the number of low-income people and the number of unemployed people who live there. Regional EFOs will usually give food to outlets based on the number of people served monthly or similar criteria. EFOs also may adjust the amount of food for an outlet based on the outlet's inventory, local demand, availability of private food, and storage capacity.

How do outlets physically receive delivery of commodities? The USDA delivers TEFAP food directly to two Central Storage warehouses - in Madison and Eau Claire –which are under contract with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). From there trucking companies hired by Central Storage make monthly deliveries to individual counties. In counties with only one TEFAP outlet, commodities are usually delivered directly to the outlet. In counties with multiple TEFAP outlets, commodities are usually delivered to a central drop off location – like a food bank, warehouse or large pantry. From there the regional EFO will either deliver it to individual outlets or outlets will pick it up. It is the responsibility of staff and volunteers at the receiving site to unload and store the food.

What if food is damaged, “out of condition”, or the quantity is wrong at the time of receipt? USDA commodities are very high quality and rarely in poor condition. However, when outlets take receipt of commodities they should always verify the kind, quantity and condition of the food using the DPH 40060A form. “Out-of-condition” products are those that come from the processor contaminated, deteriorated, spoiled, infested or with packaging defects. Cans that are leaking, bulging, have sharp dents, or have rust on the seams are also considered out-of-condition. Any discrepancies (shortage, overage, damage or out-of-condition) must be noted on the PI-1412 form and signed by both the driver and outlet representative. Damaged or out-of-

condition food must be accepted from the trucker, but should be reported immediately to your regional EFO.

Food Storage and Safety

What are the basic storage requirements for TEFAP food? All TEFAP outlets must...

- Maintain food within optimal storage conditions, including monitoring and logging temperatures of freezers, refrigerators and dry storage.
- Store food on racks or pallets that keep it at least 6 inches off the floor, 4 inches from the wall and 2 feet from the ceiling.
- Keep rooms and shelving clean, well-maintained, and free of toxic items (like cleaning supplies, paint, or hazardous chemicals) that could contaminate food.
- Keep storage areas free of pests - like rodents and insects. Outlets must either contract with a professional pest control company or regularly inspect storage areas themselves, taking all necessary steps to prevent and safely control any infestations that might occur.
- Insulate any heat generating pipes or ducts.
- Ensure the food storage area is secure to prevent access by unauthorized persons.

When should temperatures be reviewed and recorded? Check temperatures and record in the log at the beginning of the day when the outlet is first opened and before food distribution begins. Many outlets may be closed for days or even weeks in between open hours of operation. If the outlet is open every day, it is still necessary to check temperatures every day. It is essential that the refrigeration and freezer temperatures are checked to ensure appropriate temperatures are being maintained to ensure food safety and avoid any potential risk of negligence.

What temperatures are required to safely store food? “Frozen” food must be stored at or below zero degrees Fahrenheit. “Refrigerated” food must be maintained between 35 and 41 degrees Fahrenheit. Food requiring “dry” storage must be kept between 40 and 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Maintaining food within these temperatures prevents spoilage and the growth of bacteria and helps food retain its optimal flavor, quality, color, and texture. At higher temperatures some products can deteriorate or spoil. For instance, the yeast in Bakery Mix packages can activate above 70 degrees Fahrenheit, causing packages to swell or break.

What if the storage area gets warmer than 70 degrees in the summer? You may need to increase ventilation, install air conditioning, or add fans. If your refrigerators and/or freezers are in the same room as dry storage, they may be contributing to the problem due to the large amount of heat they give off. If possible, keep refrigerators and freezers in a different room than dry storage, and make sure heat generating pipes and ducts are fully insulated.

What is FIFO? Your inventory should be managed so that food received first is the first to be distributed. This is referred to in warehouse management as FIFO – First In, First Out. The best way to ensure this happens is to mark cases when they arrive with the month & year of receipt.

It also helps to rotate the oldest stock to the front where it will be used first and place recently received food above, below or to the back.

How long may commodities be kept in storage? Commodities should be distributed promptly. A two-three month supply based upon the numbers of people you serve is an appropriate inventory. Outlet coordinators should manage their inventory carefully so that commodities are distributed promptly. Clearly marking cases with the month and year of receipt will help you to ensure food is distributed in a timely manner. If you find your inventory becoming too large, ask your regional EFO to reduce the volume of your monthly deliveries.

What if products pass their expiration date? Cases of USDA commodities may contain an expiration date. If a product passes its expiration date you should contact your regional EFO for guidance. All outlets should also carefully inspect non-USDA donated food products to make sure they are not outdated. The primary concern with expired or outdated food products is not necessarily with food safety, but rather concern that food may lose optimal flavor, color, texture or nutrition.

Keeping Food Safe in Emergency Situations

The Power is Off: Is the Food Still Safe? If the power goes due to a winter storm or an unexpected summertime power outage, it may be difficult to determine whether the food in your refrigerator or freezer is safe to consume. It is important to inspect any food for unusual odor or appearance.

Refrigerated Foods are safe as long as the power is out for no more than a few hours. Keep the door closed; food will remain chilled for four to six hours if the door is not opened. When power is restored, check all food according to the following guidelines.

What Foods will not be safe to consume?

Some refrigerated food may be unsafe to consume if stored above 40°F for more than 2 hours. The following foods should be discarded:

- Raw or cooked meat, poultry, seafood
- Meat-topped pizza, lunchmeat
- Casseroles, stews or soups
- Milk/cream, yogurt, soft cheese (such as feta and Brie)
- Mayonnaise, tartar sauce, or creamy dressings
- Cooked pasta, potato, rice and salads prepared from these foods
- Cookie dough
- Fresh eggs, egg substitutes
- Cream-filled pastries
- Custard, chiffon or cheese pies
- Gravies

What foods can be kept?

The following foods can be safely stored at room temperature (above 40°F) a few days. These foods will be safe to consume, even if the power is out for a 1 to 2 days.

- Butter and margarine
- Hard cheeses (such as Cheddar, Swiss)
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Fruit juices*
- Dried fruits and nuts
- Fresh herbs and spices
- Opened jars of salad dressing, peanut butter, jelly, relish, barbecue sauce*
- Mustard, ketchup, and olives*
- Fruit pies*
- Bread, rolls, cakes and muffins

***Note:** These foods may spoil due to yeast and mold growth if left at room temperature.

Can I re-freeze thawed food if a freezer malfunctions? It depends on the type of food, and how long it has thawed. If in doubt, always err on the side of safety when it comes to public consumption. If the power is out for longer than 4 hours, follow the guidelines below:

Freezer section: A freezer that is half full will hold food safely for up to 24 hours. A full freezer will hold food safely for 48 hours. Do not open the freezer door if you can avoid it.

Refrigerated section: Pack milk, other dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, gravy, and spoilable leftovers into a cooler surrounded by ice. Styrofoam coolers are fine for this purpose.

What if stored food becomes damaged, spoiled, or stolen while in our possession? It's important not to distribute food that is in cans that are severely dented, has torn packaging, is damaged by water or insects, is out-of-condition, or has thawed and cannot safely be refrozen. If commodities are lost due to damage, infestation, spoilage or theft while in your possession, you should promptly report it to your regional EFO. If no one is available then contact Robin Soileau at 608-267-9071 or WISCAP at 608-244-0745. Do not dispose of commodities until your EFO tells you to, unless there is concern for safety. If the loss is more than \$100 and is the result of negligence the EFO could be responsible for its replacement value. Losses can be kept to a minimum by regularly checking storage temperatures, establishing good building security, routinely inspecting for spoilage, controlling for rodents and insects, and maintaining a cool, clean, and dry storage area.

Where can I find more information on each commodity? The USDA's website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov> has fact sheets on TEFAP products, including package size, storage requirements, preparation, recipes, and nutritional content.

Where can I find additional information on food safety? The University of Wisconsin has many resources and links on food and food safety at <http://foodsafety.wisc.edu>.

In addition, “**Ask Karen**” is a toll-free line staffed by Food Safety specialists 24/7 and can answer questions about safe handling, preparation and storage of meat, poultry and egg products. Call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854 at 3 o’clock in the afternoon or 3 o’clock in the morning. Or visit “**Ask Karen**” at www.fsis.usda.gov and click on “I Want To...Ask a food Safety Question”.

Record Keeping

What records must TEFAP outlets maintain? Federal and state rules require outlets to keep certain basic records to document client eligibility and the receipt, storage and inventory of food. The following records must be kept for three years at either the outlet or the regional EFO.

- *DPH 40059 Forms.* Signed forms (Eligibility Certification for TEFAP Commodities) documenting client eligibility and receipt of commodities from pantries.
- *Service Statistics.* Pantries must maintain a count of the number of adults, children, and households they serve each month. Meal sites and shelters must record the number of meals served monthly. Your regional EFO collects these figures each month.
- *Non-USDA food.* Pantries must track the pounds of non-USDA food they collect each month. They may report an exact weight if they weigh the food they collect and distribute or they may provide an estimate using a reasonable method. For instance, you might weigh ten food bags or boxes packed with private food to get an average weight per package. Then multiply the number of bags or boxes of private food you give out by the weight per container. Your regional EFO collects these figures each month.
- *Temperature, cleaning, inspection logs.* Outlets must log at least weekly the temperature of each freezer and refrigerator and the dry storage area to document that optimal conditions are maintained. Outlets also must record the dates they clean the premises and the dates they make visual inspections for spoiled food and pests. Some outlets keep temperature, cleaning and inspection logs on a single sheet. Others post temperature logs on each unit inspected for ease of recording. Regional EFOs inspect these logs whenever they conduct site reviews of outlets.
- *Outlet reviews.* Outlets should keep a copy of any on-site reviews conducted by the regional EFO, including recommendations.
- *Monthly inventory reporting (optional).* If your EFO requires outlets to provide a case count of commodities remaining at the end of each month to better monitor local inventories.
 - a. Use the DPH 40060A form if the regional EFO requires you to report only the total number of unopened cases of TEFAP product in storage at the end of the month.
 - b. Use the DPH 40060 form if the regional EFO requires you to report the total number of unopened cases of each individual TEFAP product in storage at the end of the month.

Where can I get copies of TEFAP forms? Check with your regional EFO or they are available on the Internet at: www.dhfs.wisconsin.gov/forms.

You will need to scroll down to forms beginning with the letter "T" and locate the form you need. The TEFAP forms have numbers that have been assigned to the forms:

- DPH 40059** The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) Eligibility Certification
- DPH 40059H** TEFAP Eligibility Certification (Hmong)
- DPH 40059R** TEFAP Eligibility Certification (Russian)
- DPH 40059S** TEFAP Eligibility Certification (Spanish Monthly)
- DPH 40059SA** TEFAP Eligibility Certification (Spanish Annual Income - for migrant workers)
- DPH 40061** TEFAP Program Commodities Inventory, word fillable
- DPH 40062** TEFAP & CSFP Commodity Loss Report, word fillable
- DPH 40063** TEFAP & CSFP Commodity Complaint, word fillable

Prohibited Activities

Can outlets give participants political or religious materials during food distributions? No. TEFAP outlets may not engage in political or religious activities when distributing food. Political candidates may not make appearances at these times and campaign signs and materials may not be evident. Bags or boxes advertising candidates or political causes may not be used for food packages containing commodities. Outlets may not require or pressure participants to attend political or religious meetings or to join an organization as a condition of receiving assistance.

Can TEFAP outlets ask participants for donations? Outlets that receive federal commodities may not ask participants to donate money, materials or services in exchange for food. Outlets may not post signs requesting “voluntary” donations nor place donation containers in the area where participants are served.

Can TEFAP outlets choose to serve some people but not others? Federal and state laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs or affiliation, disability, or association with a person with a disability or if the person is a Limited English Proficient applicant. State law prohibits discrimination on the basis of employment status. All outlets must display the poster “And Justice For All” where it can be seen by all participants. Please contact your regional EFO for additional copies. As already noted, it is reasonable to decline services to an otherwise eligible client if they behave in a belligerent or threatening fashion or appear to be intoxicated or using illegal drugs. Pantries also may decline to serve participants who live outside their service area.

Can outlets or participants sell commodities? Commodities are intended solely for private consumption by eligible recipients. The sale, trade, exchange or other disposal of commodities or use of commodities for personal gain is strictly prohibited and subject to federal and/or state prosecution.

Can outlets repackage commodities? TEFAP commodities must be distributed only in their original packaging to ensure food safety. Repackaging in any form is strictly prohibited.

Can outlets give or trade commodities among themselves? A TEFAP outlet may only transfer commodities to another TEFAP outlet with the approval of the regional EFO. A TEFAP outlet may never transfer or trade commodities with another outlet that has not been approved to distribute TEFAP.

Civil Rights Compliance

Are TEFAP Outlets required to comply with Federal and State Civil Rights Compliance Requirements? All regional EFOs and TEFAP Outlets receiving federal financial assistance must comply with the most recently published Department of Workforce Development and Department of Health and Family Services Civil Rights Compliance Plan Requirements for Profit and Non-Profit Entities. The Civil Rights Compliance Plan Requirements include Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Limited English Proficiency.

All who work with Federal Nutrition Service funded programs must be trained in Civil Rights required training topics. Outlets that receive TEFAP commodities are included as federally funded programs. First line workers (including volunteers and supervisors must receive annual training. There is flexibility in how the training is provided. Please contact your TEFAP contact person if you have not received training. The Civil Rights Required Topics training list is in Appendix A.

The Goals of Civil Rights are equal treatment for all applicants and beneficiaries under the law Knowledge of rights and responsibilities, elimination of illegal barriers that prevent or deter people from receiving benefits, dignity and respect for all.

Civil Rights Required Training Topics include....

Knowledge of protected classes, the types of discrimination complaints that can be filed, complaint procedures and conflict resolution, customer service, language assistance/accommodations and effective public notification systems.

Civil Rights Training List for TEFAP

Goals of Civil Rights – fairness and equality of treatment and benefit delivery

Legal Prohibitions – discrimination in the delivery of service is prohibited on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, sex and disability in special nutrition programs funded by USDA, Food and Nutrition Services. In addition, the State of Wisconsin prohibits discrimination in the delivery of service on all the above bases, as well as on the bases of sexual orientation and religion.

Types of Discrimination – Disparate treatment (intentional), disparate impact (neutral rule impacts disproportionately on a group), reprisal/retaliation against complainant or his/her family, associates or others involved in complaint process or exercising civil rights.

Exceptions – Congress can establish a program intended for certain groups of people, and it is not discrimination to exclude those who do not meet eligibility requirements. For example, Congress can set age limits, and this is not age discrimination or disability discrimination for those who do not meet the age limits.

When do civil rights rules apply? – Civil rights rules apply any time there is any federal financial assistance. Federal financial assistance is receiving anything of value from the federal government – not just cash. It can include commodities, training, equipment, and other goods and services.

Special circumstances

- Make sure people with disabilities are accommodated. Sites should be accessible to people with all types of disabilities (e.g. mobility, sight, hearing, other) OR alternate means of service delivery should be advertised and provided, such as using a proxy to pick up food or making home deliveries.
- Provide other language assistance to persons with limited English proficiency who could not gain meaningful access to the program without other language assistance. Assistance must always be provided to LEP households, but the level or type of assistance can vary based on circumstances.

Other requirements

- Treat all people with dignity and respect.
- Display the USDA “*And Justice for All...*” non-discrimination poster in a place where it can be seen by all who visit the premises.
- Include the USDA non-discrimination statement on all materials and websites that mention USDA funded programs. There is both a “long” and “short” version.
 - **Use the Non Discrimination Long Statement in documents advising people of their rights:** “*In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*”
 - **Use the Non Discrimination Short Statement in outreach materials or websites:** “*This institution is an Equal Opportunity Provider*”.
- Conduct outreach to insure that potentially eligible persons and households are aware of the program and have information on how to apply.
- Maintain confidentiality. It is not appropriate to talk about who is receiving benefits and to make remarks about them. Speak quietly with participants. Do not shout out names. Never share information with others regardless of an expression of good intentions. Refer all requests for information to managers.
- Failure to follow civil rights rules can lead to loss of Federal financial assistance.
- Sexual harassment is prohibited. Do not engage in or tolerate unwanted or unwelcome sexual behavior including jokes, touching, requests for sexual favors, etc. Report violations to management or to state or federal officials.
- Advise people who allege discrimination about how to file a complaint.
 - For discrimination complaints concerning federally protected classes, they may write to: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (800) 7795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). In the Midwest Region they may also write to Regional Director, Civil Rights / EEO, 77 W. Jackson Blvd., FL 20, Chicago, IL 60604-3591 or call (312) 353-3353. Almost all complaints are referred to the Chicago office for investigation and are actually investigated by staff from FNS field offices located in the state where the complaint originated.
 - For discrimination complaints concerning Wisconsin’s protected classes, they should first contact the regional TEFAP Coordinator. If the issue cannot be resolved, they should contact the TEFAP Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Health & Family Services, Division of Public Health, 1 W. Wilson Street, PO Box 8916, Madison, WI 53708 or call (608) 267-9071.

CHILL

Refrigerate Promptly

Bacteria grow most rapidly in the Danger Zone — the unsafe temperatures between 40° F and 140° F — so it's key to keep foods out of this temperature range. Since cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying . . . be sure to refrigerate foods quickly!



The Top 4 Cool Rules

- 1. The Chill Factor** — Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods, and leftovers within two hours or less. Marinate foods in the refrigerator.
- 2. The Thaw Law** — Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave if you'll be cooking it immediately.
- 3. Divide and Conquer** — Separate large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.
- 4. Avoid the Pack Attack** — Don't over-stuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to keep food safe.

Serve & Preserve



When serving cold food at a buffet, picnic, or barbecue, keep these “chilling” tips in mind.

- Cold foods should be kept at 40° F or colder.
- Keep all perishable foods chilled right up until serving time.
- Place containers of cold food on ice for serving to make sure they stay cold.
- It's particularly important to keep custards, cream pies, and cakes with whipped-cream or cream-cheese frostings refrigerated. Don't serve them if refrigeration is not possible.



'Fridge Quiz!

Put your knowledge of proper refrigeration to the test.

1. Should hot food be placed directly in the refrigerator?
YES or NO
2. Refrigeration prevents bacterial growth.
TRUE or FALSE
3. At what temperature should you set your refrigerator? ___° F

Answers:

1. Yes, but divide large quantities of food into shallow containers for quicker cooling.
2. False. Refrigeration *slows*, but does not prevent the growth of harmful bacteria.
3. 40° F to discourage the growth of foodborne bacteria. Use an appliance thermometer to check the temperature of your refrigerator regularly.



The Big THAW

Foods must remain at a safe temperature while thawing. Now is the perfect time to learn about the **DOs** and **DON'Ts** of defrosting.

Defrosting DOs

- Defrost food in the refrigerator. This is the safest method for all foods.
- Short on time? Thaw meat and poultry in airtight packaging in cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes, so the food continues to thaw.
- Defrost food in the microwave *only* if it will be cooked immediately.
- You can thaw food as part of the cooking process, but make sure food reaches its safe internal temperature.

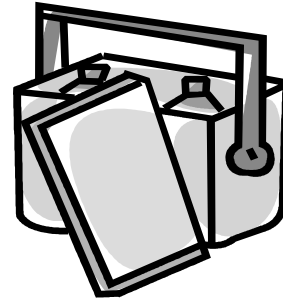
Defrosting DON'Ts

- Avoid keeping foods in the Danger Zone — the unsafe temperatures between 40° F and 140° F.
- Don't defrost food in hot water.
- Don't thaw food on the counter. Food left out at room temperature longer than two hours is not within a safe temperature range. It may not be safe to eat.

If you have questions or concerns about food safety, contact:

- **The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Meat and Poultry Hotline** at (888) 674-6854 or (800) 256-7072 (TTY).
- **The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Information Line** at (888) SAFE FOOD.
- **The Fight BAC!** ^(R) website at: www.fightbac.org.

Hit the Road!



When traveling with food, be aware that time, temperature, and a cold source are key. Here are some tips to help keep your travels cool!

- Keep frozen foods in the refrigerator or freezer until you're ready to go.
- Always use ice or cold packs and fill your cooler with food. A full cooler will maintain its cold temperatures longer than one that is partially filled.
- When traveling, keep the cooler in the air-conditioned passenger compartment of your car, rather than in a hot trunk.
- If you've asked for a doggie bag to take home from a restaurant, it should be refrigerated within two hours of serving.

Did You Know?

23% of consumers' refrigerators are not cold enough!

(Audits International, 1998)



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CLEAN



Wash hands and surfaces often

You can't see, taste, or smell them. They're sneaky little critters, and they can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, utensils, sponges, countertops, and food. They're foodborne bacteria — and if eaten, they can cause foodborne illness. So on your mark, get set, go . . . clean!

The Big 3

Use these tips to keep your hands, surfaces, and utensils squeaky clean!

1 **Splish, Splash**

Wash hands, utensils, and surfaces in hot, soapy water before and after food preparation and especially after preparing raw meat, poultry, eggs, or seafood. Also, remember to wash your hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets.

2 **All A-board**

Cutting boards (including plastic, non-porous, acrylic, and wooden boards) should be run through the dishwasher or washed in hot, soapy water after each use. Discard boards that are excessively worn.

3 **Towel Toss**

Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. When done, throw away the towel. If you use cloth towels, wash them often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.

BAC! Attack

How long should you wash your hands to send bacteria down the drain?

- a. 5 seconds
- b. 10 seconds
- c. 15 seconds
- d. 20 seconds

Answer: **d – 20 seconds**

TIP!

Using a disinfectant cleaner or a mixture of bleach and water on surfaces can provide some added protection against bacteria.

Fruit & Veggie Recipe for Safety

Here's a simple formula for keeping fruits and veggies clean.

Prep the Kitchen — Before preparing fruits and vegetables, wash your hands and clean your cutting board and utensils with hot, soapy water.

Add Water — To remove any lingering dirt, thoroughly wash fresh produce under running water.

Scrub Thoroughly — Use a vegetable brush to scrub fruits and vegetables that have firm surfaces, such as potatoes, carrots, etc.

Cut Accordingly — Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on produce. Bacteria can thrive in these places.



'Fridge Messages of the Day

- Wipe up spills immediately.
- Clean refrigerator surfaces with hot soapy water.
- Once a week, throw out perishable foods that should no longer be eaten.



Did You Know?

20% of consumers don't wash hands and kitchen surfaces before preparing food. Clean hands and surfaces are your first step in safe food handling. (FDA/USDA Consumer Survey, 1998)



If you have questions or concerns about food safety, contact:

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- **The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Information Line** at (888) SAFE FOOD.
- **The Fight BAC! ^(R)** website at: www.fightbac.org.

TIPS!

When cooking, don't forget to wash your food thermometer after each use.

Wash out lunchboxes or totes every night.

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SEPARATE

Combat Cross-Contamination

Get it straight – it's safe to separate!

Did you know that improper handling of raw meat, poultry, and seafood can create an inviting environment for cross-contamination?

As a result, bacteria — that yucky germ known as BAC! — can spread to food and throughout the kitchen.

Learn more about preventing cross-contamination by using this helpful chart, and remember to spread the word — not the bacteria!

Separate . . . Don't Cross-Contaminate

Keep It Clean!

Lather Up

Always wash hands, cutting boards, dishes, and utensils with hot, soapy water after they come in contact with raw meat, poultry, and seafood.

Take Two

If possible, use one cutting board for fresh produce and use a separate one for raw meat, poultry, and seafood.

Clean Your Plate

Never place cooked food back on the same plate or cutting board that previously held raw food.

Watch Those Juices!

Safely Separate

Separate raw meat, poultry, and seafood from other foods in your grocery shopping cart and in your refrigerator.

Seal It

To prevent juices from raw meat, poultry, or seafood from dripping onto other foods in the refrigerator, place these raw foods in sealed containers or plastic bags.

Marinating Mandate

Sauce that is used to marinate raw meat, poultry, or seafood should not be used on cooked foods, *unless* it is boiled before applying.

If you have questions or concerns about food safety, contact:

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- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Information Line at (888) SAFE FOOD.
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