



Basic Food Storage Guidelines

1. Store food in a clean, dry place. **Dry goods storage should be kept at 50° - 70°F.**
2. Store all products at least **six inches from the floor** and **away from the wall**, in order to deter insects and/or rodents. (You may obtain pallets free of charge from the Food Bank to assist you.)
3. Do not stack case lots of food up to the ceiling.
4. Be sure to keep food storage areas clean. The Department of Health requires that floors be swept and shelves washed regularly as bacteria tend to flourish in dust and dirt.
5. Rotate your stock and institute a first in/ first out system - **FIFO**. Be sure to check dates especially on items such as baby food and infant formula. The general rule of thumb is that a product is good six months after the sell by date. For more specific information check the United States Department of Agriculture web site at www.fsis.usda.gov.
6. Keep your refrigerator and/or freezer clean and in good working order. All refrigerators, freezers, and walk-ins must have thermometers. **Refrigerators should be kept at 32°- 41°F. Freezers should be kept at 0°F or below.**
7. **Store food items away from non-food items** to avoid contamination or spillage. It is generally recommended that non-food items be stored in a separate area or closet. If a separate storage space is unavailable, be sure to store non-food items below food items on shelves.
8. Wipe down all cans and jars before distributing or opening.
9. Throw away anything that is infested, discolored, smells bad, bulges, leaks, is rusty, has mold on it or just doesn't seem right to you. **"When in doubt, throw it out."**
10. The RICFB Food Safety Standard indicates that all Food Bank member agencies must have a Department of Health issued Food Business License and at least one person with food safety training. Pantries may take the Food Bank's Hybrid Handler course while meal sites must have a licensed Food Safety Manager.