

# Guidelines for Declining Donations & Documenting Waste

Every Agency Partner performing rescue has the right to decline product offered by a donor. Please review the guidance below for consistent processes for Agency Partners when declining donations.

## ► ON-SITE INSPECTION

While there are limitations to the degree of inspection we can perform at the site of collection, it's advisable to do a general inspection of donations before loading and to leave unsafe or non-distributable product with store staff to dispose of or reallocate.

## ► WHY DECLINE ON-SITE?

When we communicate with store staff what is unsafe, or otherwise not within our means to distribute, we set expectations for future donations and cut down on disposal fees. Additionally, good food safety practices begin with limiting the amount of contaminated product brought into your facility.

## ► GUIDANCE FOR DECLINING A DONATION

Be courteous, and let store staff know the reason for declining the product so they can avoid offering such products in the future. Agencies/Volunteers are encouraged to be transparent and informative when declining, and not take any product intended for disposal.



## Reasons to Decline & Follow-Up Actions

↓ REASON #1: UNSAFE FOOD HANDLING ↓	↓ REASON #2: DISTRIBUTION CAPACITY ↓
<b>Temperature Safety Zone</b> - Refrigerated items should be ≤ 41°F, frozen items should be frozen solid.	<b>Overabundance</b> - Donation too large to transport in your vehicle, store at your site, or too much to distribute to your participants before expiration.
<b>Unlabeled Product</b> - Food does not have a label to indicate best by date and/or ingredients.	<b>Items unfit for your organization's pantry model</b> - Food, or non-food items which your pantry does not typically distribute.
<b>Unfit for Human Consumption</b> - Food is rotten or otherwise inedible.	
<b>Follow-Up Action:</b> Item unsafe to distribute. Advise store staff to dispose of item.	<b>Follow-Up Action:</b> Advise store staff to contact Food Rescue Manager for possible rerouting of donation.



# Reporting Waste from a Donation

Declining unusable product “on-site” is the first line of defense. However, there are times when unusable product goes unnoticed during collection. **Items unfit for distribution at the time of donation should be documented as “waste” in reporting.**

## ► WHY REPORT WASTE?

Businesses get tax credit for every pound they donate to feed the community. When donations are unsafe for consumption, we exclude them from the received weight to ensure only edible food is credited. Additionally, if there is an ongoing issue with waste, documentation can help when addressing the problem with store staff.

REPORT AS WASTE	DO NOT REPORT AS WASTE
Donations which are accepted and brought back to the organization but <b>deemed unfit for distribution during the sorting/storing process.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Items declined on site. These are not considered donations, and don't require documentation.</li> <li>• Items fit for consumption during the sorting/storing process, but discarded before distribution due to expiration or poor food handling. No adjustments of the original report are required.</li> <li>• Items fit for distribution, but not distributed due to overabundance or preferences of participants. These should be reported as a donation.</li> </ul>

## Documenting Waste in ADR Report

- ✓ Separate waste from acceptable donations
- ✓ Weigh all waste from one pickup together, and enter in Waste category on ADR report
- ✓ Ensure weight of donated waste is NOT included in its original category

**Example:** A donation has been sorted and weighed, but you discover spoiled milk during storage. Subtract the weight of the milk from the total in the Dairy category, and include that weight in the Waste category.

## Document details in “Comment” section

Documentation of details, while optional, can be useful for reference when addressing an issue with waste. You can use the Comment section at the top of the ADR report to document details about the product, weight, and reason it is unfit for consumption, for later reference if needed. **Please note**, information in the Comment section is not monitored by the Food Rescue team. Please email or call if specific follow-up is needed.

## Addressing an issue with store staff

Agencies are encouraged to address issues of waste with store staff “on-site” whenever possible. If you find you are having an ongoing issue with a donor, and have addressed the unwanted donations with store staff, try contacting your Food Rescue team for help.

► **CONTACT US** • Food Rescue Manager • 805-888-7698 • [foodrescue@slofoodbank.org](mailto:foodrescue@slofoodbank.org)