

## FOOD WAREHOUSE VOLUNTEER MANUAL

### Roles:

- Donation Acceptance: Accept and process donations from individuals, churches, organizations, and grocery stores.
- Stocker: Stock shelves in Food Market with items from Food Warehouse

### Flow:

Donors will pull up to the warehouse dock door to drop off their donations. A donation volunteer will accept the donation, weigh it, offer a receipt, and record data on the donation clipboard. Volunteers will then process donations and stock up-to-standard items out into the Food Market shelves. When processing donations for quality, remember, "when in doubt, throw it out!"

### Donation Processing (Individuals/Organizations):

- Step 1: Donors will drive around to the back of the building and stop outside of the dock door. Get a warehouse cart and the donation clipboard and go outside to help accept the donation. Collect each donor's name and contact information on the clipboard and offer them a receipt. Take the cart to either the warehouse floor scale or the tabletop scale, weigh the donation, and record the data on the donation clipboard.
- Step 2: Take the donation to the steel tables and process by date-checking and quality-checking each item. Accepted items can be placed on a cart to be stocked on the Food Market shelves. Items that are not accepted can be either placed into the "food trash" bins in the Trash Room or will be weighed out to volunteers and put onto the "Free to Volunteer" shelves.
  - Any items at the end of the day that were not taken home by volunteers will be taken to the trash and do not need to be weighed out as trash since they were already weighed out to volunteers.

FOLLOW THE PRIORITY STOCKING GUIDELINES

### Donation Processing (Retail/Grocery Stores from Network Truck):

- Step 1: The Network Truck Driver and Truck Volunteer will begin offloading the donations from the truck, weighing each bin and recording information. Once the bins have been weighed, they are ready for volunteers to sort.
- Step 2: Sort through each donation, date-checking and quality-checking each item (following the preset guidelines). Any items that are not accepted will be placed into the rolling bins in the trash room.
- Step 3: Accepted items will be barcoded and placed onto a rolling cart to be stocked on the Food Market floor. Take the full cart and go into the Food Market, stocking the items onto the shelves, fridges, or freezers.



Warehouse Dock Doors



Floor Scale



Table Scale

## Food Quality Standards

- Refer to the posted food storage standards (shown below) and throw out all items that don't align with those standards.
- Reasons to reject canned goods
  - The can has a crease or a point at the corner of any dent.
  - The can's seam is split, broken, bent or squished
  - The can is swollen or bulging
  - The can has rust
  - The can has torn or missing labels
- Reasons to reject dry goods
  - Leaks/spills
  - Dirt on the packaging
  - No use-by/expiration/best-buy date
- Reasons to reject refrigerated (perishable) food
  - More than 7 days past the best-buy date
  - Mold is found
  - Damaged product
- Reasons to reject fresh produce
  - Mold is found
  - Slimy exterior
  - Unnatural coloration or texture
  - Pests are found
- Reasons to reject any food item
  - Broken packaging
  - Contaminants (hair, dirt, mold, yeast) are found
  - Fails to meet expiration standards

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### Refrigerated Products

Tips on Storing Refrigerated Food:

- Keep all chilled food refrigerated at or below 41° F until consuming or distributing.
- Leave space for air to circulate between items in the refrigerator.
- Keep raw meats, poultry or fish on the bottom shelf and ready-to-eat food on top to avoid dangerous cross contamination from drips.
- Rotate stock so older foods can be distributed first.
- You can safely consume most homemade left overs for up to seven days as long as it's kept at or below 41° F.
- When purchasing or receiving refrigerated products not listed in this table ensure that product has been properly refrigerated and follow package use by date.

Refrigerated Items	Safe refrigeration time after code date
Butter	2 months
Buttermilk	2 weeks
Cheese (cottage, ricotta, soft, cream cheese)	2 weeks
Cheese, hard, shredded	6 months
Cheese, processed slices, shredded	1 month
Coffee creamer (liquid, refrigerated)	3 weeks
Cream	1 week
Dough, pie crust	Self-by date on package
Eggs in shell	1 month
Eggs, pasteurized; substitute or real	7 days
Fruit, cut	4 days
Guacamole, hummus	1 week
Jarce, purchased refrigerated	3 weeks
Margarine	6 months
Meat-poultry, ground beef, pork, fish, seafood, venison	Follow "use-by date" or cook/freeze within 1-3 days of "use-by date"
Milk (not shelf stable)	1 week
Pasta, fresh	2 days
Pudding, purchased refrigerated	2 days
Salads, prepared (macaroni, egg, tuna etc.)	2 days
Sour cream	3 weeks
Whipped cream, aerosol	1 month
Yogurt	2 weeks

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### Frozen Products

Most food can be kept indefinitely if it remains continuously frozen at or below 0° F, although the quality can slowly deteriorate over time.

Tips on Storing Frozen Food:

- Keep all frozen food at or below 0° F until distribution.
- Leave meat, poultry, and seafood in the original packaging when distributing. It is unsafe to open and repack these foods.
- Do not accept frozen foods that have ice crystals or frozen liquids- this is evidence of the food being previously thawed and then refrozen. Freezer burn does not make food unsafe- it appears as grayish-brown leathery spots and just means air came in contact with the food.
- All meat from Feeding Westchester is distributed frozen. Meat should not be thawed and refrozen. Once meat is thawed, use it according to the information in following table.
- Most foods can be frozen indefinitely, but some foods do not freeze well. These foods include mayonnaise, cream sauce, yogurt, cheese, sour cream, milk and lettuce. Raw meat and poultry will maintain their quality longer when frozen than cooked meat and poultry because moisture is lost during cooking.
- Items that should not be frozen are canned foods, egg and aerosol cans.
- Safe thawing: Never thaw foods at room temperature! Bacteria grows rapidly at room temperature and can make your food dangerous to eat. You can thaw food safely in the refrigerator, in cold water and in the microwave.

Frozen Items	Recommended Time to Store Frozen Items in the Refrigerator
Bacon, ham, lunch meats, hot dogs, pepperoni (unopened)	2 weeks
Desserts	1 week
Dinners, prepared	1 week
Dough, bread, bagels	1 week
Fruit and juice concentrate	1 week
Meat and fish, cooked	4 days
Meat and fish, raw	2 days
Soy meat substitutes	4 days
Vegetables	1 week
Wraps, pancakes	1 week

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Shelf Stable Items	Shelf-Life After Code Date
<b>Baby Food/Formula</b>	
Cereal, food and formula	Do not consume after expiration date on package
<b>Beverages/ Mixes</b>	
Carbonated drinks	6 months
Coffee (ground or whole)	1 year
Coffee creamer, powder	2 years
Hot chocolate	1 year
Juice (bottled or canned)	1 year
Milk (shelf stable)	1 year
Nutrition aid supplements	Do not consume after expiration date on package
Rice milk, soy milk	6 months
Tea	3 years
<b>Canned Foods</b>	
High-acid foods • fruit (including applesauce, juices) • pickles, sauerkraut • baked beans w/ mustard and vinegar • tomatoes, tomato based sauces & soups	18 months
Low-acid foods • gravy, soups/ broths (non-tomato based) • pasta, steers, cream sauces • vegetables (not tomatoes) • fish and meat	4 years
Pie filling	3 years
<b>Condiments, Sauces, Syrups</b>	
Barbeque sauce	1 year
Frosting, tubs	1 year
Honey, molasses, syrups (chocolate, corn, pancake)	2 years
Jams, jellies, preserves	18 months
Ketchup, cocktail sauce, chili sauce, salsa	1 year
Mayonnaise	6 months
Mustard, olives, pickles	2 years
Salad dressing	1 year
Soy sauce, teriyaki sauce	3 years
Vinegar	2 years

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Worcestershire sauce	2 years
<b>Dry Goods</b>	
Baking mixes (cake mix, pancake mix)	1 year
Baking powder/soda	3 years
Bars (i.e. granola, protein, cereal)	18 months
<b>Dry Goods (continued)</b>	
Shelf-Life After Code Date	
Beans and lentils, dried	2 years
Bouillon cubes	2 years
Bread, cakes (commercially prepared)	1 year
*Frozen breads and cakes can be kept indefinitely as long as the food remains frozen. Once thawed, can be kept in the refrigerator for 3 days.	5 days
Candy	1 year
Cereal (hot or cold)	1 year
Cookies	6 months
Conmeal	1 year
Crackers, pretzels	9 months
Flour	6 months (whole wheat), 1 year (white)
Fruit, dried	6 months
Macaroni and cheese mix	1 year
Nuts (jar or can)	1 year
Oil (olive, vegetable, canola)	1 year
Pasta, dry	3 years
Peanut butter	18 months
Poppcorn, kernels	2 years
Poppcorn, popped and pre-bagged	3 months
Poppcorn, microwave packets	1 year
Potato chips	2 months
Potatoes (mashed, instant flakes)	1 year
Rice (white or brown)	3 years
Spices	3 years
Sugar	3 years
Toaster pastries	1 year
Tortillas/wraps	3 months

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- Step 4: Once the trash and recycling bins are full, it needs to be weighed and taken out to the trash or recycling dumpsters.

## **Donation Processing (Retail/Grocery Stores Individual Drivers):**

- Step 1: Volunteer driver will pull up to the warehouse dock door. Get warehouse carts and come out to accept the donation, categorizing the donation onto the carts while loading (categories are frozen meat, dairy/refrigerated meal items, produce, bakery, dry goods, and hygiene). Ask the driver what store the donation is from.
- Step 2: Take the cart of donations to the scale to be weighed. Weigh the donation, ensuring that the donation is categorized as it is weighed and record it on the Store Donation Processing Categories form.
- Step 3: Once the donation has been weighed and recorded, take the donation to the steel tables to be sorted.
- Step 4: Sort through the donation, date-checking and quality-checking all of the items. Items that are able to go out to clients will be placed onto a cart to then take into the Food Market to stock it onto the shelves, fridges, or freezers.
- Step 5: Items not accepted will be placed into bins in the trash room. When the trash bin is full or when the donation is processed through completely, the trash can be weighed out and taken out to the dumpster.

FOLLOW THE PRIORITY STOCKING GUIDELINES

## **Stocking Donations**

Follow priority stocking procedures (see next page). Put perishable items out into freezers/refrigerators first and then move onto dry goods and bakery. If an item is running out, grab a warehouse cart, take it to the warehouse inventory, and restock that item onto the shelves.

The warehouse annex is used to store full pallets of market items. Volunteers will load carts with needed items to stock market shelves. When a pallet gets less than half-full, take the remaining items to either the market shelves or to the warehouse shelves so there is room for addition whole pallets coming in.

## **Food Drive Donation Processing**

For large donations or food drives, gaylords can be used to collect donated items. Each gaylord should be marked with its weight status, date, and donor name.

## **Trash and Recycling**

Food trash, plastic trash, and cardboard recycling can be added into the corresponding bin in the Trash Room. As bins get full, take the full rolling bin to the warehouse scale, weigh the trash out, and record it to the trash clipboard.

## **Safety Reminders**

- For your own safety, please make sure to wear comfortable, closed toe shoes while working in the food market and food warehouse area. Cans and other food items can accidentally fall off the shelves, so proper shoes are important to protect your feet. Wearing comfortable shoes is also important, as working in the food market and warehouse requires long periods of standing, walking, and lifting.
- Please make sure to utilize proper lifting techniques when lifting heavier items across the market and warehouse. When lifting, make sure to always use your knees – not your back – to properly lift and avoid injury. It is also important to keep your back as straight as possible when lifting. Finally, when carrying loads, keep the load as close as you can to your body, in order to minimize long reaches. For more information on proper lifting techniques, please see the lifting technique flyers located around the market and the warehouse or feel free to ask a Network staff member for assistance.

## **Cleaning Guidelines**

- In order to keep the food market and warehouse clean, there is a regularly cleaning schedule that includes market shelves, refrigerators/freezers, shopping carts and storage shelves. There are bottles of bleach water spray to disinfect the areas. If the bottles are empty, follow the instructions posted by the cleaning cabinet for preparing more bleach water spray.
- Reminder- the bleach water needs to be tested with the test strips.
- The level of bleach needed in the water is the lightest of the colors at 10 p.p.m.
- Remember to never place a food item or boxes of food directly on the floor. All food must be placed pallet height off the floor and 6 inches from any wall.

## **Priority Stocking List**

The below information is in reference to retail donations, both what NCM staff picks up and what volunteers bring in. All frozen meat and dairy items (including prepped meal items) must be put into cold storage (either in the market or the warehouse) before produce or bread/bakery items are stocked. Follow First-Expired, First-Out (FEFO) inventory for all items.

- Frozen meat
  - Check for freezer burn
  - Ensure meat is still frozen
  - Check for open packaging
  - If there simply are not enough hands to stock frozen meat right away, it needs to go into the freezer as soon as it is spot checked for the above issues.
- Dairy/Refrigerated meal items
  - Take a sample temp for one item as soon as the donation comes in.
  - Stock as much as possible right away onto the market floor.
  - Maximum time dairy should sit in ambient temp: 15 minutes.
  - If dairy/refrigerated items cannot be stocked right away, store in refrigerator in the warehouse immediately.

- Produce: Some produce requires refrigeration and will need to be put in the produce coolers or fridges.
- Bakery
  - Check for items which may need to go into a refrigerator first
  - Check for visible signs of mold/spoilage
  - If there are not visible signs of spoilage, also use the touch test if possible to check quality – if the bread is as hard as a rock, it's not good.
  - As long as there is not mold and the bread item is not hard, the hold over date is 14 days past “best by” date
- Dry Goods
  - Even if these are donated because they are short dated, dry goods are the least urgent to stock.

### **Stocking Process**

There are times where it simply isn't realistic to stock all perishable items right away. The goal is to have everything back into cold storage in about 15 minutes.

1. Food comes in and gets weighed.
2. Frozen meat and dairy/deli items should be separated onto carts and stocked first.
3. Produce next.
4. If there are not enough volunteers available to stock right away, meat, dairy, deli, and refrigerated items must be stored in the reach-in refrigerator in the warehouse within 15 minutes. These can be kept in the boxes they come in as long as the box or tub fits.
5. A note should be added to the whiteboard to check the warehouse refrigerator for additional items to be stocked.
6. Either the last volunteer shift of the day or the first one in the morning should empty out the warehouse refrigerator and stock everything into the market refrigerators.

### **Mobile Market Stocking**

The Mobile Market runs distribution 7 times per week and needs to be stocked and ready to go. Warehouse volunteers will take carts of items to the truck, someone will need to carry the items onto the truck, then stock the shelves according to the needs and guidelines. The boxes and trash will be taken to the trash room for weight recording.