



**SECOND
HELPINGS
ATLANTA**

Food Donation Guidelines

If you wouldn't eat it, please don't donate it!



Whole Fruits and Vegetables

Some decay can be present. Please refer to the attached produce guidelines for which produce can be accepted in this state.



Dairy

Accepted 3-5 days after the labeled expiration date. Must still be palatable, date must be communicated upon donation.



Bread

Wrapped or unwrapped (donated in an appropriate container) and without mold,



Cut Fruits and Vegetables

We do not accept past their "use by" date. "Use by" date must be communicated on donation.



Non-Perishables

Packages should not be open, and cans should not be severely dented (especially around the seal) or swollen. Non-perishables are edible for one year past their expiration date.



Prepared Food

Prepared food must have been prepared in a commercial kitchen (not at home) and labeled with the date that the food was prepared. Must not have been served on a buffet or tray from which the public served themselves.



Frozen Food

Frozen food should have no freezer burn, excessive ice crystals, or be clumped together. Must be unopened.



Meat

Meat must be frozen on or before its "sell by" date or be donated prior to that date. Meat cannot have been thawed and refrozen.



Non-Food

New, unopened items such as toiletries, cleaning supplies, to-go containers, and other items are sometimes accepted. Please contact us to discuss donations.

Please note, we do not accept ANY items that were set out for the public to serve from except whole fruits and vegetables. Have something else? Try us! We strive to find a home for all eligible food!

To donate surplus food, please visit <https://bit.ly/SHAFoodDonations> or contact us:

Second Helpings Atlanta

Ricky Hyde, Director of Programs & Operations

RickyHyde@secondhelpings.info

SecondHelpingsAtlanta.org • 678-894-9761



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Food Allergies

Please label all major allergies on prepared food trays!



Dairy



Wheat/Gluten



Egg



Soy



Shellfish



Sesame



Tree Nuts



Peanuts



Fish

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Guidelines for Produce Donations



Please follow the 80/20 Rule!

80% edible food to 20% inedible food is acceptable for donation.
Please avoid mixing edible and inedible items whenever possible. Thank you!

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Guidelines for Bakery Donations



If you wouldn't eat it, please don't donate it.

Donated items should be completely free from mold and not overly stale. If past the “sell-by” date, items should be edible for at least three days after the date of donation.

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Legal & Tax Information for Food Donors

What is the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act?

Passed in 1996, the **Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act** was created to encourage companies, organizations, and individuals to donate surplus food to nonprofit organizations by limiting liability. Under this federal law, donors are protected from civil and criminal liability when food is donated in good faith to a nonprofit, even if the product later causes harm, provided the food was safe to eat at the time of donation.

Expanded Protections Through the Food Donation Improvement Act

- Allows direct donations from businesses (such as grocery stores and restaurants) to individuals served by nonprofits, rather than requiring them to go through the nonprofit alone.
- Extends liability protection to donations offered to recipients at a reduced price, commonly referred to as a “good Samaritan” price — a price that is not greater than the cost of handling, administering, harvesting, processing, packaging, transporting, and distributing the food. The introduction of coverage will encourage innovation in food distribution, leading to decreased food waste, broader access to food, and more sustainable long-term food donation and recovery.
- Reaffirms that donors and nonprofit partners are protected from liability when food is donated in good faith.

What This Means for Food Recovery with Second Helpings Atlanta

At **Second Helpings Atlanta**, we’re here to make food donation easy, safe, and impactful. Thanks to the **Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act** and the **Food Donation Improvement Act**, our food donors — ranging from national chains to local family-owned bakeries — can confidently share surplus food, knowing they are protected when donating responsibly. Whether you’re donating prepackaged items, prepared meals, or produce, the law supports your decision to give rather than throw away. When you partner with a certified nonprofit like **Second Helpings Atlanta**, you are protected.

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