



European
Commission

Donating food in the EU: food safety and hygienic rules

The EU is committed to providing **safe, nutritious, high quality and affordable** food for its citizens. All consumers must be equally protected by the same **food safety standards**, whether food is marketed directly to consumers or redistributed to those in need.

Food donation must comply with the **General Food Law** and **EU rules on food hygiene**, applicable to all food business operators. In addition, some Member States have also adopted national measures and/or guidance.

General hygiene requirements

General hygiene requirements apply to **all food products, at all stages of the food supply chain**. EU food hygiene rules are **general** and **offer a large degree of flexibility according to the type of establishment**, but they often involve:



- The registration of the establishment to competent authorities
- The application of good hygiene practices
- The implementation of procedures based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles

Relevant EU legislation

General Food Law (Regulation (EC) No 178/2002)

Food Hygiene Package (Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 and 853/2004)

Food of animal origin

Retailers and redistribution organisations that redistribute food of animal origin (meat, fishery and aquaculture products, dairy products, eggs and egg products, etc.) **must apply specific hygiene requirements of Regulation (EC) No 853/2004**, in order to safeguard public health, as, for example:



- Approval by national authorities before the donation begins
- Specific and detailed provisions on temperature

Exception to these specific hygiene requirements, other than those related temperature conditions, can be granted, if the retailers' activity stays marginal, restricted and local or is limited to transport and storage.

Hospitality, catering and food service sectors

In the **hospitality, catering and food service sectors**, food donation is more limited for food safety reasons, but it is possible to identify and assess opportunities on a **case-by-case basis**. For example, **cooling meals** at the end of service can facilitate food donation. Some Member States and trade organisations have established or are currently developing **specific guidelines for the sector**.

Freezing of surplus food



Food of animal origin intended for freezing must be **frozen without undue delay** after production. This requirement does not apply to retailers who supply food to other food business operators (e.g. food banks), if the activity is **marginal, localised and restricted**.

Member States allowing freezing of animal food for redistribution purpose should adopt **national measures** and notify the European Commission and other Member States.

#FoodDonationGuidelines #EUCircularEconomy #FoodWasteEU

Download the EU guidelines on food donation in your language here:

ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu_actions/food-donation_en



EU guidelines on food donation focus on issues which need to be addressed at EU level. Where relevant, rules and guidelines of Member States need to be also taken into account.

 Saving Food Together