
Subject: **STORAGE OF PURCHASED FOOD AND NON-FOOD ITEMS**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that purchased food and non-food items are stored properly.

PROCEDURE

Recommended Storage Practices for Food Items

The importance of storing food properly cannot be overemphasized. Improper storage may cause spoilage which is wasteful and increases food costs. Food should be stored in a manner that saves space, allows easy access, and follows procedures of the Department of Food and Nutrition and the Department of Health. Storage facilities must provide reasonable safeguards against spoilage, deterioration, theft, and other loss.

The following storage practices are recommended:

Stack Bagged Foods

Bagged foods such as rice, sugar, etc. may be stacked on pallets or shelves. Make sure items are at least twelve (12) inches from the ceiling, six (6) inches off the floor and away from the walls. This method will allow for proper circulation of air. Stack food as safely as possible to allow for ease in handling and maximizing storage space. Protect open supplies of rice, sugar, etc. in food containers equipped with tight-fitting covers. The containers and lids should be plainly labeled and equipped with dollies or casters so that they can be moved easily. The containers should be kept clean (free of loose food particles) to avoid pest contamination.

Stack Cases and Boxed Foods

Cases and boxed foods may also be stacked on pallets or shelves. Make sure items are at least twelve (12) inches from the ceiling, six (6) inches off the floor and away from the walls. This method will allow for proper circulation of air. Smaller lots or open cases may be stored on shelves.

Stack Foods of a Kind Together

Arrange the foods in the storage space according to type, e.g., canned foods, dried foods to facilitate in counting and recording of inventory.

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Date Foods for Easy Identification

Schools must date new stock so that products may be utilized according to “First In, First Out” (FIFO) by delivery date (month, date and year). Commodities require the delivery date to be indicated on case packaging and loose cans. Commodity food should be utilized within six (6) months of receipt.

Place Oldest Stock In Front

Place oldest stock in front to ensure the use of the foods on a FIFO basis. Place commodities with the oldest receipt date in front to ensure FIFO by receipt date.

Store Foods That Absorb Odors Away From Those That Give Off Odors

Foods that absorb odors must be stored away from foods that give off odors. Listed below are items that give off and/or absorb odors.

<u>Food</u>	<u>Gives Off Odors</u>	<u>Absorbs Odors</u>
Apples, Fresh	Yes	Yes
Butter/Margarine	No	Yes
Cheese	Yes	Yes
Onions	Yes	No

Refrigerate Dairy Products and Eggs:

Milk, cheese, margarine and eggs must be refrigerated immediately. Prompt and continual refrigeration is necessary for these products. Store these products on shelves **ABOVE** or separate from uncooked food products.

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Storing Fresh Produce

- A. Date produce upon receiving and note “Best if Used By” date to ensure FIFO.
- B. Upon delivery, immediately store the bags in the coldest part of the refrigerator or cooler – DO NOT FREEZE.
- C. Provide good air circulation around produce.
- D. Precut produce should be purchased in quantities that can be used within 5 school days to remain at the peak of quality.
- E. Do not remove the bags from the refrigerator until it is time to prepare the salad. Precut produce is packaged in air-controlled bags to ensure quality and freshness.
- F. Once the seal on the precut produce bag has been broken, the product should be used as quickly as possible.
- G. Store non-refrigerated produce such as bananas, tomatoes, and potatoes at room temperature.
- H. Store ethylene-producing fruit such as apples and tomatoes closest to the door, away from other fruit and vegetables, as the ethylene causes yellowing, ripening and off-flavors.

Storing Frozen Foods

Store frozen foods in the freezer in the original shipping containers. This will reduce the possibility of freezer burn and drying out of the food.

Individual packages of food will need an additional over-wrap in moisture-vapor-proof packaging material before being placed in the freezer, if space does not permit storing these foods in the original shipping containers, or if the containers have been damaged.

Check to see that the freezer maintains a temperature of -10°F to 0°F or below. Temperature above 0°F, even for brief periods of time, will cause products to lose quality. Some quality losses are easy to see; others are invisible. These losses include browning or darkening of the product, loss of flavor and color, off flavors, undesirable changes in texture, and loss of Vitamin C.

Frozen foods that have begun thawing may be safely refrozen if they still contain ice crystals or are at 41°F or below.

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Dry Food Storage

The ideal temperature in dry storage areas is 50°F although temperatures up to 70°F are acceptable. Thermometers must be available and temperature records must be kept daily to document the temperature of the dry storage area. See attached Daily Cold/Dry Storage/Hot Water Temperature Record ([Attachment](#)).

Storage Practices For Non-Food Items:

It is equally important to store non-food items properly. Improper storage can cause damage to product, which will increase costs.

It is important not only to consider proper storage methods to reduce loss, but also consider efficient methods of storage which will save space and allow ease of handling the items.

- A. Stack non-food items on pallets, dollies, or shelves. Make sure items are at least twelve (12) inches from the ceiling, six (6) inches off the floor and away from the walls. This method will allow for proper circulation of air.
- B. Stack non-foods of a kind together. Arrange items in storage area according to type, such as trays, sporks, cold cups, etc.
- C. Remember to store cleaning supplies separately from food, food equipment, utensils, or single service items. Supplies must be stored in a secure location, e.g., manager's office. Manager is responsible for distributing supplies to ensure proper use and accountability. All chemicals must be clearly labeled.
- D. Non-food items should also be used on a "First-in, First-out" basis.

For Action By: Food Service Managers and Satellite Assistants

Refer Questions to: Department of Food and Nutrition

*Revised: June 2006(4th), July 2011, June 2015, July 2022, July 2023
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