

Food Donor Guide



WHO THIS GUIDE IS FOR

This guide is for businesses interested in donating surplus food, as well as our current food donors wanting a quick refresher. Inside, you'll find an overview of how food rescue works, its benefits, and simple tips to make the process easy, helping you maximise your impact for people, planet, and community.

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ALL ABOUT FOOD RESCUE

What is food rescue?

Food rescue organisations collect safe, surplus food from growers, manufacturers, retailers, and hospitality businesses (food that might otherwise end up in landfill, compost or for feeding animals) and redistribute it to people, often those in need.

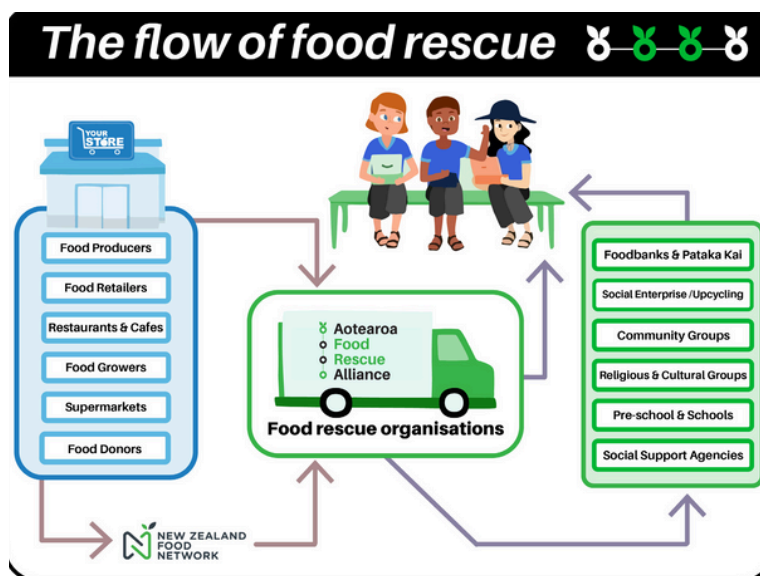
This simple act has big impacts, including:

- Feeding people experiencing food insecurity.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from food waste.
- Preventing the waste of valuable resources like water, land, and energy used to produce that food.

The Process:

While each food rescue operates a little differently, most follow a similar process:

- **Collect:** Food rescue organisations partner with donors (such as supermarkets, cafes, and orchards) to collect surplus quality food.
- **Sort:** They check the quality of the food, ensuring it's safe and suitable for redistribution, and store it in hygienic, temperature-controlled conditions.
- **Distribute:** Our members pass food on to end recipients in different ways, some via community groups, directly to individuals, or both (see more info on the right).



For every \$1 invested in food rescue, there is a \$4.50 social return.

Distribution models:

Some of the most common distribution models include:

- **Community Hub Model:** These organisations distribute rescued food to other community groups or agencies, who then pass it on to individuals and whānau in need.
- **Freestore Model:** Freestores offer rescued food directly to the public. Many operate with an open-door policy, allowing anyone to collect food, no questions asked.
- **Mixed Model:** Some food rescues are part of a larger social or environmental initiative, combining food rescue with other community services or sustainability goals.

About AFRA

The Aotearoa Food Rescue Alliance (AFRA) is the national body of food rescue organisations across New Zealand. We have more than 35 members operating locally across Aotearoa, rescuing nutritious, edible food from going to waste and redistributing it to the community. Learn more about us at afra.org.nz.

Our Members

AFRA is proud to represent a diverse network of food rescue organisations across Aotearoa. Use the QR code below to find out more about your local member, or visit <https://afra.org.nz/our-members/>.



Impact

With the help of donors, throughout the country in 2024 our members:



Rescued
7.4 million kg
of surplus food



Distributed
9.8 million kg
of food
(equivalent to 28
million meals at a retail
value of over \$73
million)



Supplied
1,500
recipient
organisations



Prevented
19,700,000 kgs
of CO2 (e)
emissions.

Benefits of Donating to food Rescue



Reduce Business Costs: Save on landfill fees, lower waste management expenses, and cut costs associated with producing, purchasing, and transporting food that would otherwise go to waste.



Achieve Sustainability Goals: Divert surplus food from landfill, lower your environmental footprint, and actively contribute to climate change action by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.



Support Your Community: Ensure good quality surplus food reaches local families and individuals who need it, helping to fight food insecurity across Aotearoa.



Strengthen Your Brand Reputation: Customers are loyal to businesses that demonstrate strong social and environmental values. Donating to food rescue shows you care and act.



Build Positive Partnerships: Food rescue organisations value and celebrate their food donors, offering great opportunities for community storytelling and brand visibility.

Measure Your Impact: Most AFRA members can supply data on how your surplus food donations are making a difference, from kilograms rescued to equivalent meals created. AFRA can work with you to provide tailored reporting that supports your sustainability and social responsibility goals.

GETTING STARTED DONATING

Liability protection for food donors

Good Samaritan Clause - s 352, Food Act 2014

Also known as Immunity of Food Donors, **this clause** applies to businesses who donate food they would normally sell. Provided food is safe and suitable when it is donated and comes with any information needed to keep it safe and suitable, a donor is protected from liability under the Food Act 2014.

1. Food is unsafe if it is likely to cause the person eating it harm.
2. Food is unsuitable if it is contaminated, deteriorated, in a condition that affects its intended use or people can't tell what is in it.

You can view this section of the Food Act 2014 [here](#).

Food Donation guidelines

What Can You Donate?

You can donate most surplus food, as long as it is safe to eat and meets food safety guidelines.

Get in touch with your local food rescue organisation and ask if they are able to collect the food you are considering donating. AFRA members are experts in their field. They will be able to give you specific info on what they can rescue. Most AFRA members have the equipment to collect and transport a variety of food, including chiller vans to collect chilled and frozen foods.



A good rule of thumb: If you would eat it from your own pantry or fridge, it's probably safe to donate.



Typically, our members can collect:

- **Fresh fruit and vegetables** (including wonky or slightly bruised produce)
- **Bread and baked goods** (loose bakery items should be bagged)
- **Dairy products** (provided they are stored in the chiller for collection)
- **Meat** (must be hard-frozen on or before its best-before date)
- **Dry goods** (pasta, rice, canned food, cereals)
- **Pre-packaged snacks and drinks** (non-alcoholic)
- **Pre-cut salads** with best-before dates or before use-by (check for signs of spoilage like slime)
- **Mislabeled Items:** Most of our members can relabel a product's packaging before donation. So items with labelling defects in the manufacturing process, eg missing allergen information, can be relabelled, making them suitable to distribute safely.
- **Second harvest from orchards:** Some of our members are also equipped to harvest fruit and vegetables that won't be picked for sale (sometimes known as gleanings).



For safety reasons, our members can't accept food that is:

- Past its use-by date.
- Been thawed and refrozen.
- Damaged, opened, or has broken packaging that compromises safety (e.g deeply dented cans).
- Showing signs of spoilage (e.g., mould, slime, discolouration, rusty or bulging cans).
- Packaged with missing labels (unless explained and still identifiable and safe).
- Under a current recall notice.
- High-risk like raw chicken and fresh shellfish.



Safe Food Donation Tips

Best-before vs. Use-by

- Best-before = quality. Food is usually still fine to eat (and donate) after this date.
- Use-by = safety. Never donate food past its use-by date.

Keep It Cold

- Chilled food must stay at or below 5°C.
- Frozen food must remain solid/hard-frozen.

Store Smart

- Separate raw, cooked, and allergen foods.
- Use food-safe packaging and label clearly.

Label What Matters

- Clearly label any allergens or special storage instructions.

Check Before You Donate

- Look for signs of spoilage: mould, strong smells, excess liquid, or discolouration.

Let Your Food Rescue Know If:

- Food is safe to eat only for a limited time.
- Food requires special handling or storage.



Agreements

It's important that food donors and their partnering food rescue organisations have clear expectations from the start. Good communication ensures the relationship works well for everyone involved.

Many AFRA members use a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to set out key expectations after a new partnership is formed. You can expect your partnering food rescue to check in regularly to make sure everything is running smoothly and discuss any improvements if needed.

An MOU typically covers:

- The nature of the food donation and each party's obligations to ensure food safety and good processes.
- That donated food will not be sold and will only be used for the agreed purposes.
- Protection for food donors under the Good Samaritan clause of the Food Act.
- How donated food is distributed to individuals and organisations in need.

Getting started: Partnering With Your local Food Rescue



Find your local food rescue and their contact details at afra.org.nz/members, and reach out for a chat, about what they can collect and how to get started.



No local food rescue?

Get in touch with the NZ Food Network, who coordinate bulk donations nationwide.



Ready to make a difference?

Join us in feeding people, not landfill: afra.org.nz.
Need help? [Contact us](#).

