

Food Safety Guidelines for Fresh Produce

Thank you for helping those facing food insecurity by donating fresh produce! You can help ensure that Vermont's bounty is shared safely with everyone in our community by following these simple guidelines:



Would you eat it?

Regardless of COVID-19, any produce that is being donated should be high-quality and nutritious. If there are any deformities or blemishes that make it so you wouldn't eat it yourself, please consider composting instead of donating.

Practice Personal Hygiene

Prior to harvesting, and any time you touch your face or any other common surface, use proper handwashing techniques (wash hands for 20 seconds using soap and warm water, rinse, and dry completely) before touching any harvest equipment or fruits and vegetables.

Safe harvesting in the time of COVID-19

During times of COVID-19 please be especially cautious when handling produce for donation. In order to keep everyone in our community safe, please:

- Do not allow anyone who may be experiencing any symptoms of illness near fresh produce.
- Only use clean containers for transport and donation. Do not reuse containers or cardboard.
- Sanitize all harvesting equipment before using it to harvest produce.
- Wear a mask during the entire harvesting and transport process to prevent spread of germs.
- Wear disposable non-latex gloves any time you handle produce. If you touch your face or any common surfaces, rewash your hands and change your gloves.

Safe transportation and storage

Any produce in need of refrigeration must stay below 40°F. Use a cooler, if necessary, to keep refrigerated produce below 40°F during transport. All other produce should be stored in a cool, dry area until delivered.

Make it safe and accessible for your local food pantry

Please contact your local pantry with as much advance notice as possible and confirm they are currently taking donations from the public. During Covid-19, all deliveries are to be done curbside. If you are unsure which pantry is closest to you, you can search for a local organization at <https://www.vtfoodbank.org/agency-locator>.

The Bill Emerson Act

The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act protects individuals from civil and criminal liability for any food product donated in "good faith", so you're safe!