

Storage and Food Safety

Make sure that all food items and packed backpacks are stored appropriately:

- Elevated off the floor
- On or in appropriate shelving/food storage surfaces (plastic, metal or sealed wood)
- Non-food items should be stored in a separate area or always below food items.
- Food or packs cannot be stored under unshielded/leaking pipes, under stairs, in mechanical/utility rooms, in bathrooms, or in garbage rooms.
- Items needing refrigeration or freezing cannot be used in backpack program
- Some perishable items such as apples or oranges can be used but caution is advised (i.e. pack and distribute within a reasonable time frame)
- **Food Labeling & Repacking** - All food stored on your site and being distributed should meet Minimum Labeling Requirements. **As required by MN law, all food must be labeled with:**
 - Distributor and their place of business (some foods labeled or packaged by Second Harvest will display "Second Harvest")
 - Product Name
 - Ingredients in order of inclusion (including allergens)
 - Net weight of distributed unit
 - Items without proper labeling should be thrown away
 - **Second Harvest Heartland recommends NOT to repack items or separate them from original packaging. Choosing to repack items increases your risk and liability and can mean that your organization is not covered by the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act. Separating items from original packaging violates MN law in regards to proper labeling.**
 - **Example:** Granola bars in large boxes can be broken up if labeling is included on each individual bar however, items like pop tarts and packs of pudding or applesauce **would not be OK to be broken up because the individual packages do not have any labeling.**
 - Repacking or loss of original packaging hampers the ability to track food in the event of a recall.

Food Dating

- There is a great deal of confusion and questions about food dating and what that means in regards to food safety. We have a number of resources available to help you better understand what these dates really mean.
- The [Food Safety section](#) on [Agency Zone](#) has some great information about food dating. You can also find more information in the [mobile application](#) about specific foods. Remember your families are likely to also have a lot of the same questions you do, so sharing this information with them and/or your contacts at school may also be helpful.

Second Harvest Requirements

- Participants cannot be asked to pay or give donations for food
- No items obtained from Second Harvest can be consumed, taken home or used by volunteers or staff
- Items from Second Harvest cannot be shared with other programs, businesses or non-profits
- No new schools can be added to program without prior review and approval from Second Harvest

When is a visit from your Account Specialist necessary?

- Anywhere that food or full packs are stored overnight or longer
 - For example, if packs are packed at the food shelf on Thursday and delivered to the school that day for distribution on Friday, a visit is needed at both the food shelf and the school. Packs delivered to schools on the same day as distribution do not need a visit to the school.
- Anywhere the packs are packed.
- Any location that will be receiving a direct delivery from Second Harvest