

FOOD AND NUTRITION PROCEDURES

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Miami-Dade County Public Schools

Subject: STORAGE OF PURCHASED FOOD AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

For Action By: FOOD SERVICE MANAGER

Refer Questions to: FOOD SERVICE ADMINISTRATORS,
DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND NUTRITION

RECOMMENDED STORAGE PRACTICES FOR FOOD ITEMS

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

The following storage practices are recommended:

(1) Stack Bagged Foods

Quantity lots of bagged foods such as flour, rice, beans, cornmeal, sugar, etc. may be stacked on pallets or shelves. Make sure lots are at least six (6) inches off the floor and that there is sufficient space away from the wall. 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 flour, rice, beans, cornmeal, 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.

(2) Stack Cases And Boxed Foods

Quantity lots of cases and boxed foods may also be stacked on pallets or shelves. Make sure lots are at least six (6) inches off the floor and that there is space away from the wall. This method will allow for proper circulation of air. Smaller lots or open cases may be stored on shelves.

(3) Stack Foods of A Kind Together

Arrange the foods in the storage space according to type, such as canned foods, dried foods, etc., to facilitate taking inventories. Both dry and refrigerated/frozen purchased foods and commodity foods must be stored separately.

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(4) Date Foods For Easy Identification

Schools must date new stock so that products may be utilized according to "First In, First Out" by pack (month and year manufacture) or delivery date (month, date and year). Commodities must include the pack date or if a USDA product is delivered without a pack date, it requires the delivery date to be indicated on case packaging and loose cans. The pack date must also be indicated on the invoice. Commodity food should be utilized within six (6) months of receipt.

(5) Place Oldest Stock In Front

Place oldest stock in front to ensure the use of the foods on a "First-In, First-Out" basis. Place commodities with the oldest pack date in front to ensure "First-In, First-Out" by pack date.

(6) 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	No	Yes
Cabbage	Yes	No
Cheese	Yes	Yes
Eggs, Dried	No	Yes
Onions	Yes	No

(7) Refrigerate Dairy Products and Eggs:

Milk, cheese, butter and eggs must be refrigerated immediately. Prompt and continual refrigeration is necessary for these products.

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(8) Refrigerate Fresh Fruits And Vegetables

Fresh fruits and vegetables require immediate refrigeration. This helps to preserve their color, flavor, texture, and nutritive value. Examine fresh produce for ripeness before storing: very ripe items should be removed and used immediately. Leave paper wrapping on fruits to help keep them clean and to prevent spoilage and loss of moisture. The products should be stored in a manner that will allow cold air to circulate around them. See produce receiving and handling guide.

(9) 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.

(10) 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 Temperature Record ([Attachment A](#)).

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Recommended 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.

- (1) Stack non-food items on pallets, dollies, or shelves. Make sure items are at least six (6) inches off the floor and that there is space away from the wall. This method will allow for proper circulation of air.
- (2) Stack non-foods of a kind together. Arrange items in storage area according to type, such as trays, sporks, cold cups, etc.
- (3) Remember to store cleaning supplies separately from food, food equipment, utensils or single service items. All chemicals must be prominently labeled.
- (4) Non-food items should also be used on a "First-in, First-out" basis.