

Safe Food Storage (created 9/13)

Note: This document was developed for use by the DPI CACFP and DCF Child Care Licensing. The information in this document is intended to provide guidance on the following Group Child Care Licensing Rules under DFC 251.06 (9)(c) 1. and (d)

Dates on packaging:

- If there is an EXPIRATION or USE BY date on the package the food must be used by the EXPIRATION or USE BY date.
- If there is SELL BY date on a package the food must be used within 3 days after the SELL BY date.
- If there is a BEST BY date on the package the food must be used within 7 days after the BEST BY date.
- Canned foods or other packaged foods with a date printed on the can or package that does not include the designation of EXPIRATION, USE BY, SELL BY OR BEST BY must be used by the date indicated on the package or can.
- Best practice standards recommend that food be used by the date on the package, regardless of whether the date is an EXPIRATION, USE BY, SELL BY or BEST BY date.

Condiments, Relishes, Peanut Butter

- Prepared foods intended to be opened and reused such as mustard, ketchup, peanut butter, jelly, salad dressings, mayonnaise and pickles must be stored as indicated on the label and used by the date indicated on the label.

Refrigerating food:

- Leftover food prepared by the center which has not been served shall be dated, refrigerated promptly and used within 36 hours, or frozen immediately for later use.
- Commercially-prepared, ready-to-serve food items where the package/can/container has been opened, but the food was not served may be retained and used within seven days after the food package/can/container was opened. The remaining opened commercially-prepared, ready-to-serve food must be placed in a food-grade plastic, metal or glass container with a tight fitting lid and placed in the refrigerator, unless the manufacturer's original label indicates that no refrigeration is necessary. The container shall be labeled with the contents and the date the food item was opened. **Note:** Commercially-prepared, ready-to-serve food is defined as foods that have been previously prepared by a company that processes or packages food for human consumption and can be served directly from the container with only minimal preparation (such as heating) or no additional preparation.

Freezing food:

- Leftover food prepared by the center which has been frozen and then removed from the freezer shall be dated with the date it was removed from the freezer, and used or discarded within 36 hours.
- Foods with an EXPIRATION, USE BY, SELL BY or BEST BY date may be placed in the freezer to extend the time period when they may be used. The package should be dated with the date the item was placed in the freezer. Once the item has been removed from the freezer it must be dated with the date it was removed, and used or discarded within 36 hours. It is recommended that a program maintain a list of food in the freezer with the date it was placed in the freezer. Food placed in the freezer with the earliest date should be used first.
- It is recommended that food packages placed in the freezer be labeled with permanent marker or freezer tape.

Dating of food items in storage:

It is recommended that all foods be dated with the purchase date and those items with the earliest date be used first. Food kept on storage shelves or in the refrigerator or freezer should be checked and rotated often to insure those items with the earliest date are used first and not pushed to the back of the storage shelf, refrigerator or freezer.