

# Grocery Rescue Training

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# Grocery Rescue Program Overview

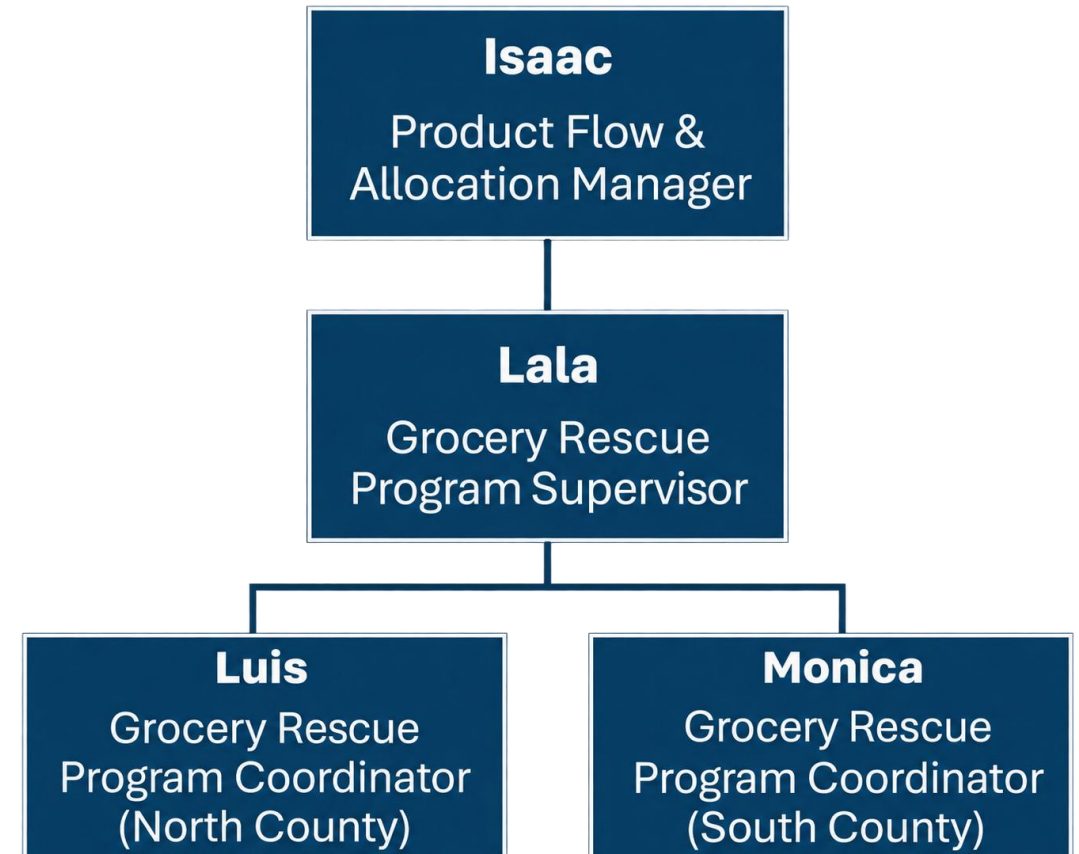
- Connects community partners with local retailers to rescue fresh, nutritious food that might otherwise go to waste.
  - **97** GR distribution locations
  - **303** GR stores = **919** weekly pickups
  - GR partner network helps rescue **1.9 million** pounds of food monthly
- Partners pick up, transport, temperature-check, weigh, sort, store, distribute, and report Grocery Rescue donations through MealConnect.
- Consistency, food safety, accurate reporting, and communication keep the program working.

## One shared goal

Move donated food safely, efficiently, and reliably from the store to the community.

# Grocery Rescue Program Structure

- The GR Program is a collaboration between Second Harvest's Programs & Services department and the Sourcing department.
- The Programs & Services department manages all partner-related aspects of the program
- The Sourcing department manages all store-related aspects of the program



# What a Grocery Rescue Pickup Looks Like



We'll follow this same sequence throughout today's training.

# Before Your First Pickup

Certification, equipment, and getting ready

# Safe Food Handling Certification

- Primary and secondary Grocery Rescue contacts must have current Safe Food Handling certification on file.
- All drivers transporting Grocery Rescue food must also be Safe Food Handling certified.
  - On the Safe Food Handling quiz, drivers must answer “YES” when asked whether they will be transporting food.
  - Keep certificates in a binder or digital file so they are available during compliance visits.
- Reach out to your GR Coordinator if you are unsure whether someone on your team needs certification.

[Safe Food Handling Quiz](#)

## Driver reminder

Certification must be completed before transporting Grocery Rescue food.

5. Do you transport food for your food pantry in any capacity (e.g., grocery rescue pick-ups, home deliveries, redistribution, or transporting food to other distribution locations)? \*

☐ yes, I transport food

☐ no, I do not transport food

# What to Bring to Your Pickup

- ✓ **SHFB Authorized Grocery Rescue badge**
- ✓ Clean vehicle — free of chemicals, debris, and contamination risks
- ✓ Freezer blankets / insulated equipment to keep perishables cold
- ✓ Working thermometer
- ✓ Scale available back at your site for weighing the donation



## Thermometers

Second Harvest will provide digital probe thermometers. Infrared thermometers are also allowed if your team prefers to use one.

# At the Store

Pickup process, communication, and temperature checking

# Store Pickup Process

- Arrive on your assigned day and within the agreed pickup window.
- Check in at the designated pickup area / receiving area.
- Wait for the donation to be brought to you.
  - If waiting longer than 10 minutes, then ask for assistance in the front of the store.
  - If waiting longer than 20 minutes, feel free to leave and report no pounds for the pickup. You're more than welcome to wait if help is on the way!
- Take the full donation, no cherry-picking. Unless items are inadequate.
- If you are unsure whether something was intended for donation, ask store staff. If you cannot confirm, do not take it.
- If a store regularly asks you to collect from individual departments, let your GR Coordinator know.

## Every store is different

We'll help you learn the normal process for your assigned store.

## Running late?

Call the store and let your GR Coordinator know.

# When Donations Are Inadequate

## Look for

- Missing labels
  - Especially on store-made items such as bread
- Incorrect temperature
- Cross-contamination
- Compromised containers/packaging
- Clear product-quality concerns
- Unfrozen meat

## 15% spoilage threshold

- Up to 15% spoilage per crate / overall donation is within the program threshold.
- If spoilage is OVER 15%, document the issue and contact your GR Coordinator.

## What to do

- Take pictures of entire box or donation.
- Leave clearly unacceptable product at the store when identified at pickup.
- Inform store staff of reason why items are being left behind.
- Do not cherry-pick otherwise acceptable donations.
- Submit a GR Feedback Form.

# Examples of Inadequate Donations



# Store Communication

## Build the relationship

Exchange contact information when possible. Be on time, communicate closures/delays, and learn who your regular receiver or store contact is.

## Help them understand the impact

Share your mission, who you serve, and what their donations make possible in the community.

## Why it matters

More buy-in can mean more food, better variety, more attention to quality, and a stronger understanding of the impact their donations have.

Better store communication = better grocery rescue donations & relationship

# Building Relationships: What GR Partners Say Works!

- **Be consistent and reliable.** Arrive on your scheduled pickup days and on time. If you're going to be late or miss a pickup, communicate with the store as early as possible. Reliability/dependability came up repeatedly in the responses.
- **Get to know the Receiver.** Introduce yourself, learn their name, and ask what pickup process and timing works best for their team. Partners especially emphasized communicating directly with receiving staff and managers.
- **Keep drivers consistent when possible.** Sending the same driver helps create name/face recognition, trust, and stronger communication between the partner and store.
- **Be friendly and respectful.** Say hello, learn employees' names, thank the store for the donations, and remember that your driver represents both your organization and Second Harvest while at the store.
- **Share the impact.** Let store teams know where their donations are going and how they're helping people in their own community. Some partners said sharing stories about the families/students served helped build stronger connections.
- **Stay connected through staff changes.** Store turnover happens! Periodically check in to confirm who the Receiver/manager is and introduce yourself when someone new takes over. One partner specifically checks in every few months for this reason.
- **Be flexible and communicate issues.** Ask questions rather than assuming, work with the store when reasonable, and make sure they know how to contact you if something comes up.

# Food Safety & Transportation

- Perishable product must stay cold during pickup and transportation.
- Use freezer blankets, insulated coolers/ice chests, or refrigerated transport as appropriate.
- Vehicle air conditioning alone is not cold storage.
- Keep the vehicle clean and free of chemicals and debris.
- Get donations back to your site promptly to maintain cold chain.



[Transportation Video —  
English](#)

[Transportation Video —  
Spanish Subtitles](#)

# Temperature Checking — Why?

- Feeding America requires Grocery Rescue partners to check and record food temperatures.
- Temperature checks help ensure refrigerated and frozen foods stay within safe ranges from store pickup to drop-off.
- Maintaining the cold chain is a standard food-safety practice across the food industry. Restaurants, grocery stores, food distributors all have a responsibility to keep TCS foods within safe ranges during storage and transportation.
- Temperatures are taken at both loading and unloading.

## Simple workflow

CHECK  
→ DECIDE  
→ RECORD

# Temperature Checking — What Do I Check?

## At PICKUP

Take ONE refrigerated sample and ONE frozen sample.

If MILK is present → use milk for the refrigerated sample.

If CHICKEN is present → use chicken for the frozen sample.

## At DROP-OFF

Take ONE refrigerated sample and ONE frozen sample again when you return to your site.

You DO NOT need to temperature-check every item.

# How to Check Temperatures

## Digital probe — provided by SHFB

Place the probe between two similar packages.

Do not puncture or open packaging.

Wait for a stable reading before recording it.



## Infrared — optional

Aim at the center of the product to take a surface reading.

If an IR reading seems incorrect or does not make sense, verify it with a probe thermometer.



# Special Case: Eggs



- Handle eggs as little as possible because they can warm quickly in your hands.
- Probe thermometer: check the ambient temperature around the eggs.
- Infrared thermometer: take the surface reading as trained.

## Remember

The goal is an accurate sample without unnecessary handling.

# Safe Temperature Ranges

## Refrigerated

41°F or below

If cold product is above the acceptable range at pickup, do not take it. Please communicate with staff that you will leave it behind.

## Frozen

20°F or below.

If a frozen reading is above 20°F, please communicate with staff that you will leave it behind.

## When using infrared

If the temperature seems incorrect, verify with a probe thermometer.

# Unloading at Your Location: Drop Off

Unload, temperature-check, weigh, sort, and store

# Back at Your Site: Follow This Order

1

## TEMP

Take your cold + frozen samples again.

If cold product is over 50°F please dispose of it.

If within 41°F - 50°F store it promptly to bring the temperature back down or distribute it immediately within two hours.

2

## WEIGH

Weigh the full donation by category, spoilage included.

3

## SORT

Remove waste, spoiled, unsafe, or unacceptable items.

4

## STORE

Move food into dry, refrigerated, or frozen storage.

# Weighing the Donations

- Weigh and document everything received before removing spoilage.
- Use the scale, do not estimate pounds.
- Report by MealConnect category:
- Bread & Bakery
- Deli, Dairy & Eggs (TCS)
- Milk (TCS)
- Produce
- Frozen Meat (TCS)
- Frozen Miscellaneous (TCS)
- Dry Grocery
- Non-Food
- Second Harvest provides the initial GR scale. If it brakes or becomes faulty, the partner is responsible for replacing it.

## Why?

We report what was rescued from the store, including spoilage.

# Sorting & Food Safety

- Sort through the donation after it has been weighed.
- Remove food that is spoiled, unsafe, incorrectly labeled, cross-contaminated, or in compromised packaging.
- Store acceptable product safely in the correct dry, cold, or frozen storage.
- When in doubt about whether food is safe to distribute, do not distribute it.
  - **When in doubt – throw it out!**

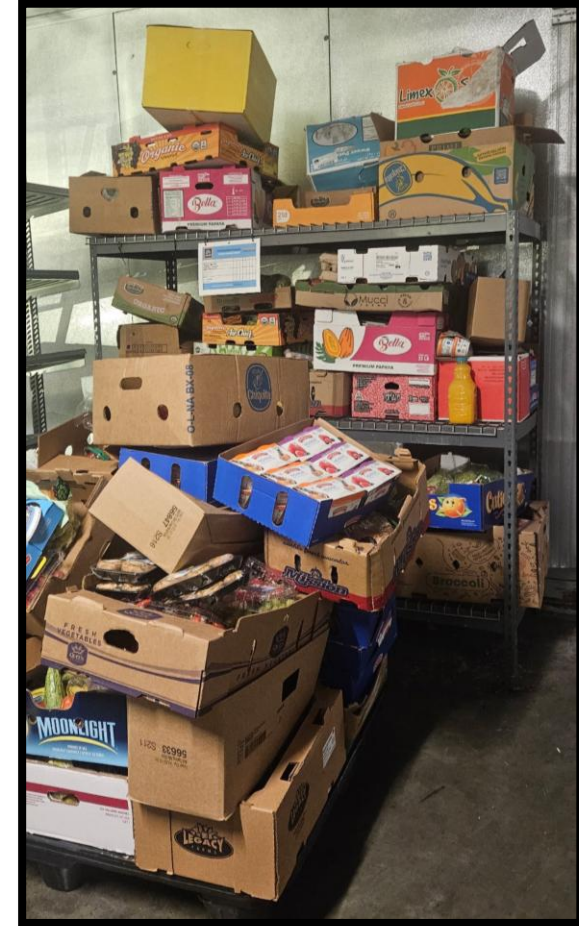


[Food Safety Video](#)

# Grocery Rescue Feedback Form

[Open GR Feedback Form](#)

- Use the form for donation-quality issues, excessive spoilage, temperature concerns, store-process challenges, or store relationship concerns.
- Take pictures that show the quantity and condition of the product whenever possible.
- Let your GR Coordinator know what happened.
- Please share concerns early. Don't wait for issue to become ongoing. Submitting a Feedback Form early gives us the opportunity to work with the store and improve the donation process for you and the rest of the community.
- Programs & Services will work with Sourcing so the appropriate store follow-up can happen. We will keep you updated!!



# MealConnect & Reporting

How to document the pickup and why it matters

# Why MealConnect Reporting Matters

## **Program accountability**

MealConnect is the record of what was rescued and distributed. Accurate weights help us understand Grocery Rescue impact.

## **Retailer + SB 1383 reporting**

Second Harvest uses GR data for retailer reporting and food-recovery documentation. City audits may also require poundage records.

## **Feeding America + community impact**

Reporting supports network requirements and helps quantify how much food is being recovered for Orange County.

# Submitting a MealConnect Receipt

- Open a new receipt and confirm the pickup date and correct store/donor.
- Enter the pounds received in each applicable category.
- For TCS categories, enter your pickup and drop-off sample temperatures.
- Review the receipt for accuracy, then submit.
  - Receipts are due every Monday EOD for previous week
    - The missing receipt report is pulled every Wednesday and Friday
- Important reminder: receipts must still be submitted for every pickup that was scheduled to occur. That includes site closures and pickups that did not yield donations.

Add New Receipt

07/01/2025

Agency (Select First) 

Donor 

☐ Scheduled Pickup Not Attempted ☐ No Pounds

[MealConnect Receipt Video](#)

# Entering Temperatures in MealConnect

## ONE cold sample

Use the same refrigerated sample temperature for the applicable cold TCS categories received:

- Deli
- Dairy & Eggs
- Milk

## ONE frozen sample

Use the same frozen sample temperature for the applicable frozen categories received:

- Frozen Meat
- Frozen Miscellaneous

# Missing Receipts

- Receipts are due every Monday by EOD for the previous week's pickups.
- We check for missing receipts on Wednesdays and Fridays.
- Every scheduled pickup must be accounted for, even if you received 0 pounds or the pickup was not attempted.
- If you submit a receipt after your Coordinator follows up, let them know; the report can take time to refresh.
- We follow up on missing or late receipts and offer support when we notice recurring issues.
- If receipts are submitted late in 3 or more months within a 6-month period, the partner will be considered Not In Good Standing.

## No donation that day?

Still submit the scheduled pickup as:

- No Pounds (include the reason)
- or
- Scheduled Pickup Not Attempted (include the reason)

☒ No Pounds

Reason

Add Receipt and Review

☒ Scheduled Pickup Not Attempted

Reason

Cancelled (Sick)  
 Cancelled (Vehicle Problem)  
 Cancelled (Donor)  
 Other

Add Receipt and Review

# SB 1383 & City Audits

- SB 1383 is California's organic-waste and edible-food recovery law.
- City representatives may audit stores and food-recovery partners.
- They may ask for store contact information, your Grocery Rescue agreement, and pounds received from each store by month or for the previous calendar year.
- MealConnect is the source for your Grocery Rescue poundage records.
- If you receive an audit request and are not sure how to provide the information requested, contact your GR Coordinator, we can help.

## Good reporting helps later

Complete weekly receipts make audit requests much easier to answer.

# Pulling Poundage for an Audit

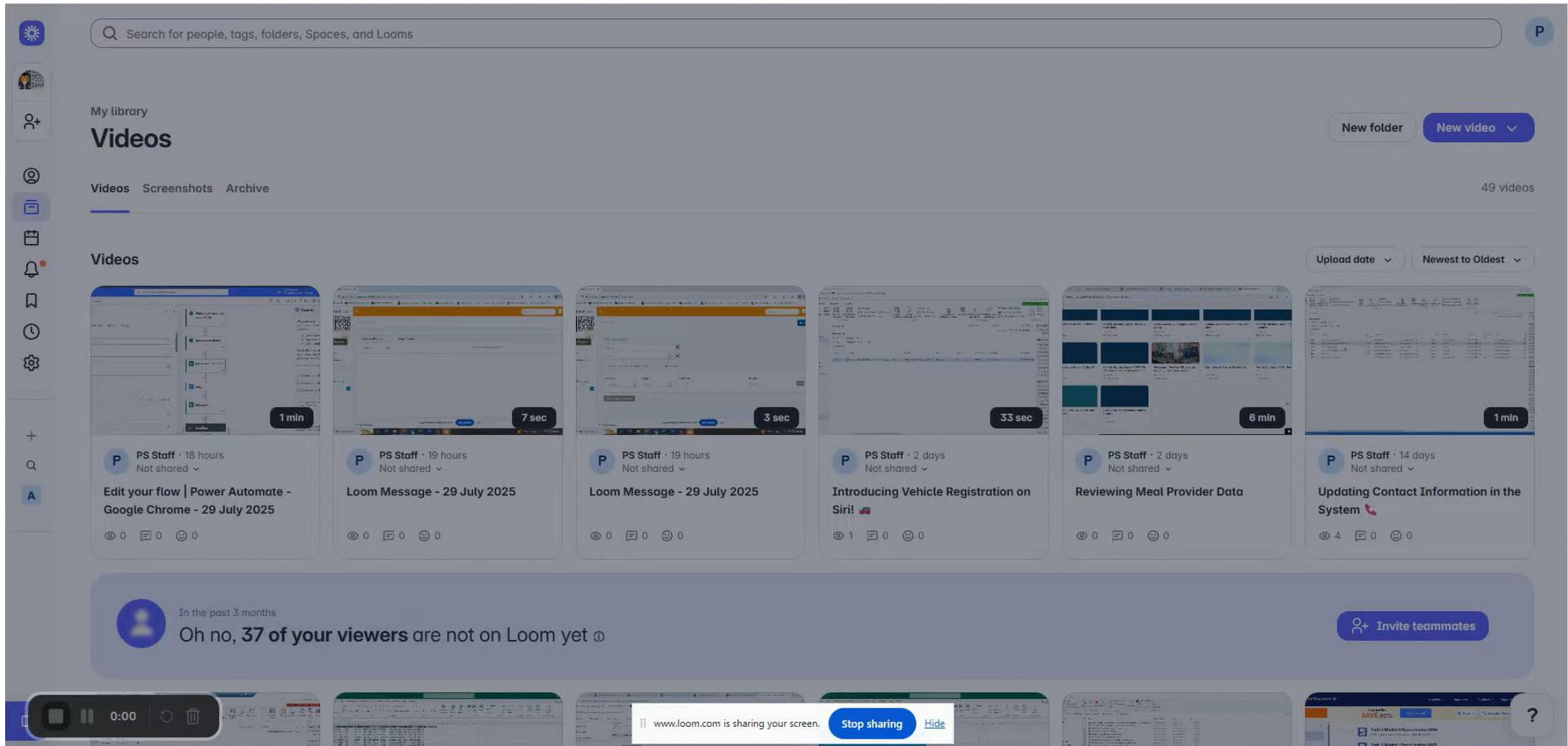
- Use MealConnect to review previously submitted receipts and poundage by store.
- Select the exact date range requested and confirm the correct donor/store.
- For city/SB 1383 requests, make sure the report covers the requested month(s) or calendar year.
- If you are unsure which report to use or what to provide, reach out to your GR Coordinator before responding.

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|          |                                         |           |                                                                       |  |  |
|----------|-----------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| Date     | Aug 4, 2025                             | Agency    |                                                                       |  |  |
| Created  | 8/4/2025 12:43 PM                       | Food Bank | Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County (64)                        |  |  |
| Modified | 8/4/2025 12:43 PM<br>by 1033@feedoc.org | Donor     | Sam's Club (3198)<br>17099 Brookhurst St<br>Fountain Valley, CA 92708 |  |  |
| Status   | Tentatively Successful                  |           |                                                                       |  |  |

| ID            | Category                                       | Storage Requirement | Product Description | Pounds |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------|
| BP43056023    | Grocery Rescue AG, Bread and Bakery            | Refrigeration       |                     | 395    |
| DAIRY43056024 | Grocery Rescue AG, Dairy (excl. Milk) and Eggs | Refrigeration       |                     | 41     |
| MIX43056025   | Grocery Rescue AG, Deli                        | Refrigeration       |                     | 14     |
| MIX43056026   | Grocery Rescue AG, Dry Grocery                 | Dry                 |                     | 687    |
| MEAT43056027  | Grocery Rescue AG, Frozen Meat                 | Frozen              |                     | 126    |
| NF43056028    | Grocery Rescue AG, Non-Food Items              | Dry                 |                     | 59     |
| FRESH43056029 | Grocery Rescue AG, Produce                     | Refrigeration       |                     | 2874   |

# Pulling Poundage Report on Meal Connect



Search for people, tags, folders, Spaces, and Looms

My library

## Videos

49 videos

Upload date Newest to Oldest

1 min 7 sec 3 sec 33 sec 6 min 1 min

PS Staff · 18 hours Not shared

Edit your flow | Power Automate - Google Chrome - 29 July 2025

PS Staff · 19 hours Not shared

Loom Message - 29 July 2025

PS Staff · 19 hours Not shared

Loom Message - 29 July 2025

PS Staff · 2 days Not shared

Introducing Vehicle Registration on Siri!

PS Staff · 2 days Not shared

Reviewing Meal Provider Data

PS Staff · 14 days Not shared

Updating Contact Information in the System

In the past 3 months

Oh no, 37 of your viewers are not on Loom yet

Invite teammates

0:00

www.loom.com is sharing your screen. Stop sharing Hide

# Accountability & Ongoing Support

Compliance visits, surveys, and when to reach out

# GR Quarterly Survey

- Second Harvest sends Grocery Rescue partners a short survey each quarter.
- Please complete it even when things are going well. Positive feedback is useful too!
- Programs & Services and Sourcing use the feedback to identify store issues, donation-quality trends, capacity needs, and opportunities to improve the program!
- Your GR Coordinator follows up on action items that come out of the survey.

## Why we ask

Your experience at the store helps us see things we cannot see from the Food Bank.

# When to Reach Out to Your GR Coordinator

## Pickup / store

- Cancellation
- Closure
- Schedule change
- Store feedback (including staff related challenges)
- Unsure about store process
- Another organization took the donations before your arrival

## Food / reporting

- Temperature concern
- Excessive spoilage
- MealConnect issue
- Missing receipt
  - Incorrect receipts or duplicate receipts

## Program / capacity

- Need more or less food
- Storage/staffing changes
- Need more GR badges
- Need to adjust pickups
  - If you're working with the store to adjust pickups, adding or dropping, please let us know!
- City audit request
- Any questions

**GR@feedoc.org**

## GR Check: At the Store

Your regular Receiver is out today and no one seems to know about your donation.

- A. Leave and try again next week.
- B. Politely ask for assistance or another store contact.
- C. Start checking store departments yourself.

**TAKE A FEW  
SECONDS!**

Drop A, B, or C in the Zoom  
chat.

## GR Check: Take It or Leave It?

A crate of Oranges has a couple spoiled ones, but the overall crate looks good.

**TAKE IT** 👍 or **LEAVE IT** 👎

### QUICK VOTE

Thumbs up or thumbs down in the chat.

## GR Check: Temperature

At pickup you temperature check the milk and get a reading of:

**44°F**

**TAKE IT** 👍

or

**LEAVE IT** 👎

### QUICK VOTE

Thumbs up or thumbs down in the chat.

# GR Check: What Should You Do?

## Scenario 1

You completed your scheduled pickup, but the store had 0 pounds available.

## Scenario 2

You reach your site and while sorting you find more spoiled product than what you noticed at the store and it is over the 15% threshold.

### YOUR TURN

One answer for each in the chat.

# Thank you!

Questions?