



Sorting Guide for Fresh Rescue and Dry Goods

Updated March 2026

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with us! Without volunteers like you, the Locker Project would not be able to do what it does. Fair warning, this may be the gnarliest job in the warehouse, but it is the most fruitful.

Part of the Locker Project mission is to reduce food waste, alongside supporting food security for children and families. We take part in a network of agencies that rescue food from local supermarkets that would otherwise be wasted. Each week, we rescue thousands of pounds of nutritious produce to distribute in the community.

Sorting Rescued Produce

- Inspect whole fruits and vegetables
 - Discard items that show mold or are overripe
 - Discard items with severe damage, such as holes or split skin
 - Deposit unusable produce in compost bin
 - If you are unsure, please feel free to ask a staff member!
- Inspect cut produce
 - Look for Sell By or Packaged On date. How long past the date food is still healthy to eat depends on the item.
 - Cut produce spoils more quickly and is prone to bacterial growth. Compost any cut produce that is discolored, smells foul, or is slimy.
 - Compost any cut **melon** and **mango** as they are prone to harmful bacterial growth.

Sorting Non-Perishables

- Inspect for expiration dates. Most food pantries distribute packaged dry and canned foods that may be past the “Best Before” or “Best By” date. How long past these dates food is still healthy to eat depends on the item.
- Inspect for dents. Discard items that are open or have packaging damage that may indicate spoilage or contamination.