



*"...providing healthy and affordable food to Food Pantries and Feeding Programs in West Central Arkansas!"*

## **STANDARDS FOR PROPER AND ADEQUATE FOOD STORAGE**

**1. STORE FOOD IN A ROOM WHICH WILL PREVENT THE ENTRY AND HARBORING OF PESTS SUCH AS ROACHES AND RODENTS.** Seal all gaps, holes, or cracks in room. Look at wall, ceiling, and shelf joinings, seal up any possible hiding places. Check around windows, doors and frames. Seal where necessary, including a strip on bottom of pantry door.

**2. STORE ALL FOOD ON SURFACES WHICH ARE SANITIZABLE AND SEALED.** No bare wood, rusty metal or shelf liner. Paint wood or metal shelves with varnish or a light-colored enamel paint.

**3. STORE FOOD PROPERLY.** Repackaging of products must be done under sanitary conditions – no paper bags. Keep all food off floors, even bulk bags. The use of pallets is not recommended for the storage of food in a pantry. Pest-prone products such as rice and beans may need to be kept in tightly-lidded, flexible plastic trash containers. Shelves should be far enough off of the floor so that cleaning and checking for signs of food leaking and signs of pests are easy.

**4. CHECK FOOD STOCK FOR SOUNDNESS.** Check incoming food for sound conditions, free from spoilage, filth or contamination. Rotate food: first in, first out. While checking food stock, discard bloated and rusty cans, containers without a label, open containers, out of date baby food, or formula and containers which appear to have been tampered by pests. Leave room on shelves so that food can be easily moved around to check the food and shelving.

**5. STORE NON-FOOD ITEMS SEPARATELY FROM FOOD.** Some common non-food items are hazardous (such as soaps and cleaning solutions). Avoid contamination of food from non-food items. Have separate storage entirely. NEVER store non-food items above or mingled with food.

**6. KEEP PANTRY CLEAN. TRASH CONTAINERS MUST BE COVERED, ISOLATED, AND EMPTIED DAILY.** All food storage areas should be checked and cleaned at least once a week, including refrigerators, freezers and floors. Specific cleaning chores should be assigned tasks with attention paid to detail. While cleaning, check for the soundness of food (open food containers), leaks and signs of pests (droppings, etc.) If signs of pests are found, the pantry and possibly the food are contaminated. Discard any food with signs of contamination, find where pests are getting in and seal entrances. Sanitize the pantry with a solution of one tablespoon bleach to a gallon of water, followed by extermination.

**7. STORE NON-PERISHABLE FOODS AT SAFE TEMPERATURES.** Non-perishable food should be kept in a cool, dry area. In our hot, humid climate, proper ventilation of the room is important. In some situations, a small air-conditioning unit may be necessary to hold a moderation temperature (75-78 degrees), protecting food from extreme heat and humidity.

**8. STORE PERISHABLES AT SAFE TEMPERATURES. KEEP TEMPERATURE GAUGES IN REFRIGERATORS AND FREEZERS.** Average safe temperatures in refrigerators: (34-40 degrees) and freezers (-15 and 0 degrees).

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