Produce Handling for Mobile Food Pantries

Do	Don't
Elevate food at least 6" with tables or pallets.	Place food on the ground (even when boxed or bagged).
Bag whole, bulk produce into appropriate household sizes. **Tip 1:** Take the poundage on the menu and divide by the number of households attending your distribution (e.g. If you have 800 pounds of potatoes and expect 100 families, you'll need 8-pound bags. **Tip 2:** Estimate the correct weight and show volunteers a sample bag. Bag the produce prior to starting the distribution.	Repack ready-to-eat or ready-to-cook items.
Use good personal hygiene: wear clean clothes, wash hands, wear food-handling gloves when touching produce that doesn't need to be peeled **Note:** Change gloves when needed (e.g. when moving to a different bulk produce item or when soiled)	Smoke around food.
Control time and temperature: keep cold food cold. **Tips 1:** If you have multiple pallets of a single cold product, keep extra(s) on the truck. **Tip 2:** Assign cold pallets to sites on the shaded side of the truck during the distribution. **Tip 3:** If you have multiple pallets of a single cold product, keep extra(s) on the truck. **Tip 4:** When working with a single cold pallet, leave the product stacked as long as possible. At the same time, keep cold pallets covered with a freezer blanket if provided.	Leave food out for more than 2 hours.
Avoid cross-contamination: Each type of food should get its own spot; tables should be cleaned and sanitized before and after the distribution.	Use dirty tables.
Inspect items during distribution: 5% waste is expected when dealing with produce. **Note:** we typically load extra pounds onto each Mobile Pantry to compensate for any spoiled product.	Distribute food unfit for consumption
Keep dogs out of the distribution area (except service animals).	**Introduce hazards**

Consult The FoodKeeper from the Food Industry Association for code date and food storage guidelines. Here is another great resource from the MSU extension.

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