

Warehousing, Distribution and Storage of USDA Donated Foods

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, School Food Services

§ 250.14 Warehousing, distribution and storage of donated foods.

(a) *Standards for Warehousing and Distribution Systems—*

(1) *Use of cost efficient and effective facilities.*

Distributing agencies shall use the most cost effective and efficient system for providing warehousing and distribution services to recipient agencies. For the purpose of this part, commercial facilities are defined as enterprises that provide commercial warehousing services or commercial delivery services, or those commercial enterprises that provide both warehousing and delivery services.

(2) *Timeframes for evaluation.* All distributing agencies shall evaluate their current warehousing and distribution systems. Initial evaluations shall be submitted to the FNSRO by June 30, 1990. Subsequent evaluations of noncommercial systems shall, at a minimum, be submitted to FNS every three years by March 31.

(3) *Evaluation of current systems.* The evaluation of the system in place shall, at a minimum, include the following information:

(i) A description of the principal warehousing/delivery techniques used by the distributing agency. The description should include:

- (A) The frequency of delivery available;
- (B) The timeframes for making deliveries;
- (C) The type of delivery service offered (to the loading dock or placement in the storeroom); and
- (D) The system for recipient agencies to order specific amounts of food from available inventory; and

(ii) An estimate of all costs that will be incurred in administering the Food Distribution Program for the upcoming school year. These costs include transportation, storage and handling of donated foods (if the current distributing agency system does not include delivery to recipient agencies, identification of costs incurred by recipient agencies to pick up commodities at a warehouse and to deliver the food to a centralized storage facility or the individual preparation sites),

salaries of persons directly connected with the administration of the program and other program related expenses. These expenses shall include fringe benefits, travel expenses, rent, utilities, accounting/auditing services to recipient agencies such as the costs for administering and monitoring the State's processing program, and technical assistance workshops.

(4) *Comparison of existing system with commercial systems.* All distributing agencies which do not use commercial facilities for a basic level of warehousing and distribution services shall compare the cost of warehousing and distributing commodities under their current system with the cost of comparable services under a commercial system for the upcoming school year.

(i) The cost comparison shall be made between the cost of providing a basic level of service under its current system and the cost of obtaining an equivalent level of service from commercial facilities. This basic level of service shall consist of the transportation, storage and handling of donated food from the time of delivery by the Department to a distributing agency until delivery to a recipient agency's centralized storage facility or individual preparation sites and shall include monthly deliveries of donated food to all recipient agencies except those that have agreed to less frequent deliveries.

(ii) A distributing agency may base its cost comparison on a level of service in excess of the basic level and/or on services not currently provided. In all cases, the comparison must be made on the costs of providing a comparable level of service under the existing system (as identified in § 250.14(a)(2)) versus a commercial system.

(iii) If a distributing agency is unable to locate any commercial facilities expressing interest in providing the basic level of warehousing and distribution services, the distributing agency shall indicate this in its cost comparison submission, together with documentation of its efforts to obtain cost estimates from commercial facilities.

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(iv) All initial data regarding the cost of the current warehousing and distribution system and the cost for comparable commercial facilities shall be submitted to the FNSRO by June 30, 1990. Subsequent cost comparisons shall, at a minimum, be submitted to FNS once every three years by March 31.

(5) *Approval to use other systems.* Distributing agencies that do not implement a commercial warehousing and distribution system shall apply to the FNSRO for approval to use other facilities and must demonstrate that other facilities are more cost effective and efficient. All requests for a waiver shall be accompanied with a full evaluation of the existing system complete with cost comparison data. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis. Initial requests for approval of alternative systems shall be submitted to the FNSRO by June 30, 1990. Subsequent requests shall, at a minimum, be submitted to the FNSRO once every three years by March 31.

(6) *System implementation.*

(i) Distributing agencies shall implement the most cost effective and efficient system for warehousing and distribution services to recipient agencies by July 1, 1991. Unless otherwise approved by the FNSRO, subsequent to July 1, 1991, a distributing agency shall convert to a commercial system within six months of:

(A) The date of submission of evaluation and cost comparison data indicating that a commercial system is more cost effective and efficient (if no request for approval of an alternate system is made); or

(B) The date of the denial of a request to use an alternative system.

(ii) If at any time FNS determines that the warehousing and distribution system in place is not cost effective or efficient, the distributing agency will be required to reevaluate its system (including a cost comparison and request for continued approval to use an alternative system) in accordance with this subsection within 90 days of notification by the FNSRO.

(7) *Revisions in system.* All distributing agencies (using either commercial or noncommercial systems) shall request approval from the FNSRO at least 90 days in advance of any planned reduction in the level of service provided or any increase in distribution charges beyond normal inflation. If FNS determines the proposed changes are inappropriate, FNS may require the distributing agency to submit additional justification, deny the request, or request a reevaluation of the system in accordance with paragraph (a)(6)(ii) of this section.

(b) *Standards for storage facilities.* Distributing agencies, subdistributing agencies and recipient agencies shall provide facilities for the handling, storage and distribution of donated foods which:

(1) Are sanitary and free from rodent, bird, insect and other animal infestation;

(2) Safeguard against theft, spoilage and other loss;

(3) Maintain foods at proper storage temperatures;

(4) Excepting recipient agencies, stock and space foods in a manner so that USDA-donated foods are readily identified;

(5) Store donated food off the floor in a manner to allow for adequate ventilation; and

(6) Take other protective measures as may be necessary. Distributing agencies, subdistributing agencies and recipient agencies shall ensure that storage facilities have obtained all required Federal, State and/or local health inspections and/or approvals that such inspection/approvals are current.

(c) *Reviews.* All distributing agency level storage facilities shall be reviewed annually. Distributing agencies shall ensure that subdistributing and recipient agencies conduct annual reviews of their respective storage facilities. Documentation shall be maintained on file at the distributing agency or local level as appropriate to reflect compliance with this section, including documentation of corrective action in cases of noncompliance. Corrective action must be taken immediately on all deficiencies identified in the review and the

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result of the corrective action must be forwarded to the distributing agency. Where applicable, the distributing agency shall determine and pursue claims in accordance with § 250.15(c).

(d) *Contracts*. When contracting for storage facilities, distributing agencies and subdistributing agencies shall enter into written contracts to be effective for no longer than five years, including option years extending a contract. Before the exercise of option years, the storage facility shall update all pertinent information and demonstrate that all donated foods received during the previous contract period have been accounted for. The contract shall, at a minimum, contain the following:

- (1) Assurance that the storage facilities will be maintained in accordance with the standards specified in paragraph (b) of this section;
- (2) Evidence that donated food shall be clearly identified;
- (3) Assurance that an inventory system shall be maintained and an annual physical inventory will be conducted; and reconciled with the inventory records;
- (4) Beginning and ending dates of the contract;
- (5) A provision for immediate termination of the contract due to noncompliance on the part of the warehouse management;
- (6) A provision allowing for termination of the contract for cause by either party upon 30 days written notification;
- (7) The amount of any insurance coverage, which has been purchased to protect the value of food items which are being stored; and
- (8) Express written consent for inspection and inventory by the distributing agency, subdistributing agency, recipient agency, the Comptroller General, the Department or any of their duly authorized representatives.

(e) *Physical inventory*. During the annual review required by paragraph (c) of this section, distributing agencies and subdistributing agencies shall take a physical inventory of their storage facilities. The physical inventory shall be reconciled with each storage facility's book

inventory. The reconciliation records shall be maintained by the agency that contracted for or maintained the storage facility. Food items that have been lost, stolen, or found to be out of condition, shall be identified and recorded. Potential excessive inventory, as described in paragraph (f) of this section, shall be reported by the subdistributing agency to the distributing agency. Corrective action on each deficiency noted during these inventories shall be initiated immediately, and a written report of those corrective actions shall be forwarded to the distributing agency. Where applicable, the distributing agency shall pursue claims in accordance with § 250.15(c).

(f) *Excessive inventories*.

(1) The distributing agency shall determine if a subdistributing agency's inventories are excessive based on:

- (i) The rate of distribution;
- (ii) Anticipated distribution; and
- (iii) Other concerns such as logistical and economic considerations.

(2) In no case may the inventory level of each donated food in storage exceed a six-month supply unless sufficient justification for additional inventory has been submitted and approved. Subdistributing agencies shall submit justification to the distributing agency in instances where more than a six-month inventory is needed. Justification shall be submitted by the distributing agency to the FNSRO for approval in instances where more than a six-month inventory is needed at the distributing agency level.

(3) The distributing agency shall take corrective action to ensure that excess inventories at all levels are eliminated and shall document actions taken to reduce excessive inventories.

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