

EMERGENCY FOOD STORAGE SAFETY CHECKLIST

✓ Store in a Cool, Dry, Dark Place

- Maintain temperatures between 40°F and 70°F
- Keep humidity low to prevent mold growth
- Avoid direct sunlight which degrades food quality
- Store away from heat sources like stoves and water heaters

✓ Use Proper Containers

- Select air-tight, moisture-proof containers
- Use food-grade buckets with gasketed lids for bulk items
- Consider glass jars with tight seals for smaller quantities
- Transfer store packaging to more durable containers

✓ Prevent Pest Infestations

- Use rodent-proof storage containers
- Freeze grains and flours for 72 hours before storage to kill insect eggs
- Consider using food-safe oxygen absorbers
- Inspect storage area regularly for signs of pests

✓ **Rotate Your Stock**

- Follow the First In, First Out (FIFO) principle
- Label all containers with contents and date stored
- Use older items in everyday cooking
- Replace used items with fresh supplies

✓ **Don't Mix Food with Chemicals**

- Store food away from cleaning supplies, fuels, and pesticides
- Remember foods can absorb odors and chemical vapors
- Never reuse chemical containers for food storage
- Use only food-grade storage containers

✓ **Cook and Reheat Safely**

- Heat foods to proper temperatures to kill bacteria
- Boil home-canned low-acid foods for 10 minutes before eating
- Cook dried beans thoroughly to neutralize natural toxins
- Use a food thermometer when possible

✓ **Use Safe Water**

- Purify water before using with food storage
- Boil water for at least one minute
- Use water filters or purification tablets in emergencies
- Store clean water specifically for food preparation

✓ **Inspect Before Eating**

- Check cans for bulges, dents, rust, or leaks
- Look for off odors, colors, or textures
- Check dry goods for mold, insects, or moisture damage
- When in doubt, throw it out!

✓ **Keep Clean Hands and Tools**

- Wash hands before handling food
- Sanitize all utensils, cutting boards, and surfaces
- Prevent cross-contamination between raw and ready-to-eat foods
- Maintain hygiene even during emergencies

✓ **Watch the "Danger Zone"**

- Keep cold foods below 40°F
- Keep hot foods above 140°F
- Never leave perishable foods between 40°F-140°F for more than 2 hours
- Reduce to 1 hour if temperatures exceed 90°F

This checklist should be reviewed seasonally when rotating your emergency food supply.