

## Packaging

Both food items and nonfood items such as single-use cups, utensils, and napkins must be packaged correctly when you receive them. Items should be delivered in their original packaging with a manufacturer's label. The packaging should be intact and clean. It also should protect food and food-contact surfaces from contamination. Reject food and nonfood items if packaging has any of the following problems.

**Damage** Reject items with tears, holes, or punctures in their packaging. Likewise, reject cans if they have any of these problems:

- Severe dents in the can seams, as shown at right
- Deep dents in the can body
- Missing labels
- Swollen or bulging ends
- Holes and visible signs of leaking
- Rust

All food packaged in a reduced-oxygen environment, such as vacuum-packed meat, must be rejected if the packaging is bloated or leaking. Items with broken cartons or seals or with dirty and discolored packaging should also be rejected. Do **NOT** accept cases or packages that appear to have been tampered with.

**Liquid** Reject items with leaks, dampness, or water stains (which indicate the item was wet at some point), as shown in the photo at right.

**Pests** Reject items with signs of pests or pest damage.

**Dates** Food items must be correctly labeled. Do **NOT** accept food that is missing a use-by date or expiration date from the manufacturer. This date is the recommended last date for the product to be at peak quality. Reject items that have passed their use-by or expiration dates. Some operations label food items with the date the item was received to help with stock rotation during storage.

You may see other dates on labels. A sell-by date tells the store how long to display the product for sale. A best-by date is the date by which the product should be eaten for best flavor or quality.



### **Documents**

Food items must be delivered with the correct documents. For example, shellfish must be received with a shellstock identification tag. These tags indicate when and where the shellfish were harvested. They also ensure that the shellfish are from an approved source.

Store shellfish in their original container. Do **NOT** remove the shellstock tag from the container until the last shellfish has been used. When the last shellfish is removed from the container, write the date on the shellstock tag. Then, keep the tag on file for 90 days from that date.

Fish that will be eaten raw or partially cooked must also be received with the correct documentation. These documents must indicate the fish was correctly frozen before you received it. Keep these documents for 90 days from the sale of the fish. If the fish was farm raised, it must have documentation that states the fish was raised to FDA standards. These documents must also be kept for 90 days from the sale of the fish.

### **Food Quality**

Poor food quality can be a sign that the food has been time-temperature abused and, therefore, may be unsafe. Work with your suppliers to define specific safety and quality criteria for the food items you typically receive. Reject food if it has any of the following problems.



**Appearance** Reject food that is moldy or has an abnormal color, as shown in the photo at left. Food that is moist when it should be dry, such as salami, should also be rejected. Do **NOT** accept any food item that shows signs of pests or pest damage.

**Texture** Reject meat, fish, or poultry that is slimy, sticky, or dry. Also reject it if it has soft flesh that leaves an imprint when you touch it.

**Odor** Reject food with an abnormal or unpleasant odor.

In addition to the guidelines above, you should always reject any item that does not meet your company's standards for quality.

## Apply Your Knowledge

**Accept or Reject?** Write an A next to the food items you should accept. Write an R next to the food items you should reject.

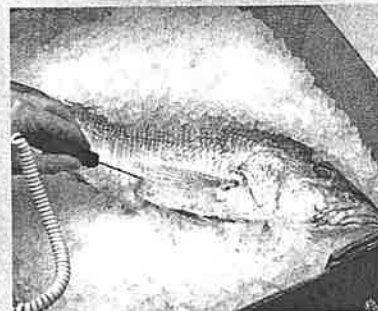
1 \_\_\_\_\_

Dirty packaging



2 \_\_\_\_\_

Fresh fish internal temp of 50°F (10°C)



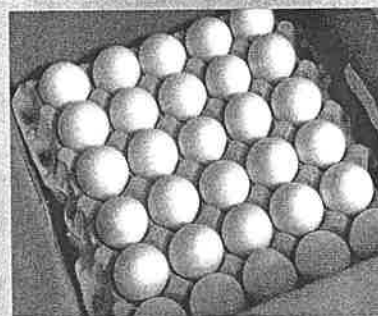
3 \_\_\_\_\_

Torn packaging



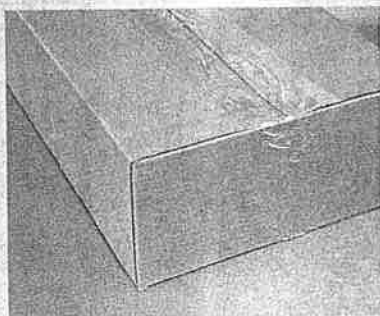
4 \_\_\_\_\_

Air temp of 45°F (7°C)



5 \_\_\_\_\_

Repackaged cans of food



6 \_\_\_\_\_

A clean, intact box



7 \_\_\_\_\_

Milk at 45°F (7°C)



8 \_\_\_\_\_

Cooked rice at 140°F (60°C)

