

Guidelines for Organisers of Group-Buys Involving Food Products

While group-buys are private arrangements among members of the public, group-buy organisers are encouraged to observe the following good food safety practices so that they can play their part in ensuring that the food they procure is safe for consumption.

1. Sourcing for Food Products

- i. Avoid buying from dubious or unknown sources
- ii. When coordinating orders, group-buy organisers are encouraged to maintain records of transactions including the buyers' basic details (e.g. name and contact details), to facilitate tracing in the event of a food safety incident
- iii. Group-buy organisers purchasing food products from overseas sources are considered importers. Please note that only traders who are licensed with SFA can bring commercial shipments of food into Singapore. The import of such food should also meet SFA's [requirements](#)

2. Receiving and Storing of Food Products

- i. Food products should be stored in a safe and proper manner (including appropriate temperature control) before self-collection, or distribution to the buyers
- ii. Good food storage practices help to prevent cross-contamination and temperature abuse, especially for temperature-sensitive and [ready-to-eat food](#)
- iii. Without proper temperature control, harmful bacteria in food can multiply rapidly at temperatures between 5°C to 60°C, which is known as the temperature danger zone
- iv. The storage of food at the correct temperatures prevents the growth of harmful bacteria and minimises food safety risks
- v. Good food storage practices include:
 - a. Storing food products away from non-food items such as liquid soap, detergent, and pesticides
 - b. Not placing food products directly on the floor or at any unhygienic areas/ surfaces
 - c. Storing frozen food in a freezer at temperature of -12°C or below
 - d. Storing chilled food in a chiller at between 0°C and 4°C
 - e. Ensuring that the chillers and freezers are not overloaded to allow proper circulation of cool air
- vi. Group-buy organisers who need to repackage food products (e.g. breaking up bulk purchases into individual orders for distribution) should conduct the activity in a clean area and ensure that the packaging materials are safe and suitable for the food product. Ready-to-eat food should not be handled with bare hands

3. Self-Collection / Distribution of Food Products

- i. Arrangements should be made with buyers to ensure prompt collection of the food products from the group-buy organisers, especially for perishable foods
- ii. Group-buy organisers who need to distribute/deliver the food orders to buyers are advised to ensure that the food products are protected from possible cross-contamination and temperature abuse, especially for temperature-sensitive and ready-to-eat food products
- iii. In the event of a food safety incident (e.g. food recall), group-buy organisers may be notified by the affected food supplier. In such a situation, group-buy organisers should refer to their transaction records and notify buyers against consuming the affected food products [please refer to Section 1(ii) above]

Food Safety is a Joint Responsibility

All parties – the government, the food industry, and the consumers – have a role to play in ensuring food safety. Food can be contaminated anywhere along the food chain and the assurance of food safety requires the combined effort of all stakeholders.

Group-buy organisers are encouraged to adhere to the food safety practices outlined in this document to ensure that food safety risks are minimised. As group-buys are considered private arrangements among members of the public, any dispute should be resolved between the parties to the arrangement.

Issued by the Singapore Food Agency

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