

Volunteer Handbook 2025





To our volunteers...

Welcome!

Thank you for volunteering with the Food Bank of York Region!

You're now a member of a team dedicated to reducing food insecurity and hunger. With your help, we support over 70+ community partners that serve over 37,000 people!

Your work enables the organizations we serve to focus their resources on helping people struggling with food insecurity, rather than sourcing and managing the food they need for their clients.

Thank you for making the FBYR work. Together we're making a real difference in the lives of thousands across our region.



Sincerley,



Alex Bilotta
Executive Director

TOGETHER



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1. About the Handbook

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with the Food Bank of York Region. Our volunteers play a major role in facilitating hunger relief efforts in York Region. This handbook is designed to introduce you to FBYR and provide you with all the necessary information to make your experience enjoyable and meaningful.

2. About FBYR

The Food Bank of York Region (FBYR) is a Canadian charity (Registered Charity # 849539473RR0001). We are recognized as the food distribution hub for York Region by Feed Ontario and Food Banks Canada.

Our mission is to create a food distribution hub for non-profit food access programs in York Region. Partnering with farmers, retail stores, wholesalers and food manufacturers, we supply healthier food choices to our most vulnerable residents. FBYR is the only organization in York Region with the refrigeration capacity to collect, warehouse and deliver large donations of fresh and frozen foods. We carefully maintain the cold chain from the donation to our community partners.

3. Contacting FBYR



Volunteer Coordinator Email: volunteer@fbyr.ca



Website: www.fbyr.ca



Tel: 437-317-3710



Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/foodbankyr>



Twitter: @FoodbankYR



Instagram: @foodbankyr



Facebook: @Foodbankyr



Pinterest: @Foodbankyr



Address: 8201 Keele Street, Units 5 & 6, Concord, ON Canada L4K 1Z4

4. Our Community Partners

The Food Bank of York Region provides services to 70+ community partners who service 37,000+ clients through local food pantries, homeless shelters, women's shelters, social housing and other agencies that provide meals and food to their clients. Providing safe and reliable delivery of healthy foods to our community partners allows them to direct their scarce resources to their programs to assist people that are hungry, rather than sourcing and procuring food for their programs. We serve;

- Municipal Food Pantries
- Community Food Pantries
- Women's Shelters and Services
- Social Housing Complexes
- School Food Pantries
- Animal Shelters

5. Volunteer Impact

The Food Bank of York Region counts on our dynamic volunteers to carry out our hunger relief efforts. We have the food our communities need, but it takes hands on help to package and deliver it to our neighbors experiencing food insecurity. Every year, hundreds of volunteers donate thousands of hours of their time at our warehouse to help out their community.

6. Code of Conduct

We make sure to provide volunteers with a safe and inclusive environment and have zero tolerance for any abuse, discrimination, or mistreatment of staff, clients or other volunteers. Any individual who is not able to safely follow the instructions of the volunteer coordinator, does not abide by the rules of the facility, or may endanger any of the staff or volunteers, will be sent home immediately and may be banned from the facility entirely. There is also no smoking in the building and being under the influence as well as the use of alcohol and/or cannabis or any illegal substances is prohibited.



7. Becoming a volunteer

The Food Bank of York Region counts on the help of our volunteers to meet the need of our food hunger relief efforts. We have the food our communities need, but it takes hands-on help to deliver it to our neighbours experiencing food insecurity. Our volunteers' involvement is crucial to the success of our food program.

Each person that wants to volunteer with the FBYR, must fill out the volunteer application form on our website located here: <https://fbyr.ca/volunteer-signup/>.

Once they sign up, they are sent an automated email thanking them for their interest and given instructions on how to create a profile on the signup.com website and how to schedule themselves in for a volunteer shift.

Our Volunteer Program always has ongoing shifts available in our warehouse for hands-on-help to sort and pack all our incoming and outgoing donations. In-Office and Special Event volunteer opportunities will be emailed out to volunteers and posted in the breakroom as they arise. If you have a specific skillset, you think could benefit the FBYR with your time, please email volunteer@fbyr.ca to share your thoughts and ideas.

8. Minimum Requirements to be a Volunteer

Every volunteer must be a minimum of 18 years of age to volunteer in the warehouse as an individual.

Each volunteer must also be comfortable lifting and moving and be symptom free of any communicable illness. Please make sure to wear closed toe shoes, and comfortable clothes that you don't mind getting a little dirty.

9. Illness Screening & Policies

Any volunteer displaying any symptoms of an illness, must stay home.

10. Volunteer Waiver

Every volunteer must fill out and sign the 4-page **Volunteer, Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims, Assumption of Risks and Indemnity** Agreement and bring it on the day of their first shift in order to be allowed to enter the warehouse.

11. Volunteer Training

Volunteers will arrive using the main entrance at Units 5 & 6 at the end of the parking lot in between Bolts Plus and GNL Leasing. They will then follow the signs and come into the lunchroom and wait to be greeted by the volunteer coordinator.



VOLUNTEER, RELEASE OF LIABILITY, WAIVER OF CLAIMS, ASSUMPTION OF RISKS AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT

WARNING: BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT YOU WILL WAIVE CERTAIN LEGAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO SUE - PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

To: FOOD BANK OF YORK REGION

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

I, the Volunteer, volunteer freely, voluntarily and after reading carefully, execute this Volunteer Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims, Assumption of Risks and Indemnity Agreement on the date printed below, agreeing as follows:

1. **CONSIDERATION**
I acknowledge the personal benefit accruing to me by reason of participation as a volunteer for FOOD BANK OF YORK REGION ("FBYR") and being aware of the activities in which I will be involved through said participation, I hereby agree as follows:

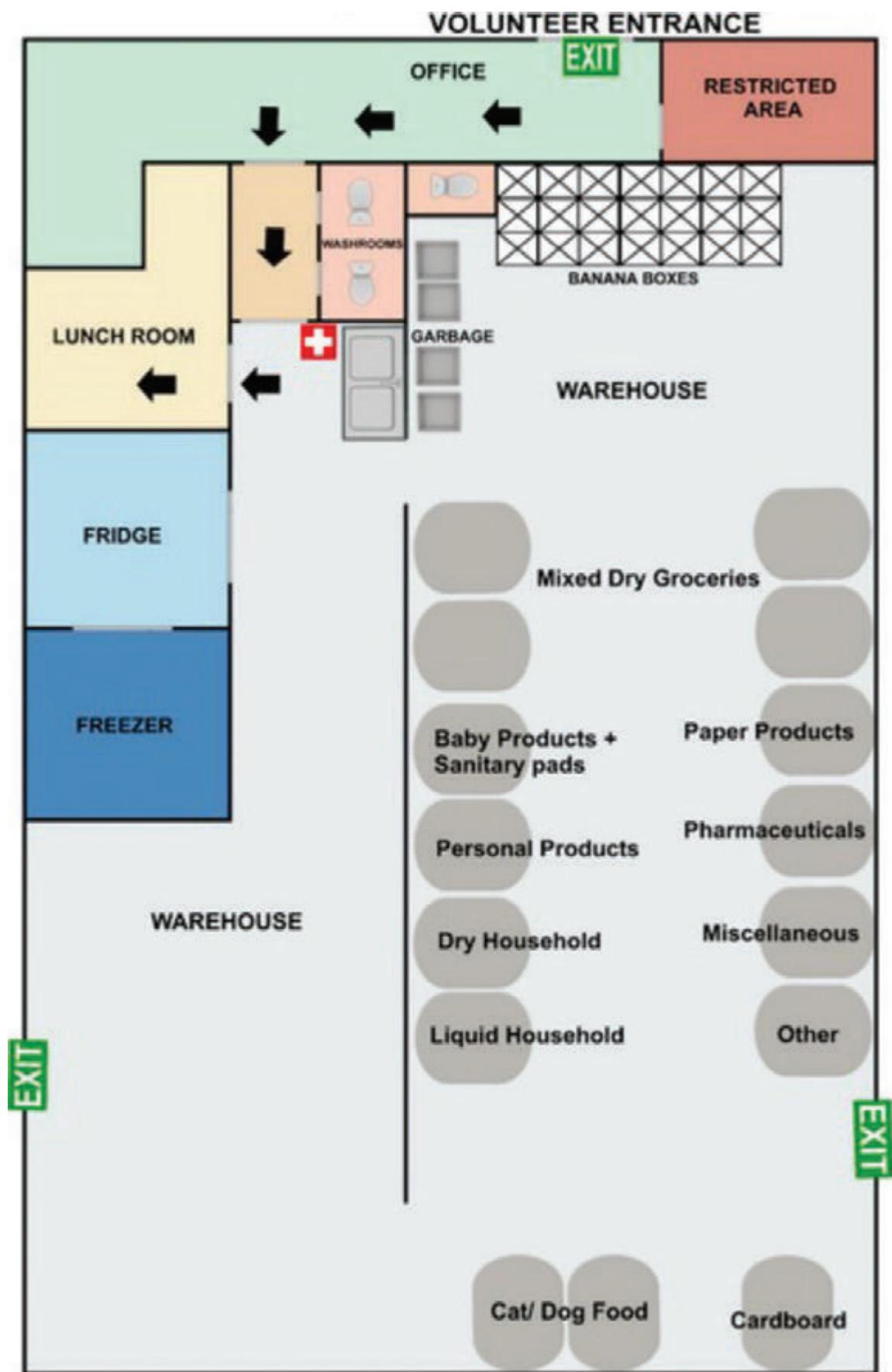
2. **ASSUMPTION OF RISKS**
I aware of the risks, dangers and hazards associated with my volunteer activities at FBYR, and I FREELY ACCEPT AND FULLY ASSUME all such risks, dangers and hazards and the possibility of personal injury, death, property damage or loss resulting therefrom.



Once signed-in, a staff member will lead volunteers to our warehouse where they will be shown how the warehouse is organized into different categories of product, and how each item is stored in a particular location in order to maintain optimal organization with the large daily inflow and outflow of products as seen on the map on the following page. The volunteer coordinator or staff member will then explain and demonstrate how to correctly complete any of the necessary tasks that will be required to complete on that day, as well as give an overview of other regular daily tasks that they will need to know how to do if they continue to volunteer in the future. General volunteers will normally be required to be helping with food sorting, packing as well as the general maintenance of the facility.

12. Volunteer Breaks & Incentives

The volunteer shifts are 3 hours in length, and we let each person know they are welcome to take a break as needed or grab water/drink or snack of choice from our fridge or in the warehouse. At times there will be scheduled breaks dependant on the weather, or safety in the warehouse when forklifts or other equipment is being used.



13. Attendance

Our volunteers can sign up for a morning shift (8-11:30 am) or an afternoon shift (11:30 am - 2 pm) from Monday to Friday. If a volunteer fails to arrive for their shift, they are called/mailed letting them know that they have missed their shift on said date and failure to attend their future shifts will result in removal. After 2 "no-shows" the volunteer is automatically excluded from future shifts.

14. Community Service Letters

We can sign off on volunteer's completed volunteer hours as well as provide ourselves as a volunteer reference. We can also provide volunteers with an official letter verifying that they have completed a certain number of community service hours with us.

15. Guidelines for Food Packing & Sorting

Food packing will take place in the warehouse in an assembly line style format and prepared to be sent out to agencies that we work with. Boxes will be placed onto tables and along with the other volunteers. Assortment of mixed dry groceries, canned goods, bottled and jarred foods, as well as juices and drinks. They will be neatly put into the boxes, with heavier items going on the bottom, and lighter items at the top. Boxes are weighed on scales to ensure that each one weighs 25 lbs., then lids will be placed on the boxes and they will be stacked up in piles of 30 boxes on wooden skids.

Food and product sorting will often be one the major tasks completed by our volunteers. When we receive large shipments of new products, every single item needs to be double checked for quality, and then sorted into its appropriate bin. When sorting food, the best before dates, expiry dates, as well as the overall condition of the food item are carefully checked. You should be familiar with the difference between best before and expiry dates. Please review the definitions carefully on the next page as provided by Food Banks Canada:

Best Before Date: Gives the consumer information as to when the product is at its best- with sensory qualities as acceptable as the day it was made when stored under appropriate conditions and packaging is intact. Indicates the shelf life of foods. They are not indicators of food safety. Could be listed as Best Before, Better Before or BB, then followed by the date. If the packaging is intact, canned/jarred shelf stable groceries can be given out 1-2 years past the best before date and boxed/bagged dry groceries can be given out 6-12 months after the best before date.

Expiry Date: Tells consumers that the product may not be providing them with the nutrients expected of the products and they should no longer consume it after that date. Products with Expiry Dates must not be shared past the date on the packaging. Would be listed on packaging as EXP, followed by the date.

Please familiarize yourself with the guidelines for evaluating the condition of different types of groceries shown in the images below in order to be aware of what is acceptable to be given out to our clients.

Guidelines for Evaluating Boxed and Dry Packaged Containers

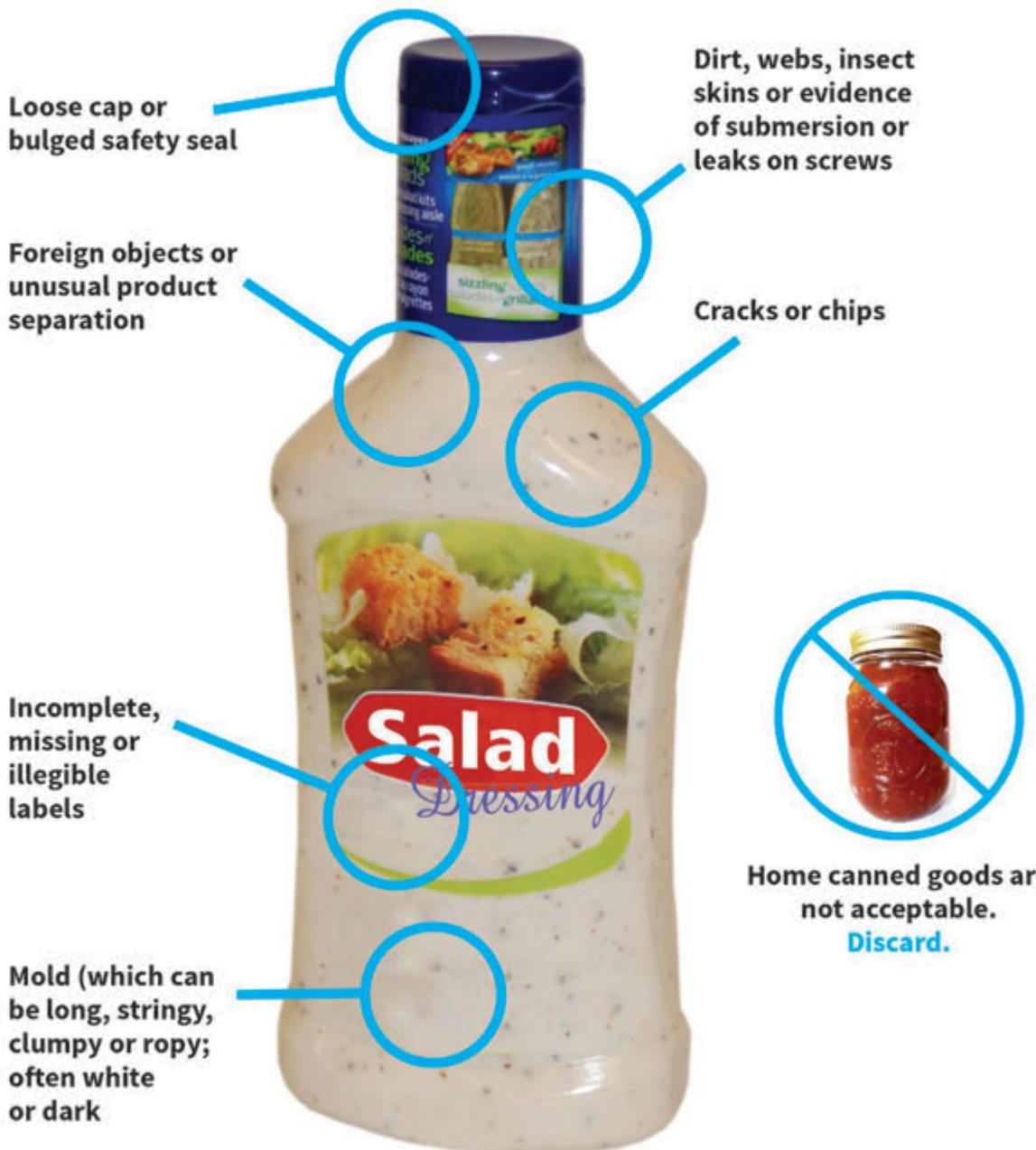


Discard if any of the following are found:

1. Box is already opened
2. Insects, insect skins, webs, chaff or moving pieces can be seen
3. Box is torn, leaking, or contaminated
4. Seals are imperfect
5. Mould on product/packaging or foreign objects found inside



Guidelines for Evaluating Glass or Plastic Food Containers



If in doubt, throw it out!

Serious Can Defects



Dented at junction
of side and end



Sharp dent or
dent on seam



Swollen or bulging



Pitted rust or leaking

*Cans with any of these defects may be unsafe.
Discard them!*

Serious Jar Defects



Inner seal or tamper resistant tape missing or broken



Dirt under the rim



Crooked lid, vacuum button raised, other evidence that cap has been opened



Leaking, crack or chips, or product discoloured

*Jars with any of these defects may be unsafe.
Discard them!*



16. Volunteer Awards

We appreciate the work of every single one of our volunteers, but some have gone above and beyond. One volunteer in particular, Francis De Rose, who volunteered with us for one year, was a very valued member of the FBYR volunteer team by demonstrating dedication, leadership, and positivity by being a full-time volunteer and helping out when his community needed it most during the COVID-19 pandemic. He was recognized by the 105.9 The Region radio station during their volunteer week. By being a great volunteer at our facility, you too could be nominated for and potentially receive any community service-based awards. Some examples are listed below:

- * Neighborhood Network Give Back Award
- * Volunteer Markham's Community Champions Award
- * City of Vaughan Volunteer Recognition Awards
- * City of Richmond Hill Volunteer Achievement Awards
- * Ontario Volunteer Service Awards



The Food Bank of York Region

8201 Keele Street, Units 5-6, Concord, ON, L4K 1Z4

T: 437.317.3710 • E: volunteer@fbyr.ca • www.fbyr.ca

Charitable Registration B/N: 849539473 RR0001