



Vermont Foodbank  
[www.vtfoodbank.org](http://www.vtfoodbank.org)

# Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Handling Best Practices & Strategies for Food Shelves

## Food Quality and Safety

- Maintain quality food that tastes, smells, and looks good.
- Keep foods safe by cleaning hands, work surfaces, utensils, containers and refrigerators.

## Deliveries

- Sort produce by ripeness and quality. Discard produce with significant decay.
- Do not wash produce. Washing can cause spoilage.
- Follow the “First In, First Out” rule. Use the oldest produce first.

## Distribution

- Remove produce from cardboard boxes, bulk cases and bags.
- Transfer produce into clean food grade containers or baskets.
- Pre-package into clear produce bags for convenience and appeal.
- Consider using a produce roll dispenser, lettuce sleeves or zip locks.
- Remind visitors to wash produce prior to use.

## Display

- Create attractive, well organized fruit and vegetable displays.
- Create visually appealing signage. Use photos, shelf labels and posters.
- Continue to sort and discard any produce that is spoiled.

## Other Strategies

- Provide simple suggestions and encouragements. Share ideas, recipes and quick tips.
- Offer taste tests or cooking demos.