

Food Safety

Seals

Ensure that tamper-proof seals are intact



Discard the item if the seal is pierced, not adhered to the edge of the container, or if there is visual evidence of product contamination.



Look for plastic or metal caps on bottles attached by small links to a ring fastened around the bottle neck. If these connecting links are broken, discard the item.



If shrink-wrap around bottles is completely broken, discard the item. If the seal is slightly damaged but shows no tampering was possible, retain the product.



A paper seal may be glued around the cap and neck of a bottle. If this paper is torn, discard the item.

Cans

Look for these red-flag indicators of a “bad can”



Dispose of cans with sharp dents on the squeezed lid seams, if the dent extends below the lid's seam and into the side of the can, or if the dent peels back the lid seam or bottom. Accept cans with a long and flat dent on a seam, unless the dent is tipped inward.



Dispose of cans with dents that cause sharp corners or sharp creases. If a fingernail applied to the edge of the crease can suspend the can, discard it.



Discard cans with side dents causing points at the ends of the crease and cans that when the crease is so deep it also deforms an end of the can, causing it to wobble. Also dispose of severely crushed cans with the sides folded in on itself.



Dispose of swollen cans. You can detect a slight amount of swelling by pressing on the end. If the end can be pushed in, contamination is present. Discard even if the end springs back after it is released.



Rust that remains after wiping may indicate rust pitting that is deep enough to allow contamination. Discard the can.

Glass & Plastic

What to look for in a “good” jar



Check for a vacuum that makes the jar airtight. An inward dished lid (usually marked with a printed pop-up indicator) shows the jar has a vacuum and is airtight.



If a container is not vacuum-sealed, a screw-cap and seal protect the contents from tampering and physical contamination. Discard the item if there is visual evidence of contamination or if the seal is broken.

What to look for in a “bad” jar



Discard jars with a raised center that may or may not spring back after being depressed. Note: An item may have both a pop-up seal indicator and a tamper-proof band. If the band is broken and the pop-up seal is intact, the item is acceptable.



Discard glass jars with dents on the lids. This indicates that glass chips may be in the food.

What to look for in a label

The U.S. Fair Packaging and Labeling Act prohibits the distribution of any food item (except fresh fruit and vegetables) without a label. Labels shall contain:

- Common name of the product; for example, apple sauce
- Name and address of manufacturer, packer or distributor
- Quantity of the contents,; for example, 10 oz.
- Common name of each ingredient; for example, salt or sugar



Products with torn labels are acceptable when all the above information is legible and complete.

If ingredients are missing, as shown here, you must dispose of the product.

Many people are on restricted or specialized diets, while others may be allergic to individual foods. The ingredients list helps them avoid products which may cause allergic reactions or are life threatening.

SAFE DISPOSAL OF UNSAFE PRODUCTS

OFS recommends that unsafe items be disposed of in a lockable dumpster. If this is not available, open and pour out product or place in black trash bags to ensure the food is not available for consumption.