



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services  
CHARLES H. BRONSON, Commissioner  
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Please Respond to:  
Bureau of Food Distribution  
407 S. Calhoun Street (M39)  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0800  
850-487-6694; Fax 850-488-6961

May 20, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Florida School Food Service Directors

CR 09-07

FROM: Gloria M. Van Treese, Chief  
Bureau of Food Distribution

SUBJECT: 2009 Hurricane Season

The hurricane season is rapidly approaching and it is important to plan ahead. In preparation for the season, we would like to remind all the school food service directors of the following:

- 1 Schools should maintain an inventory consisting of about five (5) days worth of non-perishable foods, even when school is not in session. This is especially important for those schools that have been designated as shelters.
- 2 As soon as the Bureau, as lead for Emergency Support Function (ESF) 11, learns that shelters may be opening, the appropriate school food service (SFS) director(s) will be notified in writing that they are authorized to release USDA commodities.
- 3 USDA commodities released to disaster organizations like the American Red Cross (ARC) and the Salvation Army (TSA) during a disaster are used by these agencies to feed victims/evacuees at any of the shelters, comfort stations and mobile feeding sites. **These feeding facilities do not have to be located in school buildings or even in the same county.** (As the need for shelter space increases, other structures, such as government buildings, community colleges, senior citizen centers and even private businesses, may be used as shelters.)
- 4 Update your emergency plans and ensure all your contact lists are current. If you do not have a Disaster Preparedness Plan for your school food service program, this may be the perfect time to prepare one. Visit the National Food Service Management Institute web site at <http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=61> and review their publication "Emergency Readiness Plan: A Guide for the School Foodservice Operation"
- 5 Review your copy of the manual, "A Planning Guide for Disaster Feeding", prepared by the Florida Food and Nutrition Advisory Council. In addition, you may want to provide a copy to each of your cafeteria managers. The manual is available on the Bureau's web page at <http://www.florida-agriculture.com/foodprograms/pdf/disasterfeedingrev2002.pdf>
- 6 In the event that the normal communication channels are not available, we will relay any information through your county Emergency Management office.
- 7 Notify the Bureau immediately of any changes concerning your agency's designated Disaster Contact person, home and office phone numbers, etc.



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## MEMORANDUM

May 20, 2009

Page 2

In addition, in order to prevent any problems or misunderstandings concerning the operations of the shelters, it is recommended that the school food service:

- 8 Enter into an agreement, in advance, with the local disaster organization or other party responsible for management of the shelter, establishing responsibility for feeding at the shelters. For example, SFS can be responsible for providing the meals while the disaster organization assumes responsibility for furnishing the snacks.
- 9 Consider having the American Red Cross train the cafeteria personnel concerning shelter operations.
- 10 Always have cafeteria personnel on site whenever a school shelter is open. They are the most knowledgeable about your operations, commodities, supplies, equipment, safety issues, HACCP, etc.
- 11 Encourage all the staff to have a personal disaster plan. Visit the Division of Emergency Management's website at <http://www.floridadisaster.org/family/> for assistance developing a personal or family disaster plan. Plans should be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

The Division of Emergency Management and the American Red Cross have partnered to provide information from the National Shelter System. When a disaster is anticipated, click on the following website for information regarding available shelters:  
<https://floridanss.communityos.org/cms/openshelters>

If it becomes necessary to release food, remember to keep careful and detailed records of any foods used. In addition, please notify Shenique Bridges at the Bureau of Food Distribution, 850-488-8835, **within 15 days** after feeding of disaster victims is no longer necessary, of the types and quantities of food you released to the ARC and TSA. Pursuant to the USDA's instructions for "Single Inventory and Recordkeeping Requirements", in case of a Presidential declared disaster, entitlement credit will be available to SFSs that furnish foods for feeding of persons affected by the event. The credit cannot exceed the lesser of the actual commodities supplied or the amount of the commodity received during the immediately preceding 12 months.

Thank you again for your assistance. Through your efforts and cooperation, we are able to serve many Floridians in their time of need. If you have any questions or comments, please contact your field representative or Lance Rodan at 850-487-6694.

GVT/g

cc: Superintendent of Schools  
Supervisors  
Field Representatives