Distributing surplus food safely with the help of FWH volunteers

Food safety is a TOP priority at OLIO and we work together as part of a team (food business donors and volunteers) to reduce food waste in a simple and safe way. Food businesses must ensure that the food they give away is safe to eat, and OLIO has developed safe systems in partnership with local government authorities so that donor businesses can relax in the knowledge that any surplus food that they donate will be delivered to the final consumer in a safe way.

Pre-screened users apply as volunteers from within the app

Volunteers take online training based on OLIO’s approved Food Safety Management System

Volunteers pass online exam prior being allowed to collect food

Volunteers have an in-person induction prior their first collection

Multiple safety checks & balances, ongoing training and support for volunteers

Selection, training and monitoring of Food Waste Heroes

1. Users who have previously successfully exchanged food within their community and who live local to the business donor with a user rating of 3.5 stars or more can apply as FWHs from within the app. The business must have a FSA food hygiene rating of 3 stars or better.

2. Our hazard analysis has identified temperature control, food allergen control and cleaning/disinfection of containers and utensils (where applicable) as being of particular relevance to the activities of FWHs. FWH applicants take an online training where they learn how to handle different types of ambient, chilled and hot food by risk category. For each there are guidelines on transport (eg if a thermal or chill bag is required) and maximum transit and storage times before food must be collected by the final consumer.

3. The training includes a self-assessment to ensure the FWHs’ domestic kitchen & fridges are fit for the purpose of distributing surplus food and a section on allergen control to ensure accurate allergen information can be passed on to the final consumer.

4. FWHs have to pass a final food safety exam with 100% correct answers before they’re allowed on the programme.

5. FWHs are part of a group chat that is monitored by an OLIO staff member.

6. FWHs receive regular food safety communications and have to take an annual food safety exam.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How long does it take FWHs to distribute the food?
A: 40% of all food is requested within the first 60 minutes. 90% of Food Waste Heroes’ listings are requested on the same day (95% with some clients, eg Pret A Manger).

Q: How do you monitor whether FWHs follow the food safety rules?
A: We monitor FWHs’ activities in group chats, their listings in our backend system on a spot-check basis and have a process in place for FWHs to monitor and report each other if they see any concerning behaviour. We reserve the right to ask any volunteer to stop collections immediately if we have any reason to believe they are not complying with our HACCP.

*HACCP - Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points study by ABC Food Law with input from the FSA. It forms the basis of OLIO’s Food Safety Management System and covers every aspect of handling (collecting, transporting, storing, distributing) any type of food.*