



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mailing Holiday Food Gifts

Make sure your gifts don't include an extra surprise: foodborne illness!

Whether you're sending home-baked goodies to kids away at college, loved ones overseas, or receive food gifts in the mail, follow these tips from the Sacramento County Environmental Management Department to help ensure they are safe to eat.

- Perishable foods should be handled and shipped carefully and in a timely manner to prevent foodborne illness. These foods include meat/poultry products, vacuum packaged smoked fish, and some sausages and cheeses. They should be shipped cold (41 degrees F. or less) in a foam or heavy cardboard box with a cold source included.
- All perishable foods should be shipped next-day delivery. Let the postal service know that the item is perishable and ask the clerk to stamp "Perishable" or "Keep Refrigerated" on the package.
- Ship foods at the beginning of the week. Packages mailed at the end of the week may not get delivered before the weekend and may sit at the post office or in a warehouse through the weekend.
- Don't send perishable items to a place of business unless you know it will arrive on a work day and that there is refrigerator space for keeping it cold.
- Address the package correctly and notify the recipient that the gift is in the mail.
- With the exception of cheesecake or foods containing custard or cream filling, most cookies, candies and baked goods are safe to ship with careful packing. Harder cookies ship better than soft cookies, which can crumble and break in transit.
- Pack the food after it cools completely. If foods are packed warm, droplets of water may condense inside the package and cause sogginess and mold growth.
- Pack the box so the contents do not shift during shipment. Use paper or packing material to help fill in the empty spaces.
- If you receive foods by mail, immediately open the package and check the temperature of perishable items with a food thermometer. If the temperature is warmer than 41 degrees F., notify the sender or company. Do not eat the food - it may be unsafe.

Following these guidelines will help to ensure you, your family and your friends have a safe and healthy holiday season. And remember, **"When in doubt, throw it out!"**

Visit the Sacramento County Environmental Management Department website at www.emd.saccounty.net or call (916) 875-8440.

Go to m ffi.saccounty.net with your smart phone or tablet and view inspection results for food facilities in your immediate area! Visit EMD's new [mobile web & app page](#) for more information.