



Subject: Auth/Reauth – Staple Food Stocking Standards

Legislation: Food and Nutrition Act, Section 3 - (o) and (q)(2)

Regulations: 7 CFR [278.1\(b\)\(1\)\(ii\)](#) and [278.1\(b\)\(7\)](#)

Supersedes: Policy Memoranda 2020-04 - *Retailer Eligibility-Clarification of Criterion A and Criterion B Requirements* and 2020-05 - *Retailer Eligibility-Accessory Foods*

Policy Memorandum 2026-02 is rescinded without going into effect.

Effective: November 4, 2026

On Friday, May 8, 2026, the Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) published the [Updated Staple Food Stocking Standards for Retailers in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP) Final Rule. SNAP retailers must implement the provisions of this rule no later than November 4, 2026.

To support retailer implementation, FNA is issuing this memorandum to describe the new minimum staple food stocking requirements across the four staple food categories: 1. Dairy; 2. Grains; 3. Protein; 4. Vegetables or Fruits. This memorandum also provides an updated list of accessory foods. Accessory foods, even if eligible for purchase by SNAP households, do not count toward meeting the staple stocking requirements. Please note that the stocking standards do not apply to specialty stores that are authorized by having 50 percent of their gross sales in at least one staple food category (e.g., butcher shops, fish markets, and produce stands).

This rule is implementing changes directed by Congress in the Agricultural Act of 2014 and aims to ensure that SNAP retailers can effectively serve SNAP participants by offering a wider variety of staple foods.

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Part 1 – Each SNAP Retailer Must Stock 28 Varieties of Staple Food

- **7 distinct varieties in each staple food category – Dairy, Grains, Protein, and Vegetables or Fruits.** SNAP retailers must stock sufficient varieties of staple foods on a continuous basis.
- **3 perishable varieties - At least one (1) variety in three (3) staple food categories must be perishable.** SNAP retailers have the flexibility to choose which three staple food categories to stock with a perishable variety.
- **3 stocking units - Each variety must have at least three (3) stocking units.** This totals a minimum of eighty-four (84) stocking units over the four (4) staple food categories.

Distinct Variety – A different type of food within a staple food category.

Continuous Basis – On any given day of operation, a store must offer for sale and display in a public area, sufficient varieties of staple foods required to meet the stocking standards in each staple food category.

Perishable Foods – Perishable foods can be fresh, unrefrigerated, refrigerated, or frozen.

Note: A shelf-stable food item that requires refrigeration after it is opened is not a perishable food.

Stocking Unit – A can, bunch, box, bag, or package that a product is usually sold in. For example: A bag of apples sold by the bag is one stocking unit. A single apple can also be one stocking unit if sold individually.

Part 2 – Distinct Staple Food Varieties by Category

Dairy

In total, there are 14 possible dairy varieties counting both mammal and plant-based varieties.

Mammal-based dairy: There are 11 possible mammal-based varieties in the dairy staple food category.

1. **Plain perishable liquid milk.**
2. **Multi-ingredient perishable milk product.** A perishable product with milk listed as the first ingredient, or second ingredient after water or broth. Examples include chocolate milk and frozen mozzarella sticks with milk as the first ingredient.
3. **Shelf-stable milk.** Examples include ultra-high-temperature (UHT) milk, evaporated milk, and sweetened condensed milk.
4. **Dried or powdered milk.**
5. **Cream.** Examples include heavy cream, half-and-half, and alfredo sauce in which the first ingredient, or the second ingredient after water or broth, is cream.
6. **Sour cream.**
7. **Yogurt (non-liquid).**
8. **Fermented or cultured dairy beverages.** Examples include drinkable yogurt, buttermilk, or kefir.
9. **Cheese (non-shredded).** Examples include block cheese, cheese sticks, or cottage cheese.
10. **Shredded cheese.** Examples include grated, shaved, and crumbled cheese.
11. **Infant formula.**

Plant-based dairy alternatives (up to 3) - In addition to the traditional dairy varieties, retailers may also count plant-based dairy alternatives for up to three (3) of the mammal-based varieties listed above.

Example 1:

12. Perishable plain almond milk (plain perishable liquid milk),
13. Cashew cheese shreds (cheese – shredded),
14. Coconut yogurt (yogurt – non-liquid).

Example 2:

12. Perishable unsweetened and unflavored oat milk (plain perishable liquid milk).
13. Shelf-stable flavored oat milk (shelf-stable milk).
14. Soy infant formula (infant formula).

Grains

There are more than 10 possible varieties in the grains category. For many of the grain varieties, there are additional possible varieties for each type of grain.

1. **Whole grain bread.** Examples include whole wheat sandwich bread, bagels, pita, and corn tortillas. (Different forms of bread no longer count as distinct varieties.)
2. **Non-whole grain bread.** Examples include white sandwich bread, white flour tortillas, and enriched hamburger buns. (Different forms of bread no longer count as distinct varieties.)
3. **Whole grain pasta/noodles.** Examples include whole wheat spaghetti, whole grain penne, or whole grain rotini.
4. **Non-whole grain pasta/noodles.** Examples include spaghetti, enriched macaroni, egg noodles, and ramen noodles.
5. **Breakfast cereals.** Examples include corn flakes, oat O's, and puffed rice.
6. **Infant cereal.**

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7. **Raw grains for each type of grain.** Examples include:

- Rice - Brown rice and jasmine rice.
- Oats - Rolled oats and plain quick-cook oats.
- Quinoa.

8. **Multi-ingredient grain product for each type of grain**

- Rice - Herb and butter rice mix.
- Oats - Microwaveable flavored instant oatmeal packets.

9. **Flour for each type of grain.** Examples include:

- Corn flour - Corn meal and masa.
- Wheat flour - All-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, and bread flour.

10. **Multi-ingredient flour product for each type of grain.** Any product not listed above in which the first ingredient, or second ingredient after water or broth, is a grain.

Examples include:

- Multi-ingredient wheat flour product - Pancake mix and whole wheat pizza dough.
- Multi-ingredient rice flour product - Gluten-free all-purpose flour made from rice and potato flour.

Protein

There are more than 13 possible varieties in the protein category.

Animal-based meat: There are several animal-based varieties in the protein staple food category. Each animal is a separate variety, such as chicken, beef, pork, salmon, or turkey. Each animal is further divided into three varieties. Using chicken as an example, the three distinct varieties are:

1. **Perishable with no other ingredients** – Examples include raw chicken breasts, raw whole chicken, and raw chicken wings.
2. **Perishable multi-ingredient** – Examples include frozen or refrigerated chicken nuggets and seasoned uncooked chicken breasts with chicken as the first ingredient, or the second ingredient after water or broth.

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3. **Shelf-stable** – Examples include canned chicken soup or ready-to-eat chicken pouches with or without other ingredients as long as chicken is the first ingredient, or the second ingredient after water or broth.

Eggs: Eggs can be up to two distinct varieties, regardless of animal type and whether the item is perishable.

4. **Shell eggs** with no other ingredients.
5. **Multi-ingredient eggs** – Examples include quiche and liquid eggs in a carton with eggs as the first ingredient, or the second ingredient after water or broth.

Plant-based protein: There are also many plant-based varieties in the protein staple food category.

6. **Dry beans.**
7. **Multi-ingredient beans** - Examples include canned black beans, cannellini bean soup, and frozen falafel.
8. **Dry peas.**
9. **Multi-ingredient peas** - Examples include split-pea soup.
10. **Dry lentils.**
11. **Multi-ingredient lentils** - Examples include pouch of ready-to-eat lentils.
12. **Tofu or tempeh.**
13. **Nuts or seeds** - Examples include sunflower seeds, peanut butter, and roasted almonds.

Vegetables or Fruits

There are many possible distinct varieties in the vegetables or fruits category. Each fruit or vegetable is a distinct variety. For example, apples, oranges, carrots, broccoli, and tomatoes each represent a distinct variety.

However, regardless of whether a vegetable or fruit is fresh, frozen, canned, dried, or juiced, each vegetable or fruit counts as the same variety. For example, fresh tomatoes, canned diced tomatoes, tomato paste, sundried tomatoes, and 100% tomato juice all count as one “tomato” variety.

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Similarly, any multi-ingredient product with a vegetable or fruit as the first ingredient, or the second ingredient after water or broth, is the same variety as the single vegetable or fruit. For example, tomato basil pasta sauce counts as the same “tomato” variety as a fresh tomato.

Part 3 – Accessory Foods (Do Not Count Toward the Stocking Standards)

In general, accessory foods are snack foods, desserts, most beverages, seasonings, condiments, and foods used to prepare a meal. These foods do not count toward the stocking standards, even if retailers are allowed to sell them to SNAP households.

Packaging type or package size does not impact whether a food is defined as an accessory food or a staple food.

Below is a list of accessory foods with examples. The examples are not exhaustive. Foods newly designated as accessory foods under this rule are in bold.

Snack and Dessert Food Items

- Chips and other finger snacks, such as potato, corn, wheat, tortilla, pita, vegetable, and fruit chips, crisps, sticks, and straws; onion ring snacks; corn nuts; snack and trail mixes (other than those containing only nuts); crackers; pork rinds; pretzels; pre-popped or unpopped popcorn; and cheese puffs or curls.
- Baked, gelatin, and pudding desserts, such as doughnuts, brownies, cupcakes, cookies, snack cakes, muffins, pastries, sweet rolls, pies, cakes, pudding, churros, scones, pudding, and package mixes to make them.
- Frozen snacks and desserts, such as ice cream, ice milk, frozen yogurt, custard, whipped cream, sherbet, sorbet, gelato, granita, Italian ices, frozen carbonated beverages, snow cones, and ice pops.
- Candy and chocolate, such as mints, chocolate, marshmallow, gum, toffee, brittle, fudge, marzipan, nougat, and candy bars.
- **Snack bars**, such as protein bars, granola bars, and baked bars.
- **Jerky**, such as dehydrated meat sticks and slices made from any type of animal, and plant-based substitutes.

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Food Items That Complement or Supplement Meals

- Beverages, such as soda pop, sports or energy drinks, iced tea, tea bags, fruit punch, mixers for alcoholic beverages, **shake powders and mixes**, and water. The following beverages are staple foods, not accessory foods: milk, cream, 100% fruit or vegetable juice, and plant-based milk and cream alternatives in which the first ingredient is not an accessory food, or the second ingredient is not an accessory food if the first ingredient is water.
- Condiments, such as ketchup, mayonnaise, mustard, salad dressing, hot sauce, vinegar, relish, horseradish, chutney, salsa, and soy sauce.
- **Cheese or fruit dips and spreads**, such as cheese sprays, jams, jelly, marmalade, preserves, and compote.
- Sweeteners, such as sugar, honey, maple syrup, aspartame, molasses, high fructose corn syrup, and any other natural or artificial sweeteners.

Edible Items Used as Part of the Food Preparation Process

- Extracts, such as vanilla extract.
- Powdered, dried, and extracted spices or seasonings.
- Baking soda, baking powder, yeast, and starch.
- Cooking oils and fats, such as vegetable oil, olive oil, **butter**, shortening, and lard.
- Broth, stock, gelatin, and bouillon.
- Edible but non-caloric and non-digestible food products, such as monosodium glutamate, sodium nitrate, olestra, and any other food additives.

Foods Made of Accessory Foods

- A food in which the first ingredient or first ingredient after water and broth is in this list, such as margarine in which the first ingredient is vegetable oil. Infant formula is a staple food, not an accessory food, regardless of the first ingredient or second ingredient, after water and broth.

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Part 4 – Sample Pathways to Compliance with the New Stocking Standards

Below are sample pathways to show the possible distinct varieties across the four staple food categories a retailer could stock to comply with the final rule. These examples are for illustrative purposes only and are not intended to be comprehensive.

Staple Food Category	Pathway 1	Pathway 2	Pathway 3
Dairy	1. Plain milk* 2. Chocolate milk* 3. Greek yogurt* 4. Sour cream* 5. Mozzarella cheese sticks* 6. Canned evaporated milk 7. Half-and-half*	1. Plain milk* 2. Fortified soy milk* 3. Infant formula 4. Shredded cheese* 5. Yogurt* 6. Almond milk yogurt* 7. Cheddar cheese block*	1. Plain milk* 2. Coffee creamer* 3. Sour cream* 4. Cheese sticks* 5. Grated parmesan cheese 6. Shelf-stable soy milk 7. Canned evaporated milk
Grains	1. Sliced whole grain bread* 2. Whole wheat spaghetti 3. Traditional flour tortillas* 4. Boxed macaroni and cheese 5. Breakfast cereal 6. Pancake mix 7. All-purpose flour	1. Whole wheat tortillas* 2. Whole wheat angel hair pasta 3. Potato bread* 4. Chickpea pasta 5. Corn meal 6. Pizza dough* 7. Bag of rice	1. Whole wheat angel hair pasta 2. Enriched elbow macaroni 3. Breakfast cereal 4. Pancake mix 5. Sliced white bread* 6. Sliced whole wheat bread* 7. Microwavable rice packets
Protein	1. Chicken breasts* 2. Frozen fish sticks* 3. Tofu* 4. Lentil soup 5. Canned tuna 6. Dry kidney beans 7. Peanut butter	1. Turkey deli meat* 2. Sunflower seeds 3. Red lentils 4. Canned black beans 5. Ground beef* 6. Canned chicken soup 7. Frozen quiche*	1. Carton of eggs* 2. Peanut butter 3. Lentils 4. Canned chickpeas 5. Canned chicken soup 6. Canned tuna 7. Canned beef stew
Vegetables or Fruits	1. Fresh baby carrots* 2. Fresh fruit cups* 3. 100% orange juice* 4. Salad kit (first ingredient lettuce)* 5. Stir-fry mix (first ingredient bell pepper)* 6. Whole yellow onions* 7. Bananas*	1. Can of tomato paste 2. Fresh whole avocados* 3. Package of dried apple chips 4. Fresh oranges* 5. Canned green beans 6. Fresh blueberries* 7. Frozen riced cauliflower*	1. Dried apricots 2. Canned green beans 3. Bananas* 4. Jar of tomato sauce 5. Single-serving applesauce cups 6. Canned olives 7. 100% grape juice boxes

*Indicates a perishable food item

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Final eligibility determinations are made by FNA's Retailer Operations and Compliance unit when a retailer applies for SNAP authorization or reauthorization.

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to:

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