

FreshMart Grocery Chain

Store Operations Policy Manual

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Document Overview and Purpose

This Store Operations Policy Manual serves as the comprehensive guide for all FreshMart Grocery Chain locations. It contains standardized procedures, policies, and protocols that ensure consistent operations across our 247 store locations nationwide.

How to Use This Manual

This manual is organized by operational area and includes specific procedures, timeframes, and contact information. All policies are mandatory unless otherwise noted. Staff should reference this manual for guidance on daily operations, customer service issues, and emergency situations.

Key Features:

- Step-by-step procedures with specific timeframes
- Dollar amount limits and authorization levels
- Contact information for escalation
- Safety and compliance requirements

Emergency Contact Information

Corporate Emergency Hotline: 1-800-FRESH-911 (Available 24/7)

Regional Manager On-Call: 1-800-555-0123

Loss Prevention Emergency: 1-800-555-0456

Facilities Emergency: 1-800-555-0789

Local Emergency Services: 911

Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222

Corporate Security: 1-800-555-0321

Page 2: Customer Service Policies

Customer Complaint Procedures

Initial Response Protocol

1. **Acknowledge the complaint within 30 seconds** of customer approach
2. **Listen actively** without interrupting
3. **Apologize for the inconvenience** regardless of fault determination
4. **Ask clarifying questions** to understand the full situation
5. **Offer immediate resolution** within your authorization level

Escalation Guidelines

Level 1 - Department Associate (Up to \$25)

- Product exchanges of equal value
- Immediate replacement of defective items under \$25
- Complimentary bags or basic service recovery

Level 2 - Department Manager (Up to \$100)

- Cash refunds up to \$100 without receipt
- Product exchanges with price differences up to \$100
- Service recovery gestures (gift cards, discounts)

Level 3 - Store Manager (Up to \$500)

- Complex complaint resolution
- Cash refunds over \$100
- Policy exceptions requiring management approval

Level 4 - District Manager (Over \$500)

- All complaints involving potential legal issues
- Refunds or adjustments over \$500
- Media-related complaints

Documentation Requirements

All complaints over \$50 must be documented in the Customer Service Log with:

- Date and time of incident
- Customer contact information (if provided)
- Nature of complaint
- Resolution provided

- Follow-up required (Y/N)

Refund and Return Policies

Standard Return Policy

Timeframe: 30 days from purchase date

Receipt Required: Yes, for all returns over \$25

Condition: Items must be in resalable condition

Return Authorization Limits

Without Receipt:

- Up to \$25: Department manager approval
- \$25-\$50: Store manager approval
- Over \$50: District manager approval required

With Receipt:

- No limit for standard returns within 30 days
- Perishable items: 7-day return window
- Non-food items: 90-day return window

Restricted Items

Cannot be returned:

- Prescription medications
- Tobacco products
- Gift cards
- Custom-ordered items
- Items consumed or used

Special handling required:

- Alcohol: State ID verification required
- Baby formula: Unopened only, within 14 days
- Electronics: Original packaging required

Processing Procedures

1. **Verify receipt** and check return timeframe
2. **Inspect item condition** for resale standards
3. **Process refund** in original payment method when possible
4. **Update inventory** in POS system immediately
5. **Complete return documentation** in daily log

Customer Satisfaction Guidelines

Service Standards

Greeting: All customers must be acknowledged within 10 seconds of entering any department area

Assistance: Staff must offer help within 2 minutes if customer appears to be searching

Checkout: Average wait time should not exceed 3 minutes during peak hours

Customer Recovery Program

When service failures occur, implement the LAST method:

- Listen to the customer's concern
- Apologize sincerely for the experience
- Solve the problem within your authority
- Thank the customer and follow up if needed

Authorized Recovery Gestures

Immediate (no approval needed):

- Sincere apology
- Expedited service
- Complimentary bag or small convenience item

Supervisor approval required:

- \$5-15 gift cards for minor inconveniences
- Product replacement or exchange
- Discount on current purchase (up to 10%)

Page 3: Customer Service Policies (Continued)

Service Recovery Procedures

Minor Service Issues (Under \$25 impact)

Examples: Long wait times, out-of-stock advertised items, minor product defects

Standard Resolution:

1. Immediate acknowledgment and apology
2. Offer rain check or substitute product
3. Provide \$5 service recovery gift card if applicable
4. Document in shift notes if pattern emerges

Major Service Issues (\$25-100 impact)

Examples: Spoiled products, significant wait times, incorrect pricing causing overcharge

Standard Resolution:

1. Manager involvement required within 5 minutes
2. Full refund or exchange plus service recovery
3. \$10-25 gift card for future visit
4. Follow-up call within 24 hours if customer provides contact information
5. Incident report filed with district office

Serious Service Issues (Over \$100 impact)

Examples: Food safety concerns, significant overcharges, multiple item problems

Escalation Requirements:

1. Store manager notification within 15 minutes
2. District manager notification within 2 hours
3. Corporate customer service notification within 24 hours
4. Full documentation including witness statements
5. Follow-up plan developed within 48 hours

Special Circumstances

Food Safety Complaints:

- Immediate removal of affected products from shelves
- Health department notification if required

- Customer medical information documentation
- Corporate quality assurance team notification

Accessibility Issues:

- Immediate assistance provided
 - Equipment malfunction reported to facilities
 - Alternative service options offered
 - ADA compliance review if needed
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Page 4: Staff Operations Procedures

Opening and Closing Procedures

Store Opening Checklist (6:00 AM Daily)

Pre-Opening (5:30-6:00 AM):

1. **Disarm security system** using manager code
2. **Turn on all lights** in customer areas first, then back areas
3. **Check overnight temperature logs** for all refrigerated sections
4. **Verify cash drawer** starting amounts (\$200 per register)
5. **Review overnight messages** and priority tasks
6. **Unlock entrance doors** at exactly 6:00 AM

Department Preparation:

- **Deli/Bakery:** Heat display cases, check product temperatures
- **Produce:** Mist displays, rotate stock, check quality
- **Meat/Seafood:** Verify cold chain integrity, arrange fresh displays
- **Pharmacy:** Boot up systems, verify controlled substance security

Safety Checks:

- Walk-through for spills or hazards
- Verify emergency exits are clear
- Test fire alarm panel functionality
- Check first aid kit accessibility

Store Closing Checklist (10:00 PM Daily)

Final Hour (9:00-10:00 PM):

1. **Announce store closing** at 15, 10, and 5 minutes before 10 PM
2. **Complete final transactions** by 10:05 PM
3. **Lock entrance doors** immediately after last customer
4. **Count all cash registers** with two-person verification
5. **Secure all departments** according to department-specific protocols

End-of-Day Tasks:

- Complete daily sales report
- Secure pharmacy controlled substances
- Empty all trash receptacles
- Turn off customer area lights
- Set security system using manager code
- Complete closing manager log

Deposit Procedures:

- Bank deposit prepared by 10:30 PM
- Two-person verification required for amounts over \$5,000
- Deposit delivered to night depository by 11:00 PM

Cash Handling Policies

Register Operation Standards

Daily Limits:

- Maximum cash in drawer: \$300
- Minimum cash in drawer: \$100
- Drop required when excess exceeds: \$500

Cash Counting Procedures

Shift Changes:

1. **Outgoing cashier** counts drawer with supervisor present

2. **Count verification** by supervisor
3. **Incoming cashier** verifies starting amount
4. **Documentation** of any discrepancies over \$2.00
5. **Signature confirmation** from both parties

End of Shift:

- Count all bills and coins separately
- Calculate total and compare to register report
- Document any overages or shortages
- Secure cash in designated drop safe

Variance Reporting

Acceptable variances:

- Under \$2.00: No action required
- \$2.00-\$10.00: Coaching conversation with cashier
- Over \$10.00: Written report required, investigation initiated

Chronic variance patterns:

- Three incidents over \$5.00 in 30 days: Formal counseling
- Five incidents over \$2.00 in 30 days: Retraining required
- Pattern investigation involves loss prevention team

Check and Credit Card Procedures

Check Acceptance:

- Valid photo ID required for all checks
- Maximum check amount: \$200 over purchase
- Verify check against ID information
- Use check verification system for all transactions

Credit/Debit Cards:

- Chip cards must use chip reader when available
- Signature required for purchases over \$50
- ID verification for suspicious transactions

- Report damaged card readers immediately
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Page 5: Staff Operations Procedures (Continued)

Inventory Management Basics

Daily Inventory Tasks

Morning Inventory Check (7:00 AM):

1. **Review overnight deliveries** and verify against receiving logs
2. **Check produce quality** and remove any unsaleable items
3. **Verify dairy expiration dates** and rotate stock appropriately
4. **Inspect frozen food temperatures** and document readings
5. **Count high-theft items** in electronics and health/beauty sections

Evening Inventory Review (8:00 PM):

1. **Complete perpetual inventory** for key promotional items
2. **Document any known shrinkage** from damaged or expired products
3. **Prepare receiving area** for next day deliveries
4. **Review low-stock alerts** and place emergency orders if needed

Stock Rotation Protocols

First In, First Out (FIFO) Requirements:

- All perishable items must follow strict FIFO rotation
- New stock placed behind existing stock
- Expiration date verification during stocking
- Remove items within 24 hours of expiration

Department-Specific Rotation:

- **Dairy:** 2-day lead time before expiration removal
- **Meat:** Same-day removal for items expiring next day
- **Produce:** Daily quality assessment regardless of delivery date
- **Bakery:** 50% discount when 1 day from expiration

Ordering and Receiving

Order Authorization Levels:

- Department associates: Routine stock orders up to \$500
- Department managers: Emergency orders up to \$2,000
- Store manager: All orders over \$2,000

Receiving Procedures:

1. **Verify delivery** against purchase order before acceptance
2. **Check product quality** and temperature for perishables
3. **Document any discrepancies** immediately with delivery driver
4. **Update inventory system** within 2 hours of receipt
5. **Notify purchasing** of any quality issues or shortages

Safety and Security Protocols

Personal Safety Guidelines

Lifting and Moving:

- Maximum individual lift: 50 pounds
- Team lift required: Items over 50 pounds
- Use lifting equipment: Available in each department
- Report injuries: Immediately to manager, complete incident report within 2 hours

Chemical Safety:

- MSDS sheets: Available in each department office
- PPE requirements: Follow product labeling
- Spill procedures: Contain, report, clean using appropriate materials
- Training required: Annual certification for all staff

Customer Safety Protocols

Spill Response:

1. **Immediately block area** with safety cones or barriers
2. **Alert nearby customers** to hazard
3. **Clean spill** using appropriate materials and techniques

4. **Document incident** if customer injury occurs
5. **Review surveillance** if incident involves potential liability

Emergency Response:

- **Medical emergencies:** Call 911, provide first aid if trained, notify management
- **Security threats:** Follow lockdown procedures, call 911, notify loss prevention
- **Severe weather:** Follow emergency evacuation or shelter procedures

Loss Prevention Measures

Theft Prevention:

- Monitor high-theft areas every 15 minutes during peak hours
- Greet all customers entering electronics and pharmacy areas
- Maintain clear sight lines throughout store
- Report suspicious activity to loss prevention immediately

Cash Security:

- Never leave register unattended with drawer open
- Complete drops when cash exceeds \$300 in drawer
- Two-person verification for all large bill transactions over \$100
- Report counterfeit currency to management and authorities

Inventory Security:

- Secure high-value items in locked cases
- Maintain accurate perpetual inventory on controlled items
- Report any unexplained inventory discrepancies within 24 hours
- Participate in monthly physical inventory counts

Page 6: Product Management Policies

Damaged Goods Procedures

Damage Assessment Categories

Category 1 - Minor Damage (Sellable with discount):

- Dented cans with intact seals
- Slightly damaged packaging with product integrity intact
- Cosmetic damage to non-food items
- **Action:** Mark down 25-50%, move to clearance section

Category 2 - Moderate Damage (Unsellable, returnable):

- Damaged packaging affecting product protection
- Electronics with cosmetic damage but functional
- Non-perishable items with significant packaging damage
- **Action:** Remove from sale, process vendor return

Category 3 - Severe Damage (Disposal required):

- Compromised food safety or product integrity
- Broken glass or sharp edges creating safety hazard
- Electronics with functional damage
- **Action:** Immediate disposal, document shrinkage

Damage Reporting Procedures

Immediate Response (Within 30 minutes):

1. **Remove damaged items** from customer access area
2. **Photograph damage** for documentation purposes
3. **Complete damage report** in inventory management system
4. **Notify department manager** of damage circumstances
5. **Secure items** in designated damage holding area

Documentation Requirements:

- Date and time of discovery
- Location where damage occurred
- Estimated cause of damage (shipping, handling, customer, etc.)
- Retail value of damaged goods
- Disposal or return method selected
- Employee signature and manager approval

Vendor Return Process

Eligible for Return:

- Manufacturing defects discovered within 30 days
- Shipping damage reported within 48 hours
- Recall items regardless of purchase date
- Seasonal items within return window

Return Authorization Process:

1. **Contact vendor** within 24 hours of damage discovery
2. **Obtain return authorization number** from vendor
3. **Package items** according to vendor requirements
4. **Complete return documentation** with all required information
5. **Ship within timeframe** specified by vendor (typically 5-7 days)

Expiration Date Management

Monitoring Protocols

Daily Expiration Checks:

- **Dairy products:** Every morning by 8:00 AM
- **Meat and seafood:** Every 4 hours during operating hours
- **Prepared foods:** Every 2 hours or per health department requirements
- **Pharmacy:** Weekly controlled substance check, daily OTC check

Removal Timeframes

Food Products:

- **Dairy:** Remove 2 days before expiration date
- **Meat:** Remove 1 day before expiration date
- **Produce:** Remove when quality deteriorates regardless of date
- **Bakery:** Remove same day as expiration, offer 50% discount day before

Non-Food Products:

- **OTC medications:** Remove on expiration date

- **Cosmetics:** Remove 30 days before expiration
- **Vitamins/supplements:** Remove on expiration date
- **Baby formula:** Remove 1 week before expiration

Disposal and Documentation

Disposal Methods:

- **Food waste:** Commercial organic waste disposal
- **Pharmaceuticals:** DEA-approved pharmaceutical disposal program
- **Hazardous materials:** Licensed hazardous waste disposal service
- **General merchandise:** Standard commercial waste disposal

Required Documentation:

- Product description and quantity
 - Original retail value
 - Expiration date
 - Disposal method and date
 - Manager authorization signature
 - Loss/shrinkage report filing
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Page 7: Product Management Policies (Continued)

Vendor Return Processes

Return Categories and Timeframes

Standard Returns:

- **Defective merchandise:** 30 days from receipt
- **Overstock situations:** 60 days from receipt (manager approval required)
- **Seasonal merchandise:** End of season plus 30 days
- **Discontinued items:** 90 days from discontinuation notice

Expedited Returns:

- **Product recalls:** Immediate return required
- **Safety hazards:** 24 hours from identification

- **Perishable defects:** Same day discovery
- **Controlled substances:** 48 hours (DEA notification required)

Return Authorization Process

Step 1 - Initial Contact (Within 24 hours):

1. **Contact vendor representative** using approved contact list
2. **Provide detailed information:** Item numbers, quantities, reason for return
3. **Request return authorization number (RMA)**
4. **Confirm return shipping instructions** and any special requirements
5. **Document all communication** in vendor return log

Step 2 - Preparation (Within 48 hours of authorization):

1. **Gather all items** to be returned in designated area
2. **Complete return documentation** including RMA number
3. **Package according to vendor specifications** (original packaging when possible)
4. **Prepare shipping labels** using vendor-provided information
5. **Schedule pickup** or arrange delivery to vendor

Step 3 - Shipping and Follow-up:

1. **Ship within vendor timeframe** (typically 5-7 business days)
2. **Track shipment** and confirm delivery
3. **Follow up on credit processing** within 15 business days
4. **Reconcile vendor statements** monthly for accuracy
5. **Report any discrepancies** to purchasing department

Credit Processing

Expected Timeframes:

- **Full credit:** 10-15 business days after vendor receipt
- **Partial credit:** 15-20 business days (requires investigation)
- **Credit denial:** 20-30 business days (appeals process available)

Documentation Requirements:

- Copy of original purchase order

- Return authorization number
- Shipping tracking information
- Photos of returned merchandise condition
- Communication log with vendor

Product Recall Procedures

Recall Notification Response

Immediate Actions (Within 2 hours of notification):

1. **Verify recall details** against current inventory
2. **Remove all affected products** from sales floor immediately
3. **Check recent sales** for affected items (past 30 days)
4. **Post recall notices** at customer service and affected department areas
5. **Notify all shift managers** and department supervisors

Customer Notification:

- **Post signs** in prominent locations throughout store
- **Update website** and social media if corporate-managed
- **Contact known purchasers** if customer contact information available
- **Prepare customer service staff** with recall talking points and procedures

Recall Product Handling

Quarantine Procedures:

1. **Segregate recalled products** in locked storage area
2. **Label clearly** with recall date and reason
3. **Maintain chain of custody** documentation
4. **Restrict access** to authorized personnel only
5. **Await disposal instructions** from manufacturer or health authorities

Inventory Management:

- **Remove from POS system** to prevent accidental sales
- **Document quantities** of recalled products found
- **Track disposal** or return to manufacturer

- **Update perpetual inventory** to reflect removal
- **File insurance claims** if applicable for significant losses

Customer Service for Recalls

Customer Return Process:

1. **Accept all returns** of recalled products regardless of receipt
2. **Provide full refund** at original retail price
3. **Document return** with recall tracking number
4. **Offer sincere apology** and explanation of safety precautions
5. **Provide corporate contact information** for additional concerns

Health Emergency Recalls:

- **Refer medical questions** to healthcare professionals
 - **Provide manufacturer contact** information for health concerns
 - **Document any reported** illness or injury claims
 - **Notify corporate risk management** immediately
 - **Cooperate fully** with health department investigations
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Page 8: Emergency Procedures & Additional Contacts

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Fire Emergency Response

Immediate Actions:

1. **Sound fire alarm** if not already activated
2. **Call 911** from safe location
3. **Announce evacuation** over store intercom system
4. **Guide customers** to nearest marked emergency exits
5. **Conduct sweep** of assigned areas if safe to do so
6. **Proceed to assembly point** in parking lot (northeast corner)

Staff Responsibilities:

- **Store Manager:** Overall coordination, communication with emergency services

- **Department Managers:** Sweep assigned areas, assist customer evacuation
- **Customer Service:** Guide customers, assist disabled individuals
- **Maintenance:** Shut off utilities if safe and directed by fire department

Assembly Point Protocol:

- **Account for all staff** using daily roster
- **Report missing persons** immediately to emergency responders
- **Maintain customer safety** in parking lot assembly area
- **Await all-clear** from fire department before re-entering building

Medical Emergency Response

Customer Medical Emergency:

1. **Call 911 immediately** for serious injuries or illness
2. **Provide first aid** only if trained and certified
3. **Clear area** around affected person
4. **Comfort and reassure** customer until help arrives
5. **Complete incident report** within 2 hours

Employee Medical Emergency:

1. **Ensure scene safety** before approaching injured employee
2. **Call 911** for serious injuries or worker's comp claim situations
3. **Notify store manager** and corporate HR within 1 hour
4. **Preserve incident scene** for investigation if applicable
5. **Complete all required documentation** per corporate policy

Power Outage Protocols

Immediate Response (First 15 minutes)

Assessment Phase:

1. **Determine scope** of outage (store only vs. area-wide)
2. **Check emergency lighting** functionality
3. **Assess register operations** (battery backup capability)
4. **Evaluate refrigeration systems** and backup power status

5. **Communicate with customers** about situation

Customer Management:

- **Announce situation** over battery-powered megaphone
- **Allow current transactions** to complete if registers functional
- **Guide customers** safely through store using emergency lighting
- **Offer assistance** for customers who wish to leave
- **Provide store credit** for interrupted transactions

Extended Outage Response (After 30 minutes)

Operations Decisions:

1. **Consult with district manager** on store closure decision
2. **Implement manual transaction log** if staying open
3. **Monitor refrigeration temperatures** and document readings
4. **Secure high-value merchandise** if lighting inadequate
5. **Prepare for potential closure** if outage extends beyond 2 hours

Product Protection:

- **Keep freezer/cooler doors closed** to maintain temperature
- **Document temperature readings** every 30 minutes
- **Contact refrigeration service** for backup power if available
- **Prepare for product loss** if temperatures exceed safe limits
- **Follow product disposal procedures** for compromised items

Equipment Failure Procedures

Refrigeration System Failure

Immediate Response:

1. **Contact refrigeration service** using emergency number: 1-800-555-COLD
2. **Monitor and document** temperature readings every 15 minutes
3. **Move product** to functioning units if space available
4. **Post "Out of Order"** signs on affected cases
5. **Notify corporate facilities** and insurance carrier

Product Management:

- **Relocate products** maintaining cold chain when possible
- **Document affected inventory** with photos and temperature logs
- **Follow vendor return procedures** for compromised products
- **Maintain customer safety** by removing unsafe products immediately

POS System Failure

Backup Procedures:

1. **Attempt manual reset** following IT department instructions
2. **Contact IT help desk:** 1-800-555-TECH (24/7 support)
3. **Implement manual transaction logging** if system unavailable
4. **Use backup registers** or departments with functioning systems
5. **Communicate wait times** honestly with customers

Manual Transaction Process:

- **Record item prices** manually using current price sheets
- **Calculate tax** using posted tax rate charts
- **Accept cash only** during system outage
- **Provide handwritten receipts** with store information
- **Process transactions** in POS when system restored

Key Personnel Contact List

Corporate Leadership

Chief Executive Officer: Direct line available through Regional Manager

Chief Operations Officer: 1-800-555-0100 (business hours)

Corporate Security Director: 1-800-555-0321 (24/7)

Risk Management Director: 1-800-555-0199 (emergency claims)

Regional Management

Regional Manager - Northwest: 425-555-0150

Regional Manager - Southwest: 503-555-0160

Regional Loss Prevention: 425-555-0170

Regional Facilities Manager: 425-555-0180

Vendor Emergency Contacts

Primary Food Distributor: 1-800-555-FOOD

Pharmaceutical Wholesaler: 1-800-555-MEDS

General Merchandise Distributor: 1-800-555-GOODS

Refrigeration Service: 1-800-555-COLD

Service Providers

IT Help Desk: 1-800-555-TECH (24/7)

Facilities Management: 1-800-555-0789

Cleaning Service Emergency: 425-555-0200

Security System Monitoring: 1-800-555-SAFE

Government and Regulatory

Health Department: Contact local office during business hours

Fire Department (Non-Emergency): Contact local office

OSHA Regional Office: 1-800-321-OSHA

DEA Diversion Control: 1-800-882-9539

END OF DOCUMENT

This manual is reviewed annually and updated as needed. All staff are responsible for staying current with policy changes. Questions regarding policy interpretation should be directed to your immediate supervisor or store management team.

Document Control:

Next Review Date: January 1, 2026

Authorized by: FreshMart Corporate Policy Committee

Distribution: All store locations, regional offices, corporate headquarters