

Planning a residential move often involves a long checklist — scheduling the movers, booking elevators, arranging parking, and deciding what items to bring along or declutter. One frequent question I encounter from homeowners is about **perishable food moving**: *Will movers transport your refrigerated or frozen food, especially if your shipment includes overnight storage?*

Based on my 12 years coordinating moves and working alongside reputable companies like **Southside Moving (Southside Portsmouth VA Movers)**, as well as guidance from the **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)** and its trusted resources like the *Protect Your Move* initiative, I'm here to clarify this vital topic. Let's break down what you need to know about moving perishable food, overnight storage moving rules, and all the logistics you'll want to handle early on to avoid headaches on moving day.

Understanding Why Movers Usually Don't Take Perishable Food

First things first — **food movers won't take** most perishable items. Why? It comes down to safety, liability, and practical logistics:

- **Health and Safety Risks:** Perishable foods such as dairy products, meat, seafood, and produce require constant refrigeration or freezing. Moving trucks or storage containers often lack such controlled environments.
- **Liability Concerns:** If food spoils during transit, movers face potential claims or health hazards. The FMCSA's frameworks strongly caution carriers about transporting food items that can perish.
- **Non-Allowables and Exclusions:** Most moving contracts explicitly list perishable foods under non-allowable items, often alongside hazardous materials.

For these reasons, companies like **Southside Moving (Southside Portsmouth VA Movers)** strictly exclude perishable foods from shipment. This policy aligns with best practices encouraged by FMCSA resources like the "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move" booklet, ensuring compliance with federal regulations to protect both customers and movers.

What Are Overnight Storage Moving Rules Regarding Food?

You may think, "If the movers will only hold my items overnight in a storage facility, can they transport some perishable foods?" Unfortunately, the answer remains largely the same. Overnight storage in a warehouse or storage container usually cannot maintain refrigeration, so food items remain at risk of spoilage.

Perishable food moving with overnight storage is generally not allowed — the FMCSA's "Ready to Move" brochure advises consumers to plan ahead and use alternative methods for food transport to avoid losses and contamination.



- Frozen or refrigerated foods must be consumed, donated, or transported by you in a cooler if you want to keep them safe.
- Dry goods or canned foods can often be packed with household goods, provided movers approve.
- Always review your carrier's list of non-allowables, which is typically included in the moving contract and the FMCSA booklet's guidelines.

Non-Allowable Items Beyond Food

While perishable food [movers COI request template](#) is the most common exclusion, movers and federal policies also list hazardous substances and fragile items requiring special handling:

Category	Examples	Reason for Exclusion
Flammable or Explosive Materials	Gasoline, propane tanks, fireworks	Fire and explosion risk
Perishables	Fresh foods, frozen goods, plants	Health hazard and spoilage
Hazardous Chemicals	Pesticides, bleach, paint thinner	Toxicity and contamination
Live Animals	Pets, livestock	Specialized transport required

Decluttering Your Food and Household Items to Cut Cost and Unpack Time

Before move day, consider using your food inventory as a smart decluttering opportunity. Moving companies, including Southside Moving, often suggest downsizing your possessions, which helps:

- Reduce **volume** — fewer boxes and pallets mean lower cost.
- Simplify unpacking — fewer items to reorganize at your new home.
- Prevent spoilage or waste — consume or donate perishables before the move.

I always advise clients to count your cans, jars, and pantry staples, gifting or consuming anything nearing expiration rather than shipping it. This approach aligns well with FMCSA's recommendations for responsible moving.

Truck Parking and Building Access Logistics: Why Location Matters Before Boxes

Here's a little quirk I have: *"Where is the truck parking?"* Because it shapes the entire move, even before labeling boxes. It's the first question I ask every client — and it should be yours too.

If parking is tight or restricted (like many urban condos), it may impact the size of truck the movers bring, the time required, and the extra fees associated with shuttle services or stairs.

- Confirm with your building management if you need permits to reserve loading zones.
- Consider elevator bookings: Many condos require advance scheduling for moving days.
- Measure all large furniture pieces in advance and check doorways, stairwells, and elevator dimensions to ensure smooth access.

For example, Southside Moving is known for proactively coordinating these building logistics for their Portsmouth, VA customers, reducing stress and delays during the move.



Measuring Large Furniture and Doorways

Before movers arrive, measure oversized items with a tape measure; note the height, width, and depth. Then compare these with any tight corners, door frames, and elevator capacities. Mark these measurements in bold painter's tape on boxes or furniture, so your crew sees them immediately. This extra step can prevent the frustration of getting stuck halfway through.

Tips From FMCSA and Protect Your Move

The FMCSA's website offers a treasure trove of informative and consumer-friendly materials, including the *"Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move"* booklet and the *"Ready to Move"* brochure. I highly recommend reviewing these to understand policies and your consumer protections.

- These guides include checklists of what movers will and won't transport.
- They explain how to file claims for lost or damaged items.
- They outline the process of obtaining certificates of insurance and confirming moving company licenses.

Southside Moving adheres to these federal standards, assuring clients you're working with a compliant, safe, and reliable mover.

Summary: Move Smart to Avoid Perishable Pitfalls

To wrap up:

1. **Movers generally do not transport perishable foods**, even if there's overnight storage involved, due to health, safety, and liability reasons.
2. **Declutter food items** by consuming, donating, or transporting perishables yourself.
3. **Confirm truck parking, elevator access**, and measure furniture well before moving day.
4. **Use FMCSA resources** like the "Your Rights and Responsibilities When You Move" booklet and "Ready to Move" brochure to get properly informed.
5. **Work with dependable movers** like Southside Moving (Southside Portsmouth VA Movers), who follow federal guidelines for safe and compliant moving.

Sticking to these best practices will help you avoid surprises, keep your move on schedule, and protect your belongings — especially your food!

Where will your moving truck park? Once you have your spot, you can start labeling those rooms with confidence (and hopefully fewer questions about food!).