



# Va'ad HaRabanim of Greater Seattle

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## Produce Checking Requirements for the Home (11/5/08)

This is not all-inclusive; please contact the Va'ad office or your Rabbi if you have questions or comments.

*This chart, the background letter, and updates to this policy will be posted to the Va'ad website at [www.seattlevaad.org](http://www.seattlevaad.org). Feel free to print this out, laminate for your kitchen, and/or pass along to anyone else.*

**Note:** All references to surfactant refer to either vegetable wash or detergent which is used to help dislodge insects from produce. Washing with water, salt water, or vinegar water (no matter the temperature or strength) is not effective. Vegetable wash can usually be found in grocery stores. If you need help finding produce wash, please call the Va'ad.

**Note:** *If the intended use of the product requires that the produce be mashed or pureed completely, it may be used without further checking. This is based on a responsum of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and approved by the Rabbis of the Seattle Va'ad. Please consult your Rabbi for further guidance.*

### Frozen Produce that May Be Purchased Without Kosher Certification when plain, without sauces or other additions, excluding Passover

Carrots	Spinach (requires checking – see category 3)	Lima beans	Okra	Peas
String Beans	Broccoli (requires checking – see category 3)	Corn	Cauliflower	Uncooked Squash
Mushrooms	Blackberries, Raspberries, Asparagus (only for purees – see category 4)	Mango	Strawberries	Peppers (Not Spicy)
Peaches		Rhubarb	Blueberries	

### Category 1

Apples	Corn	Lemons	Peppers	Tomatoes
Bananas	Cucumbers	Limes	Pineapple	Water chestnuts (raw)
Bean sprouts	Eggplant	Lotus root	Plums	Watermelon
Beans (dry)	Ginger root	Mango	Potatoes	White Asparagus
Blueberries	Grapes	Onions	Rhubarb	Yams
Broccoli slaw (stems only)	Green beans	Oranges	Snow peas	Zucchini
Cantaloupe	Honeydew	Peaches	Squash	
Carrots	Kiwi	Pears	String beans	

Because these items are most likely not to have insects, **Category 1** fruits and vegetables **do not require special washing and checking**, although it is always prudent to keep an eye out for insects.

### Category 2

Chives	Mushrooms	Red and white cabbage (see #3 below)
Iceberg lettuce (see #3 below)	Radicchio	

This produce has the status of being susceptible to having some insects, but is not automatically assumed to be infested; therefore the following process is advised:

- 1. Regular cleaning** with water (preferably with surfactant, but not required)
- 2. Checking** a sampling of such items. A sample should be about 10% of the amount being used. If insects are found, the remaining produce may be used only after cleaning and checking of the whole batch being used.
- The outer leaves of iceberg lettuce and cabbage must be *removed before* the remaining leaves are washed.
- Bagged washed & shredded iceberg lettuce, broccoli stalks, and cabbage may be used without further checking if they are the only ingredients.

*Please see other side*

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## Category 3

Asparagus, green, fresh	Celery	Kale	Spinach, fresh & frozen
Basil	Curry leaves	Leeks	Spring Mix Greens
Beet greens	Dill	Lola Rosa	Strawberries
Bok Choy	Cilantro	Napa Cabbage	Thyme
Broccoli, fresh & frozen (See specific directions)	Frisé	Parsley - all types	
Cauliflower, fresh & frozen	Green or red leaf lettuce	Romaine lettuce	
	Green onions/Scallions	Rosemary	

Category 3 produce with a recommended kosher certification may be used as is without further inspection.

Non-certified produce in this category requires proper inspection. (See note on page 1 regarding “Intended Use”.)

There are two general methods of inspecting produce (see some specific notes below as well):

1. **Inspection method:** Separate each leaf or piece and inspect for insects. It is best to use a light box, or hold leaves up to a light. If insects are found, they may be removed. Once all the produce has been checked and all insects removed, the produce is ready to eat.
2. **Washing method:** Separate each leaf or floret. Wash all of the produce with surfactant (produce wash or soap) in water. Check the wash water for insects. This can be done by dipping a cup into the water 3 times at 3 different locations and checking the water or by visual inspection of the entire wash water. If no insects are found, all of the produce can be rinsed and used. If insects are found, each piece must be checked and individually cleaned as in option 1 above.

### Specific Procedures:

**Asparagus, Fresh** – first peel up to the base of the tip, inspect with method 1 or 2 above.

**Broccoli, Fresh (due to difficulty and time involved in checking, special care must be taken)** - look under the flowers and around the stems; break down into pieces and soak in surfactant for about a minute pressing the florets against the bottom with enough pressure to open the flowers; then, in clear water, press the head against the basin bottom with enough pressure to open the flowers. Check the water – if insect free, can be used.

**Celery** - remove the leaves and stem end; check as above

**Dill** - soak in surfactant and agitate for about a minute, check as above

**Leafy Greens (Pre-washed)** – Even though leafy greens may be pre-washed, one must follow the same process as above.

**Leeks**- split or chop, agitate in water with surfactant, inspect as above (method 1 or 2)

**Romaine lettuce (heads)** - remove the outer leaves, root end of leaves, wash and check as above

**Scallions** - remove the outer leaf, split a green stalk from each scallion with a knife and examine between the leaves and at the juncture. As an alternative to splitting each green stalk, the stalk may be diced and then washed/checked like leafy greens.

**Spinach, Broccoli, & Cauliflower - Frozen** – thaw the product in water, (squeeze the spinach), check the water (including squeezed juice). If there are any insects, the product may not be used. If it is free of insects, the whole bag may be used. Frozen product with a recommended kosher symbol may be used without checking.

**Strawberries** – take off the tops including the leaves, wash with surfactant. Washing with a soft brush is very effective, inspect as above

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## Category 4

Asparagus, green (frozen & canned) (see below)  
Brussel Sprouts (see below)

Whole Fresh or Frozen Raspberries (see below)  
Whole Fresh or Frozen Blackberries (see below)

**Category 4 items** are very difficult to clean and check. See the note on page 1 regarding “Intended Use”.

**Fresh Blackberries, Fresh Raspberries, & Brussel Sprouts** – Split open each item of the intended batch and inspect them for insects and worms on the inside and outside. See note on page 1 regarding “Intended Use”.

**Frozen Blackberries, Frozen Raspberries, Frozen & Canned Asparagus** – Because these are impossible to check, they should only be used in recipes that call for purees as in the note on page 1 regarding “Intended Use”.

*Please see other side*