

## Oxygen and Long-Term Emergency Food Storage

First off, we'd like to thank and commend you for your interest in preparing your family for unexpected emergencies. This very important topic is frequently overlooked until it is too late. By taking steps now, before you need it, you will be well prepared when faced with adversity.

In this paper, we touch on one component of emergency preparedness: food storage and the effect of oxygen on long-term quality. We'll also touch on the steps that we at Mountain House® take to ensure that our food is the highest quality available on the market, both at the time of manufacture and years – or even decades – later, when you'll need it most.

In today's food storage market, oxygen is the primary mechanism that degrades food quality over time (moisture and light are generally handled well by most manufacturers, while heat is determined by customer storage practices). Unfortunately, oxygen levels can vary significantly by brand, despite marketing claims.

Oxygen is introduced into packaged food by virtue of the fact that the atmosphere we breathe contains oxygen, nitrogen, and trace gasses. Unless great care is taken in terms of the packaging process and materials, oxygen will remain or infiltrate the package over time.

Why should we be concerned? The food will still be edible in 25 years, won't it?

This is the crux of the matter and depends on your understanding of the word "edible". Foods that are stored with high levels of oxygen in the package may "sustain life", but may not meet your expectations of "edible" food. If the oxygen level in the packages is over 2% – considered by military specifications to be the upper allowable level for storage foods – after many years of storage the "food" may be so rancid and stale that you'd have a hard time actually eating it.

On the other hand, Mountain House has over 40 years of experience working with the US armed forces (since 1968). The US Army Natick Soldier Systems Center has tested our products extensively for shelf life and we have decades of real life experience feeding troops in the field. Given our experience, product quality, superior packaging technology, and strict production processes, Mountain House is truly the "Gold Standard" in long-term emergency food storage.

To help customers and their families in times of emergency, we have initiated an ongoing series of third-party oxygen tests for Mountain House and other brands of long-term emergency food. We will post the results on our website in order to make them easily available to customers of *all* brands of emergency food.

If you are concerned about the oxygen content of a particular brand of long-term emergency food that we haven't had tested, please let us know at: [MH-Info@ofd.com](mailto:MH-Info@ofd.com). We will prioritize future testing based on customer feedback and market conditions.

Thanks Again!

--Your Friends at Mountain House