

# SOP: Food Preparation and Cooking Protocols

This SOP defines **food preparation and cooking protocols**, emphasizing hygiene standards, ingredient handling, temperature control, cross-contamination prevention, cooking time and temperature guidelines, and proper storage of prepared foods. The goal is to ensure consistent food quality, safety, and compliance with health regulations throughout the food preparation process.

## 1. Scope

Applies to all staff involved in food preparation and cooking within the facility.

## 2. Responsibilities

- **Food Handlers:** Follow procedures outlined in this SOP to ensure safety and quality.
- **Supervisors:** Monitor adherence, provide training, and conduct regular checks.

## 3. Hygiene Standards

- Wash hands with soap and water before beginning work, after handling raw ingredients, after breaks, and after using the restroom.
- Wear clean uniforms, aprons, and hair restraints.
- Keep fingernails short, clean, and unpolished. No jewelry except plain wedding bands.
- Sanitize surfaces and equipment before and after use.

## 4. Ingredient Handling

- Receive and store all ingredients at proper temperatures immediately upon delivery.
- Inspect ingredients for signs of spoilage or contamination; discard if in doubt.
- Label and date all ingredient containers.
- Follow FIFO (First In, First Out) for inventory rotation.

## 5. Temperature Control

- Store perishable foods at or below 4°C (39°F); frozen foods at or below -18°C (0°F).
- Verify temperatures of refrigerators and freezers twice daily.
- Monitor temperatures of hot and cold holding units throughout operation.

## 6. Cross-Contamination Prevention

- Use separate cutting boards, utensils, and containers for raw and ready-to-eat foods.
- Clean and sanitize equipment and surfaces between uses.
- Store raw meats below cooked or ready-to-eat foods in refrigerators.
- Avoid direct hand contact with ready-to-eat foods by using gloves or utensils.

## 7. Cooking Time and Temperature Guidelines

Food Item	Minimum Internal Temperature	Minimum Cook Time
Poultry (whole or ground)	74°C (165°F)	At least 15 seconds
Ground Meat (beef, pork, lamb)	71°C (160°F)	At least 15 seconds
Seafood	63°C (145°F)	At least 15 seconds
Whole Cuts of Beef, Pork, Lamb	63°C (145°F)	At least 15 seconds
Eggs (for immediate service)	63°C (145°F)	At least 15 seconds
Reheating Previously Cooked Foods	74°C (165°F)	At least 15 seconds

## 8. Proper Storage of Prepared Foods

- Cool cooked foods from 60°C to 21°C (140°F to 70°F) within 2 hours, then to 4°C (39°F) or lower within 4 hours.
- Store prepared foods in clean, covered containers, labeled with date and name.
- Separate raw and prepared foods in storage.
- Discard any food left in the temperature danger zone (4°C-60°C/39°F-140°F) for more than 2 hours.

## **9. Documentation and Record Keeping**

- Maintain logs for temperatures of storage units and cooked foods.
- Record cleaning and sanitizing schedules.
- File reports of incidents, corrective actions, or deviations from standard protocols.

## **10. Training**

- All staff must receive initial and ongoing training in food safety and SOP compliance.
- Training records must be maintained and reviewed regularly.

## **11. Review and Updates**

- This SOP will be reviewed annually or whenever regulations change.
- Revisions must be communicated promptly to all staff.