

SOP Template: Allergen-Free Food Preparation and Handling Protocols

This SOP details **allergen-free food preparation and handling protocols**, covering ingredient sourcing, cross-contact prevention, cleaning and sanitizing procedures, staff training, labeling and communication, and monitoring and verification processes. Its aim is to minimize allergen exposure risks, ensuring the safety of consumers with food allergies by maintaining strict control measures throughout all stages of food preparation and handling.

1. Purpose

To establish standardized procedures ensuring that all food prepared and handled is safe and free from allergens, thereby protecting consumers with food allergies.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff involved in the sourcing, storage, preparation, handling, packaging, and service of food designated as allergen-free.

3. Definitions

- **Allergen:** A substance capable of causing an allergic reaction.
- **Cross-contact:** The unintentional transfer of allergens from one food or surface to another.
- **Allergen-free:** The absence of specified food allergens within a product, as required by the consumer or regulation.

4. Procedures

4.1 Ingredient Sourcing

- Purchase ingredients only from approved suppliers who can guarantee allergen-free status through documentation.
- Maintain up-to-date ingredient specifications and allergen declarations.
- Verify delivery invoices and packaging for allergen information upon receipt.

4.2 Cross-Contact Prevention

- Store allergen-free ingredients separately from allergen-containing items, preferably in clearly labeled, sealed containers.
- Use dedicated utensils, equipment, and preparation areas for allergen-free foods.
- Schedule allergen-free food preparation before other foods, or at dedicated times.
- Minimize airborne allergen spread by carefully handling powders and loose items.

4.3 Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Clean and sanitize all work surfaces, utensils, and equipment before preparing allergen-free foods.
- Use color-coded tools to distinguish allergen-free items.
- Follow cleaning logs and document cleaning times/procedures.

4.4 Staff Training

- Provide comprehensive allergen awareness and avoidance training for all staff.
- Review SOP updates and new procedures regularly.

- Document all training sessions and participant attendance.

4.5 Labeling and Communication

- Clearly label all allergen-free products, ingredients, and storage areas.
- Communicate allergen information to all staff and customers as required.
- Use accurate menus, signs, and packaging that reflect allergen-free status.

4.6 Monitoring and Verification

- Supervise preparation and handling to ensure adherence to SOP protocols.
- Conduct regular audits and reviews of allergen-free practices.
- Document incidents of cross-contact and corrective actions taken.

5. Record Keeping

Record Type	Responsible Person	Frequency	Retention Period
Ingredient Specifications	Purchasing Manager	Each Receipt	1 Year
Cleaning Logs	Kitchen Staff	Daily	6 Months
Staff Training Records	HR/Training Manager	On Hire & Annually	2 Years
Audit Reports	Quality Manager	Quarterly	2 Years

6. Corrective Actions

- Immediately segregate and discard any product suspected of cross-contact.
- Investigate the cause of the incident and retrain staff as necessary.
- Document all corrective actions and monitor for recurrence.

7. Review and Updates

- This SOP should be reviewed **annually** or upon any change in ingredient, process, or regulatory requirements.

Note: Adapt sections as needed to align with your organization's practices and applicable regulations.