

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Knife Safety and Proper Cutting Techniques

This SOP details **knife safety and proper cutting techniques**, emphasizing the importance of using the correct knife for each task, maintaining sharp blades, and implementing safe handling practices. It covers proper grip, cutting angles, and body positioning to prevent injuries, as well as guidelines for cleaning, storing, and transporting knives securely. The goal is to promote a safe working environment by minimizing risks associated with knife use and enhancing efficiency during food preparation or other cutting tasks.

1. Purpose

To provide guidelines ensuring safe, efficient, and effective use of knives in food preparation and other cutting-related tasks.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff and personnel involved in food preparation or any activity requiring knife use.

3. Responsibilities

- Ensure all personnel are trained in knife safety and proper cutting techniques.
- Supervisors must monitor compliance and provide regular refresher training.

4. Required Equipment

- Assorted kitchen knives (chef's knife, paring knife, serrated knife, etc.)
- Cutting boards (preferably non-slip)
- Knife sharpening tools
- Protective gloves (if necessary)

5. Procedures

a. Knife Selection & Maintenance

- Choose the appropriate knife for the specific task (see **Table 1: Knife Types**).
- Inspect knives for damage and ensure blades are sharp prior to use.
- Sharpen knives regularly; a dull knife is more dangerous than a sharp one.
- Do not use knives for unintended purposes (e.g., opening cans, prying open objects).

Knife Type	Best For
Chef's Knife	Chopping, mincing, dicing, slicing vegetables and meats
Paring Knife	Peeling, trimming, and small intricate work

b. Safe Knife Handling

- Carry knives with the blade pointing down, close to your side.
- Never leave knives soaking in sinks or hidden under items.
- Place knives securely on flat surfaces-never at the edge or hidden by objects.
- Pass knives by setting them down for others to pick up rather than handing them directly.

c. Cutting Techniques

1. Use a stable, non-slip cutting board on a flat surface.
2. Grip the knife handle firmly, using a pinch grip at the handle's base and the blade's spine for control.
3. Tuck fingertips of your non-cutting hand ("the claw" method) to avoid contact with the blade.
4. Angle the knife properly-cut with a rocking motion for chef's knives, and saw gently for serrated blades.
5. Keep blade contact beneath the knuckles of the guiding hand.
6. Position your body comfortably, keeping elbows close and feet shoulder-width apart.

d. Cleaning and Storage

- Wash knives immediately after use; do not leave them unattended or in sinks.
- Dry knives thoroughly and store in a designated knife rack, sheath, or magnetic strip.
- Ensure storage area is secure and out of reach of unauthorized persons or children.

e. Transporting Knives

- Use blade guards, sheaths, or knife rolls when transporting knives between locations.
- Never carry knives loose in pockets or bags.
- Transport all knives with blades pointing down and securely wrapped or covered.

6. Emergency Procedures

- Injuries must be reported immediately to a supervisor.
- For cuts, apply pressure to control bleeding, clean the wound, and seek medical attention if necessary.
- Blood-contaminated surfaces and equipment should be cleaned and sanitized promptly.

7. Review and Training

- All employees must receive initial and refresher training on this SOP.
- SOP should be reviewed annually or after significant incidents.
- Staff feedback should be gathered for SOP improvements.

8. References

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Knife Safety Guidelines
- National Restaurant Association: Food Safety and Knife Handling