

# SOP: Food Handling and Processing Procedures

This SOP details **food handling and processing procedures**, encompassing hygiene standards, proper food storage, sanitation practices, temperature control, cross-contamination prevention, equipment cleaning protocols, and quality assurance measures. The goal is to maintain food safety, ensure product integrity, and comply with regulatory requirements throughout the entire food processing workflow.

## 1. Purpose

To outline procedures for safe food handling and processing, ensuring compliance with food safety and quality standards.

## 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all personnel involved in food preparation, handling, processing, and storage within the facility.

## 3. Responsibilities

- **Staff:** Follow all food handling and processing procedures as outlined.
- **Supervisors:** Monitor compliance, provide training, and report infractions.
- **Quality Assurance:** Conduct regular audits and oversee corrective actions.

## 4. Hygiene Standards

1. All staff must wear clean uniforms, hairnets, and gloves.
2. Hands must be washed and sanitized:
  - Before starting work
  - After handling raw products
  - After breaks/toilet visits
3. No jewelry or watches are allowed in food handling areas.
4. Cuts or wounds must be covered with waterproof bandages and gloves.

## 5. Food Storage Procedures

1. Store raw and cooked foods separately to prevent cross-contamination.
2. Label all food items with date of receipt and use-by dates.
3. Maintain proper storage temperatures:
  - Refrigerated products:  $\pm 4^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $39^{\circ}\text{F}$ )
  - Frozen products:  $\pm -18^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $0^{\circ}\text{F}$ )
  - Dry storage:  $10\text{--}21^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $50\text{--}70^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), low humidity

## 6. Sanitation Practices

1. Clean and sanitize all surfaces and utensils before and after use.
2. Use only approved sanitation products and follow manufacturer's instructions.
3. Dispose of waste promptly in designated containers.

## 7. Temperature Control

1. Monitor and record temperatures of food storage equipment at least twice daily.
2. Cook food to safe internal temperatures as per guidelines:
  - Poultry:  $\geq 74^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $165^{\circ}\text{F}$ )
  - Ground Meat:  $\geq 71^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $160^{\circ}\text{F}$ )
  - Fish:  $\geq 63^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $145^{\circ}\text{F}$ )
3. Cool cooked foods quickly to  $\pm 4^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $39^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) within 2 hours.

## 8. Cross-Contamination Prevention

1. Use color-coded cutting boards and utensils for different food groups.
2. Never place cooked food on surfaces that held raw products.
3. Wash hands and change gloves between different tasks.

## 9. Equipment Cleaning Protocols

1. Clean and sanitize all equipment after each use.
2. Disassemble equipment where possible for thorough cleaning.
3. Maintain cleaning logs for each piece of equipment.

## 10. Quality Assurance Measures

1. Conduct random product sampling and testing.
2. Document and investigate deviations from standards or procedures.
3. Review and update SOPs annually or as regulations change.

## 11. Record Keeping

- Maintain logs for temperature checks, cleaning, training, and product traceability.
- Retain records for a minimum of three years or as per regulatory requirements.

## 12. References

- Local and national food safety regulations
- HACCP Guidelines
- Company food safety manual

## 13. Revision History

Date	Revision	Description	Approved By
2024-06-01	01	Initial release	QA Manager