

SOP: Food Transport, Storage, and Temperature Control Procedures

This SOP defines **food transport, storage, and temperature control procedures** to ensure food safety and quality throughout the supply chain. It includes guidelines for proper loading and unloading of food products, maintaining appropriate temperature conditions during transport, correct storage practices to prevent contamination, regular monitoring and recording of temperature data, and handling protocols to preserve food freshness and prevent spoilage. The goal is to comply with food safety regulations and minimize risk of foodborne illnesses.

1. Purpose

To establish safe and effective procedures for transporting, storing, and controlling the temperature of food products to prevent contamination and spoilage.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all staff involved in the handling, transport, and storage of food products within the facility and during distribution.

3. Responsibilities

- **Food Handlers:** Follow all procedures as outlined below.
- **Supervisors:** Ensure staff are trained and procedures are followed.
- **Quality Assurance:** Monitor records and compliance with SOP.

4. Procedures

4.1 Food Transport

- Clean and sanitize transport vehicles before loading.
- Ensure food is protected from physical, chemical, and biological contamination during loading and transit.
- Separate raw and ready-to-eat items to prevent cross-contamination.
- Maintain required transport temperatures (see Table 1).
- Record departure and arrival times, and temperatures.

4.2 Food Storage

- Store food in designated, clean, and labeled areas.
- Monitor and record storage temperatures at least twice daily.
- Rotate stock using FIFO (First In, First Out) principles.
- Maintain proper spacing between products to ensure adequate air circulation.
- Immediately segregate and report damaged or spoiled goods.

4.3 Temperature Control

- Refer to Table 1 for specific temperature requirements for different food categories.
- If temperatures fall outside recommended ranges, notify supervisor and follow corrective actions.
- Calibrate thermometers weekly and keep calibration records.

4.4 Monitoring and Recording

- Document all temperature checks, corrective actions, and maintenance performed.
- Keep records for at least **12 months** (or as per local regulation).

4.5 Handling Protocols

- Use gloves and clean utensils when handling food.
- Avoid direct contact between hands and ready-to-eat foods.
- Wash and sanitize hands before and after handling food.

5. Temperature Guidelines (Table 1)

Food Category	Recommended Transport/Storage Temperature	Maximum Duration (in transit)
Frozen Foods	-18°C (0°F) or below	8 hours
Refrigerated Foods	0°C to 4°C (32°F to 39°F)	4 hours
Hot Foods	Above 60°C (140°F)	2 hours
Dry Goods	Cool, dry, well-ventilated area	N/A

6. Corrective Actions

- If temperature deviates from acceptable range, isolate affected food and inform supervisor immediately.
- Document incident, including date, time, nature of deviation, and corrective measures taken.
- Discard food if safety is compromised according to local regulations.

7. Training

- All staff must undergo initial and annual refresher training on food transport, storage, and temperature control.
- Training records must be maintained and available for inspection.

8. References

- Local food safety regulations and guidelines
- Internal quality assurance procedures

9. Document Control

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