

SOP: Receiving and Storage Procedures for Allergen-Containing Foods

This SOP details the **receiving and storage procedures for allergen-containing foods**, focusing on accurate identification and segregation of allergenic ingredients upon delivery, proper labeling, and secure storage to prevent cross-contact. It includes guidelines for inspecting allergen-containing products, verifying supplier documentation, and maintaining dedicated storage areas or clearly marked containers. The SOP aims to ensure food safety by minimizing allergen cross-contamination risks and protecting consumers with food allergies through strict handling protocols and thorough record-keeping.

1. Purpose

To ensure the safe receipt and storage of allergen-containing foods by minimizing cross-contact and maintaining strict identification, segregation, and documentation procedures.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all employees involved in receiving, inspecting, and storing food products within the facility.

3. Definitions

- **Allergen-Containing Foods:** Foods that contain any major food allergens as defined by regulatory agencies.
- **Cross-contact:** The unintentional incorporation of allergens into foods not intended to contain them.

4. Responsibilities

- Receiving personnel: Inspect and document all deliveries in compliance with this SOP.
- Warehouse/storage staff: Ensure correct segregation, labeling, and storage of allergen-containing foods.
- Supervisors: Monitor for adherence, conduct staff training, and maintain records.

5. Procedure

1. **Receiving**
 - Verify incoming shipments against purchase orders and supplier documentation.
 - Inspect packaging for integrity, correct labeling (including allergen declarations), and signs of damage.
 - Immediately reject any products that are mislabeled, damaged, or show signs of cross-contact.
 - Segregate allergen-containing deliveries in a designated holding area, away from other foods, until inspection is complete.
2. **Labeling**
 - Ensure all allergen-containing foods are clearly labeled with the common allergen name(s) on both cases and individual packs where possible.
 - Affix additional in-house allergen identification labels as required.
3. **Storage**
 - Store allergen-containing foods in:
 - Dedicated storage rooms/areas, *or*
 - Clearly marked and sealed containers/bins on lower shelves to prevent spillage onto non-allergen foods.
 - Never store allergen-containing products above ready-to-eat or allergen-free items.
 - Implement physical barriers where feasible to separate allergens from other foods.
4. **Record-Keeping**
 - Maintain logs of incoming allergen-containing shipments, inspection outcomes, and storage locations.
 - Keep supplier allergen declarations and certificates on file.
5. **Staff Training**
 - All relevant staff should be trained on allergen awareness, SOP implementation, and emergency procedures for allergen incidents.

6. Documentation

Document	Retention Period
Receiving Logs	Minimum 2 years

Inspection Checklist	Minimum 2 years
Supplier Allergen Declarations	Minimum 2 years or as per regulatory requirements
Staff Training Records	Minimum 2 years

7. Verification and Review

- Supervisors will conduct periodic audits to verify compliance with SOP.
- The SOP will be reviewed annually or upon changes in product lines, regulatory updates, or after any allergen incident.

8. References

- Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA)
- FDA Food Code
- Company-specific allergen management policies