

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Allergen Segregation during Receiving, Storage, and Processing

This SOP details the procedures for **allergen segregation during receiving, storage, and processing** to prevent cross-contamination and ensure product safety. It covers identification of allergenic ingredients upon receipt, dedicated storage areas with clear labeling, segregation protocols during handling and processing, cleaning and sanitation practices, employee training on allergen awareness, and documentation requirements. The goal is to protect consumers with allergies by maintaining strict control measures throughout the supply chain and production line.

1. Purpose

To prevent cross-contamination of allergens and ensure safe handling of allergenic ingredients throughout receiving, storage, and processing operations.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all staff involved in the receipt, storage, handling, and processing of allergenic materials at the facility.

3. Responsibilities

- **Receiving Staff:** Identify and correctly store allergenic materials upon arrival.
- **Warehouse Staff:** Maintain segregation and labeling within storage areas.
- **Processing Staff:** Follow allergen control measures during handling and processing.
- **Supervisors:** Ensure procedures are followed and provide training.
- **QA Personnel:** Monitor compliance and review documentation.

4. Procedure

4.1 Receiving of Allergenic Ingredients

- Visually inspect and verify all incoming ingredients for allergen content based on supplier documentation and labeling.
- Mark allergenic materials with a distinct label or color code upon receipt.
- Record each allergen-containing item in the receiving log.

4.2 Storage of Allergenic Ingredients

- Store allergenic ingredients in a **dedicated, clearly marked area** (e.g., color-coded racks or separate rooms).
- Maintain physical separation between different allergen groups (e.g., milk, nuts, gluten, etc.) whenever possible.
- Ensure proper sealing of containers to prevent spillage and airborne contamination.
- Non-allergenic and allergenic ingredients must never be stored together.
- Ensure allergen identification labels are visible and legible at all times.

4.3 Handling and Processing

- Follow **dedicated process lines, equipment, and utensils** for allergen-containing products whenever possible.
- If shared equipment must be used, follow validated cleaning protocols between uses.
- Process allergenic ingredients at designated times, typically after non-allergenic runs.
- Use color-coded tools and personal protective equipment (PPE) specific to allergen handling.

4.4 Cleaning and Sanitation

- Implement **allergen control cleaning procedures** for equipment, surfaces, and storage areas after handling allergenic materials.
- Sanitation staff must verify and document successful cleaning before using equipment for non-allergenic products.
- Regularly inspect allergen storage areas for cleanliness and integrity of packaging.

4.5 Employee Training

- Provide initial and recurring training on allergen awareness, identification, and segregation procedures.

- Ensure all employees understand the importance of allergen controls and reporting cross-contact incidents.

4.6 Documentation and Records

- Maintain records of **receiving, storage, cleaning, and staff training** related to allergen segregation.
- Retain all documentation in accordance with company policy and regulatory requirements.

5. Related Documents

- Allergen Receiving Log
- Cleaning and Sanitation Record
- Employee Training Log
- Allergen Master List
- Supplier Allergen Declarations

6. Review and Revision

This SOP must be reviewed annually, or upon introduction of new products, processes, or allergens.