

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Food Preparation and Assembly Guidelines

This SOP details **food preparation and assembly guidelines** designed to maintain hygiene, ensure food safety, and optimize kitchen workflow. It covers proper handling and storage of ingredients, sanitization protocols, cooking temperature controls, allergen management, and final assembly techniques to deliver consistent, high-quality meals while preventing contamination and ensuring compliance with health regulations.

1. Purpose

To provide step-by-step instructions for the safe and efficient preparation and assembly of food, ensuring hygiene, food safety, and compliance with applicable health codes.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all kitchen staff responsible for handling, preparing, and assembling food items within the facility.

3. Responsibilities

- **Kitchen Staff:** Follow all procedures outlined in this SOP.
- **Supervisors/Managers:** Ensure all staff are properly trained and SOP compliance is monitored.

4. Procedures

1. Personal Hygiene

- Wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before handling food, after handling raw ingredients, and after using the restroom.
- Wear clean uniforms, aprons, and hair restraints.
- Remove jewelry and cover cuts or wounds with waterproof dressings and gloves.

2. Ingredient Handling & Storage

- Inspect all ingredients for quality, expiry dates, and damage before use.
- Store raw and cooked foods separately to avoid cross-contamination.
- Follow FIFO (First In, First Out) for all stored ingredients.
- Maintain appropriate storage temperatures:

| Food Type | Temperature |
|----------------|----------------|
| Cold Storage | ≤ 4°C (39°F) |
| Frozen Storage | ≤ -18°C (0°F) |
| Hot Holding | ≥ 60°C (140°F) |

3. Sanitization Protocols

- Clean and sanitize all work surfaces, utensils, and equipment before and after use.
- Use food-safe sanitizing agents according to manufacturer instructions.
- Maintain a cleaning schedule and log all completed tasks.

4. Cooking Temperature Controls

- Use calibrated food thermometers to check internal temperatures of cooked foods.
- Cook foods to minimum internal temperatures:

| Food | Minimum Temperature |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Poultry (whole or ground) | 74°C (165°F) |
| Ground Meat | 71°C (160°F) |
| Beef, Pork, Lamb, Veal (steak, roast, chop) | 63°C (145°F) and rest 3 min |

| | |
|------------------|--------------|
| Fish & Shellfish | 63°C (145°F) |
| Reheated foods | 74°C (165°F) |

5. Allergen Management

- Identify and label all common allergens present in menu items.
- Use separate utensils and prep areas for allergen-free meals when possible.
- Clean and sanitize all surfaces before preparing allergen-sensitive orders.
- Communicate clearly with service staff regarding allergen requests.

6. Food Assembly

- Assemble food according to approved recipes and plating standards.
- Minimize direct hand contact with ready-to-eat foods; use gloves and utensils.
- Inspect assembled dishes for presentation and accuracy before serving.

5. Documentation & Records

- Maintain logs for temperature checks, cleaning schedules, and ingredient traceability.
- Document all deviations or incidents and corrective actions taken.

6. Training

- All staff must receive initial and refresher training on this SOP and food safety principles.
- Training records must be kept on file.

7. Review & Revision

- This SOP is reviewed annually or as needed to ensure regulatory compliance and operational effectiveness.