

# SOP Template: Dishwashing and Utensil Sterilization Protocols

This SOP details the **dishwashing and utensil sterilization protocols**, covering proper cleaning techniques, sanitizing agents and concentrations, equipment usage, drying methods, and storage practices. The objective is to maintain hygiene standards, prevent cross-contamination, and ensure all dishware and utensils are safe for food service in compliance with health regulations.

## 1. Purpose

To establish standardized dishwashing and utensil sterilization procedures to maintain food safety and compliance with regulatory requirements.

## 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff responsible for washing, sanitizing, and storing dishware and utensils in the food service facility.

## 3. Responsibilities

- All kitchen staff are accountable for following these protocols.
- Supervisors must monitor compliance and provide ongoing training.

## 4. Required Materials & Equipment

- Approved dishwashing detergent
- Approved sanitizing agents (e.g., chlorine bleach, quaternary ammonium)
- Scrubbing brushes or pads
- Three-compartment sink or commercial dishwasher
- Clean, lint-free towels or air dryers
- Personal protective equipment (PPE): gloves, aprons

## 5. Procedure

### 5.1 Manual Dishwashing (Three-Compartment Sink)

1. **Preparation:** Remove food debris and rinse items with warm water.
2. **Washing:** Wash items in first sink using hot water ( $\geq 43^{\circ}\text{C}/110^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and detergent. Scrub thoroughly.
3. **Rinsing:** Rinse items in the second sink with clean, hot water.
4. **Sanitizing:** Immerse items in the third sink with a sanitizing solution:
  - **Chlorine:** 50–100 ppm, at least 30 seconds.
  - **Quaternary ammonium:** 200–400 ppm, as per manufacturer's instructions.
5. **Air Drying:** Place items on clean, sanitized racks to air dry. Do not towel dry.

### 5.2 Automatic Dishwashing

1. **Scrape and pre-rinse** all dishware.
2. **Load items** per dishwasher guidelines, ensuring all surfaces are exposed.
3. **Run the cycle** with detergent and appropriate sanitizer:
  - **High-temperature dishwasher:** Final rinse  $\geq 82^{\circ}\text{C}/180^{\circ}\text{F}$ .
  - **Chemical dishwasher:** Sanitizer at labeled concentration.
4. **Allow washed items to air dry** before storage.

## 6. Drying Methods

- Air dry all items on clean racks. Do not use towels to reduce cross-contamination risk.

## 7. Storage Practices

- Store utensils and dishware in designated clean, dry areas above floor level.
- Ensure items are completely dry before stacking or storing.
- Handle cleaned items with sanitized hands or gloves only.
- Cover or invert utensils and dishes to protect from dust and contaminants.

## 8. Documentation & Monitoring

- Maintain cleaning and sanitizing logs, including date, time, and initials.
- Regularly test sanitizer concentrations using appropriate test strips and record results.
- Supervisors must review practices and logs weekly.

## 9. References

- Local Health Department Regulations
- FDA Food Code (Latest Edition)
- Manufacturer instructions for dishwashing equipment and sanitizers