

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Safe Food Storage Protocols

Purpose: This SOP details **safe food storage protocols**, focusing on maintaining proper temperature controls, effective labeling systems, and systematic food rotation to prevent contamination and spoilage. It ensures all food items are stored under optimal conditions, clearly labeled with dates and contents, and rotated using the first-in, first-out (FIFO) method to uphold food safety and quality standards.

1. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff responsible for receiving, storing, and handling food items within the facility.

2. Responsibilities

- All Staff:** Adhere to safe food storage protocols as outlined.
- Supervisors/Managers:** Ensure compliance, conduct regular checks, and provide training.

3. Food Storage Temperature Controls

Type of Food/Storage Area	Required Temperature	Monitoring Frequency
Cold Storage (Refrigerators)	± 4°C (± 40°F)	Twice daily (beginning/end of shift)
Frozen Storage (Freezers)	± -18°C (± 0°F)	Twice daily
Dry Storage	10°C – 21°C (50°F – 70°F), 50-60% humidity	Daily (temperature & humidity)

- Ensure thermometers are present and calibrated in all storage units.
- Record temperatures on log sheets; report any inconsistencies to management immediately.

4. Labeling System

- All stored food items (opened or prepared) must be labeled with:
 - Product name
 - Date received or prepared
 - Use-by/expiry date
 - Initials of staff member labeling the item
- Use clear, waterproof labels and markers.
- Remove old labels before re-labeling containers to avoid confusion.

5. Food Rotation (FIFO Protocol)

- Store new stock behind older stock to ensure older items are used first.
- Place items with nearest expiry dates at the front.
- Inspect food items regularly; discard any spoiled or expired items immediately.
- Document any discarded items in the waste log.

6. Cleaning & Organization

- Keep storage areas clean, dry, and free of pests.
- Store food off the floor and away from walls to facilitate air circulation and cleaning.

- Organize food according to category (raw, ready-to-eat, allergens) and store raw food below cooked/ready-to-eat food.

7. Monitoring & Recordkeeping

- Complete daily temperature logs for each storage unit.
- Maintain records of all labeled items and periodic rotation checks.
- Keep cleaning schedules and pest control logs up-to-date and accessible.

8. Corrective Actions

- If storage temperatures fall outside safe ranges, notify supervisor, and take immediate corrective actions (e.g., move food to another unit).
- For unlabeled or improperly labeled items, discard immediately.
- Document issues and corrective actions taken.

9. References

- Local health department food safety codes
- FDA Food Code
- Company food safety policy manual