

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

Air-drying and Storage of Clean Dishes and Utensils

This SOP describes the **air-drying and storage of clean dishes and utensils**, emphasizing proper sanitation practices, preventing contamination, ensuring complete drying to inhibit bacterial growth, and organizing storage areas to maintain cleanliness and accessibility. It aims to uphold food safety standards by detailing step-by-step procedures for handling clean dishware and utensils after washing.

1. Scope

This procedure applies to all staff involved in cleaning, air-drying, and storing dishes and utensils in the facility.

2. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Dishwashing Staff	Thoroughly clean and rinse all items; ensure proper air-drying and storage according to this SOP.
Supervisors	Monitor adherence to this SOP; ensure all staff are trained in proper procedures.

3. Materials and Equipment

- Clean, sanitized drying racks or shelves
- Clean dish and utensil storage areas
- Single-use gloves (if needed)
- Sanitizer solution and cleaning cloths

4. Procedure

- Preparation:**
 - Clean and sanitize all drying racks/shelves and storage areas before use.
 - Verify washed items have been properly rinsed and sanitized according to dishwashing SOP.
- Air-drying:**
 - Place washed items on clean, sanitized drying racks or draining boards. **Do not towel-dry** as this may cause contamination.
 - Arrange items so that water drains away naturally and air circulates freely, spacing items to avoid contact where possible.
 - Allow items to air-dry completely before handling or storing. Inspect for residual moisture.
- Storage:**
 - Once dry, handle dishes and utensils by the base, rim, or handle to avoid contact with food-contact surfaces.
 - Store items in designated, clean, and dry areas separate from used or dirty ware.
 - Stack dishes and arrange utensils so they remain accessible without excessive handling; do not overcrowd storage spaces.
 - Cover open storage racks or shelves with clean barriers if needed to prevent dust and debris contamination.
- Maintenance:**
 - Regularly clean and sanitize all drying and storage areas.
 - Discard or rewash any items found to be damp, dirty, or contaminated before use.

5. Precautions & Notes

- Never use cloth towels to dry dishes or utensils intended for food service.
- Always wash hands before handling clean items.
- Regularly inspect drying and storage equipment for cleanliness and damage.

6. Documentation

- Keep cleaning and sanitizing logs for racks, shelves, and storage areas.
- Maintain staff training records for this SOP.