

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Food Preparation and Culinary Hygiene Protocols

This SOP details **food preparation and culinary hygiene protocols**, covering essential practices such as proper handwashing techniques, safe handling of raw and cooked foods, cross-contamination prevention, temperature control standards, cleaning and sanitization of kitchen equipment and surfaces, personal hygiene requirements for kitchen staff, and guidelines for food storage and disposal. The objective is to maintain high standards of food safety, ensure hygiene compliance, and prevent foodborne illnesses in all culinary operations.

1. Purpose

To establish protocols for food preparation and hygiene to ensure safe, high-quality food service and to prevent foodborne illnesses.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all kitchen staff and food handlers involved in the preparation, service, and handling of food in the facility.

3. Responsibilities

- All kitchen staff must comply with these protocols.
- Supervisors are responsible for monitoring compliance.
- Management ensures training and provision of resources.

4. Handwashing Procedure

1. Wet hands with clean, running water.
2. Apply soap and lather for at least 20 seconds.
3. Scrub all parts of hands, including between fingers and under nails.
4. Rinse thoroughly under running water.
5. Dry hands using a disposable paper towel or air dryer.
6. Wash hands:
 - Before and after handling food
 - After using the restroom
 - After handling raw meat, poultry, or seafood
 - After touching face, hair, or body
 - After handling waste or cleaning

5. Safe Handling of Food

- Keep raw and cooked foods separate at all times.
- Use separate chopping boards and utensils for raw and cooked foods.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before preparation.
- Do not use the same containers for raw and cooked items.

6. Cross-Contamination Prevention

- Sanitize workstations before and after use.
- Use color-coded chopping boards and utensils where possible.
- Store raw foods below cooked foods in refrigerators.
- Dispose of any contaminated food immediately.

7. Temperature Control Standards

Step	Temperature	Guideline
Cold Storage	≤ 5°C (41°F)	All perishable foods must be stored at or below this temperature.

Hot Holding	≥ 60°C (140°F)	Cooked foods must be held at or above this temperature.
Cooking (General)	≥ 74°C (165°F)	Internal temperature for most ready-to-eat foods.
Reheating	≥ 74°C (165°F)	Reheated foods must reach at least this temperature.

8. Cleaning and Sanitization

- Clean all equipment and surfaces before and after use.
- Use approved food-safe cleaners and sanitizers.
- Sanitize utensils and equipment by soaking or using dishwashers at appropriate settings.
- Clean spills immediately and dispose of waste properly.

9. Personal Hygiene for Kitchen Staff

- Wear clean uniforms, aprons, and hair restraints.
- Remove all jewelry (except plain bands).
- Cover cuts and wounds with waterproof dressings.
- Do not work if experiencing symptoms of illness (e.g., fever, vomiting, diarrhea).

10. Food Storage and Disposal

- Label and date all stored food items.
- Follow the First-In, First-Out (FIFO) method.
- Store chemicals and cleaning agents separately from food.
- Dispose of expired or spoiled food promptly and safely.

11. Training and Record Keeping

- Provide regular training to all kitchen staff on food safety protocols.
- Maintain records of cleaning schedules, temperature logs, and staff training.

12. References

- Local and national food safety regulations
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Code
- World Health Organization (WHO) food safety guidance