

# SOP: Proper Loading and Operation of Dishwashing Machines

This SOP details the **proper loading and operation of dishwashing machines** to ensure optimal cleaning performance and equipment longevity. It covers step-by-step instructions for loading dishes, selecting appropriate wash cycles, handling detergents and chemicals safely, routine maintenance checks, and troubleshooting common operational issues. Following these guidelines helps maintain hygiene standards, reduce machine downtime, and promote efficient dishwashing processes in commercial and institutional settings.

## 1. Purpose

To ensure thorough cleaning, sanitation, and proper functioning of dishwashing machines in compliance with hygiene and safety standards.

## 2. Scope

This procedure applies to all staff responsible for operating dishwashing machines in food service, hospitality, and institutional settings.

## 3. Responsibilities

- Dishwashing staff: Follow procedures for loading, operating, and maintaining machines.
- Supervisors: Ensure staff are trained and monitor adherence to SOP.
- Maintenance team: Address technical issues or malfunctions.

## 4. Procedure

### 1. Preparation:

- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as gloves and aprons.
- Inspect dishes for large food debris and pre-rinse as needed.
- Check machine for cleanliness, correct assembly, and that spray arms are unobstructed.

### 2. Loading Dishes:

- Load plates, glasses, and utensils into designated racks without overcrowding.
- Arrange dishes so soiled surfaces face spray arms.
- Do not stack items; avoid nesting bowls or cups.
- Separate utensils to permit thorough cleaning.

### 3. Selecting Wash Cycles:

- Check the type and quantity of items loaded.
- Select wash cycle according to manufacturer's instructions (e.g., light, normal, heavy duty).
- Adjust temperature and cycle time as specified for the load.

### 4. Handling Detergents and Chemicals:

- Use only approved detergents and sanitizers.
- Measure chemicals as per manufacturer's instructions; avoid overuse.
- Store chemicals safely and away from food preparation areas.

### 5. Operating the Machine:

- Close door/lid securely before starting.
- Press the appropriate start button or lever.
- Monitor machine during operation; stay alert to unusual noises or leaks.

## 6. Unloading Dishes:

- Wait for cycle completion; open machine carefully to avoid steam burns.
- Allow items to air dry; do not towel dry to prevent contamination.
- Inspect items for cleanliness; rewash if necessary.

## 5. Routine Maintenance

- Empty and clean machine filter and drain screens daily.
- Inspect spray arms, jets, and seals for clogs or wear.
- Wipe down exterior and interior surfaces at the end of each shift.
- Follow manufacturer's schedule for deep cleaning and descaling.

## 6. Troubleshooting

- **Machine won't start:** Check power supply, door/lid closure, and emergency stops.
- **Poor cleaning results:** Check for overloading, clogged spray arms, or low detergent.
- **Water leaks:** Inspect gaskets and ensure correct machine assembly.
- **Alarms or error codes:** Refer to user manual and escalate persistent issues to maintenance.

## 7. Documentation

Record machine maintenance, repairs, and issues in the designated logbook. Report persistent faults to the supervisor immediately.

## 8. Safety

- Wear PPE as required.
- Handle chemicals per safety data sheets (SDS).
- Do not bypass safety interlocks or tamper with controls.

## 9. References

- Manufacturer's user manual and chemical safety data sheets (SDS).
- Local health and safety regulations.