

# SOP: Safe Food Handling, Storage, and Labeling Protocols

This SOP details **safe food handling, storage, and labeling protocols** to ensure food safety and prevent contamination. It covers proper hygiene practices, temperature control for storage, appropriate packaging methods, clear and accurate labeling, and procedures for handling allergens. The goal is to maintain food quality, comply with regulatory standards, and protect consumer health throughout the entire food supply chain.

## 1. Purpose

To establish clear procedures for safe food handling, storage, and labeling in order to minimize the risk of contamination, ensure regulatory compliance, and safeguard consumer health.

## 2. Scope

This SOP applies to all personnel involved in food handling, storage, and labeling within the organization.

## 3. Responsibilities

- Food handlers: Follow all hygiene, handling, and labeling protocols.
- Supervisors: Monitor compliance, provide training, and conduct regular audits.
- Management: Ensure SOP availability and staff competency.

## 4. Procedures

### 4.1. Safe Food Handling Practices

1. Wash hands thoroughly before and after handling food, using soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds.
2. Wear appropriate protective gear (gloves, hairnets, clean uniforms).
3. Prevent cross-contamination by using separate equipment and utensils for raw and cooked foods.
4. Clean and sanitize work surfaces frequently.
5. Dispose of waste and spoiled food immediately and appropriately.

### 4.2. Storage Protocols

1. Store food items at correct temperatures:
  - Refrigerated foods  $\hat{a}\%_{00}\hat{a}\ 4\hat{A}^{\circ}\text{C}$  (40 $\hat{A}^{\circ}\text{F}$ ).
  - Frozen foods  $\hat{a}\%_{00}\hat{a}\ -18\hat{A}^{\circ}\text{C}$  (0 $\hat{A}^{\circ}\text{F}$ ).
  - Dry goods in cool, dry, and well-ventilated areas.
2. Use FIFO (First In, First Out) method to rotate stock.
3. Keep raw and ready-to-eat foods separate.
4. Check and record storage temperatures regularly.
5. Inspect all deliveries for damage, spoilage, and proper temperature on arrival.

### 4.3. Packaging Methods

1. Package food in clean, food-grade containers that are appropriately sealed.
2. Ensure packaging is intact and free from damage before use.
3. Use tamper-evident packaging where required.
4. Label packaged foods immediately after packing.

### 4.4. Labeling Protocols

1. All food items must be clearly labeled with:
  - Name of the product
  - Date of preparation/packaging
  - Expiration or use-by date
  - Ingredients list (including allergens)
  - Storage instructions
2. Labels must be legible, durable, and securely attached to packaging.
3. Update and remove outdated or incorrect labels immediately.

### 4.5. Allergen Management

1. Identify and segregate allergen-containing ingredients.
2. Clearly label all allergenic foods in storage and on final product packaging.
3. Implement special cleaning protocols between handling allergen and non-allergen products.
4. Train staff on allergen awareness and response procedures.

## **5. Documentation & Records**

- Maintain temperature logs and inspection checklists daily.
- Keep records of food labeling for traceability.
- File incident and corrective action reports as required.

## **6. Training**

All staff must receive training on this SOP and refresher training annually or when procedures are updated.

## **7. References**

- Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)
- Local Health Department Regulations
- Codex Alimentarius: General Principles of Food Hygiene

## **8. Review**

This SOP is to be reviewed and updated annually or as required by operational changes or regulatory updates.