STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Commercial Dishwashing SOP

Document no.	SOP-KIT-008
Revision	1.0
Owner	Kitchen Manager
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To make sure all dishes, pots, pans and utensils are washed, rinsed and sanitized to a safe standard before they are reused.

2. Scope

Applies to warewashing at the three-compartment sink and dish machine. General kitchen surface cleaning is covered by the kitchen cleaning SOP.

Definitions

Three-compartment sink	A sink with separate wash, rinse and sanitize compartments used to clean items by hand.
Sanitizer concentration	The strength of the sanitizing chemical in the final rinse or sink, checked with a test strip against the level on the product label.
Air dry	Letting washed and sanitized items dry on a rack rather than wiping them with a cloth.

3. Responsibilities

Dishwasher	Washes, rinses and sanitizes all dishes, pots and utensils and keeps the dish area organized.
Line Cook	Scrapes and pre-rinses items before sending them to the dish area and returns clean items to the correct storage location.
Kitchen Manager	Checks sanitizer concentration and water temperature, and maintains the dish machine.

RACI matrix

Activity	Dishwasher	Line Cook	Kitchen Manager
Scrape and pre-rinse dirty items	C	R/A	I
Wash, rinse and sanitize items	R/A	-	C
Check sanitizer concentration and water temperature	R	-	A
Maintain and troubleshoot the dish machine	C	-	R/A

Activity	Dishwasher	Line Cook	Kitchen Manager
Store clean items correctly	R	C	A

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Three-compartment sink with wash, rinse and sanitize basins
- Commercial dish machine
- Approved dish detergent and sanitizer
- Sanitizer test strips
- Water temperature thermometer
- Drying racks
- Scraper and pre-rinse sprayer

Personal protective equipment

- Waterproof apron
- Rubber gloves
- Non-slip closed shoes

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Scrape and pre-rinse items** Scrape food scraps into the trash or compost, then pre-rinse items at the sprayer to remove remaining debris before they reach the wash basin or machine.	Line Cook	☐
5.2	**Sort items by type** Sort flatware, dishware, pots and pans into separate bins or racks so similar items can be washed together and fragile items are not damaged.	Dishwasher	☐
5.3	**Fill the three-compartment sink correctly** Fill the wash basin with hot water and the correct amount of detergent, the rinse basin with clean hot water, and the sanitize basin with sanitizer mixed to the concentration on the label.	Dishwasher	☐
5.4	**Check sanitizer concentration and water temperature** Test the sanitizer basin with a test strip and check the wash water temperature before starting, adjusting or refilling the basins if either is out of range. **Checkpoint:** Sanitizer concentration matches the level on the product label and wash water is hot enough to clean effectively.	Dishwasher	☐
5.5	**Wash items in the first basin** Submerge and scrub each item in the wash basin using a brush or pad until visibly clean, refreshing the water when it becomes greasy or cloudy.	Dishwasher	☐
5.6	**Rinse items in the second basin** Dip and swirl each item in the rinse basin to remove all detergent residue before moving to the sanitize step.	Dishwasher	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.7	**Sanitize items in the third basin** Fully submerge each item in the sanitize basin for the contact time listed on the sanitizer label, then remove it without rinsing again. **Warning:** Never rinse sanitized items with plain water afterward, since this removes the sanitizer before it can work.	Dishwasher	☐
5.8	**Load and run the dish machine** For machine washing, scrape and pre-rinse items, load racks without overlapping items, and run the machine's full wash and sanitize cycle without interrupting it.	Dishwasher	☐
5.9	**Verify the dish machine reaches sanitizing temperature** Check the dish machine's gauge or a sanitizer test strip on a sample item after each load to confirm the final rinse reached the required sanitizing level. **Checkpoint:** The dish machine's final rinse temperature or chemical sanitizer level meets the manufacturer's requirement on every load.	Kitchen Manager	☐
5.10	**Air dry all washed items** Place washed and sanitized items on a clean drying rack and let them air dry completely before stacking or storing them.	Dishwasher	☐
5.11	**Store clean items correctly** Return dry, clean items to their designated storage location, stacking dishware and inverting cups and pots to prevent dust and moisture buildup.	Line Cook	☐
5.12	**Clean and reset the dish area** Drain and clean the sink basins or dish machine at the end of the shift, wipe down surrounding surfaces, and empty the food waste strainer.	Dishwasher	☐

6. Quality checks

- Sanitizer concentration or dish machine final rinse meets the required level at every check.
- No dish leaves the area with visible food debris or grease.
- Items are air dried, never wiped dry with a cloth.
- Clean items are stored inverted or covered to prevent dust and pest contact.

7. Records

- Sanitizer concentration and water temperature log
- Dish machine maintenance and repair log
- Dish area cleaning sign-off

8. KPIs

- Percent of sanitizer checks passing on the first test
- Turnaround time from dirty to clean and stored
- Dish machine downtime hours per month
- Number of items rewashed for failing inspection

9. Common mistakes

- Rinsing sanitized items with plain water after the sanitize step.
- Overloading the dish machine so items do not get fully sprayed.

- Letting the wash basin get greasy and cloudy without refreshing it.
- Wiping dishes dry with a cloth instead of air drying them.
- Not testing sanitizer concentration before starting a shift.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Ilia Pirozhenko

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

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