STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Kitchen Food Preparation SOP

Document no.	SOP-KIT-001
Revision	1.0
Owner	Executive Chef
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To ensure all food is prepared to recipe standard, at a safe temperature, and without cross-contamination before it reaches the line or storage.

2. Scope

Applies to all cold and hot prep done in the kitchen ahead of service, including produce, proteins, sauces and stocks. Cooking on the line during service is covered by the line check SOP.

Definitions

Mise en place	All ingredients and tools set up and ready before cooking or service begins.
Par level	The target quantity of a prepped item needed to get through a shift or day.
FIFO	First in, first out. Using or shelving the oldest prepped item first.
TCS food	Time/temperature control for safety food, such as raw meat, dairy or cooked rice, that supports rapid bacterial growth if mishandled.

3. Responsibilities

Prep Cook	Preps ingredients to recipe spec, labels and dates items, and keeps the station clean and organized.
Line Cook	Communicates shortages and prep needs from the line and helps with overflow prep during slow periods.
Sous Chef	Builds the daily prep list, assigns stations, and checks finished prep for quality and quantity.
Executive Chef	Sets recipe specs and par levels, and reviews prep standards and food cost during walkthroughs.

RACI matrix

Activity	Prep Cook	Line Cook	Sous Chef	Executive Chef
Build daily prep list and pars	C	C	R/A	I
Prep ingredients to spec	R	C	A	I
Label, date and store prepped items	R	-	A	-

Activity	Prep Cook	Line Cook	Sous Chef	Executive Chef
Check finished prep quality and quantity	C	-	R/A	I
Set recipe specs and par levels	I	I	C	R/A

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

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Daily prep list and par sheet
- Color-coded cutting boards
- Recipe cards or standardized recipe binder
- Portion scale
- Food-safe labels and marker
- Sanitizer buckets and test strips
- Calibrated probe thermometer
- Shallow storage pans with lids

Personal protective equipment

- Cut-resistant glove for slicing tasks
- Disposable gloves for ready-to-eat food
- Closed-toe non-slip shoes

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Review the prep list and par levels** At the start of the shift, the prep cook reviews the daily prep list from the sous chef, checks current par levels against what is on hand, and plans the order of tasks.	Prep Cook	☐
5.2	**Set up and sanitize the station** Wipe down the work surface with sanitizer, pull the correct color-coded cutting board for the task, and gather the tools, pans and labels needed before starting.	Prep Cook	☐
5.3	**Wash and inspect produce** Rinse fruits and vegetables under running water, trim any damaged or spoiled parts, and set aside anything that does not meet quality standards for the sous chef to review.	Prep Cook	☐
5.4	**Keep raw proteins on separate boards** Prep raw meat, poultry and seafood only on their assigned colored boards and in a separate area from produce and ready-to-eat food, using separate knives and utensils for each. **Warning:** Never use the same board or knife for raw protein and ready-to-eat food without washing and sanitizing between uses.	Prep Cook	☐
5.5	**Portion proteins to recipe spec** Weigh and portion proteins on the scale to the weight listed on the recipe card, trimming excess fat or skin as specified, and place portions in labeled pans. **Checkpoint:** Portion weights match the recipe card within the allowed tolerance.	Prep Cook	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.6	**Prepare sauces, dressings and stocks** Follow the standardized recipe card for quantities and method, tasting and adjusting seasoning only with a clean tasting spoon that is not returned to the pot.	Prep Cook	☐
5.7	**Par-cook items that require it** Bring any item that must be par-cooked, such as par-boiled vegetables or seared proteins, to the internal temperature required by the recipe using a calibrated probe thermometer. **Checkpoint:** Par-cooked TCS food reaches at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit, or as required by your local food code, before cooling.	Line Cook	☐
5.8	**Cool hot prepped items before storage** Move hot prepped items into shallow pans and start the cooling process immediately rather than placing hot food straight into deep, covered containers in the walk-in. **Warning:** Follow the cooling and reheating SOP for full cooling times; food left in the danger zone too long must be discarded.	Prep Cook	☐
5.9	**Label and date every prepped item** Label each pan or container with the item name, prep date and use-by date, and place it behind older stock on the shelf so staff pull the oldest item first. **Checkpoint:** Every prepped item has a legible label and date before it leaves the prep area.	Prep Cook	☐
5.10	**Store prepped items in the correct location** Place TCS items in the walk-in cooler at or below 41 degrees Fahrenheit, or as required by your local food code, and dry goods in the dry storage area, keeping raw proteins on the lowest shelf.	Prep Cook	☐
5.11	**Update the par sheet and flag shortages** Mark completed items on the par sheet, note any ingredient shortages or quality issues, and tell the sous chef about anything that will affect the line before service.	Prep Cook	☐
5.12	**Inspect finished prep before service** Walk the prep area, taste-test a sample of key items, confirm quantities against the par sheet, and sign off that prep is ready for the line.	Sous Chef	☐
5.13	**Clean and reset the prep station** Wash, rinse and sanitize all boards, tools and surfaces used, empty and clean the sanitizer bucket, and reset the station for the next shift.	Prep Cook	☐

6. Quality checks

- Portioned items match recipe card weights within the allowed tolerance.
- Every prepped item has a legible label with prep date and use-by date.
- Raw protein prep stayed on the correct color-coded board and station throughout.
- Par-cooked TCS food reached the required internal temperature before cooling.
- Finished prep quantities match the par sheet before service starts.

7. Records

- Daily prep list and par sheet
- Prep temperature log for par-cooked items
- Labeled and dated prepped items in storage
- Shortage and quality notes passed to the sous chef

8. KPIs

- Percent of prep list completed before service
- Food cost variance against recipe spec
- Number of labeling or dating errors found in spot checks
- Prep-related waste as a percent of items prepped

9. Common mistakes

- Cutting raw protein and produce on the same board without sanitizing between.
- Skipping labels or dates on prepped pans because service is busy.
- Placing hot food directly into deep covered containers before cooling.
- Prepping more than the par level and creating waste at the end of the week.
- Reusing a tasting spoon to stir the pot after tasting.

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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