STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Kitchen Handwashing SOP

Document no.	SOP-KIT-007
Revision	1.0
Owner	Kitchen Manager
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To reduce the spread of illness-causing bacteria and viruses by making sure kitchen staff wash their hands correctly and at the right times.

2. Scope

Applies to all kitchen staff at every designated handwashing sink. General surface cleaning and dishwashing are covered by their own SOPs.

Definitions

Designated handwashing sink	A sink set up only for handwashing, stocked with soap and paper towels, that is not used for food prep or dishwashing.
Bare-hand contact	Touching ready-to-eat food directly with hands instead of gloves or a utensil.

3. Responsibilities

Prep Cook	Washes hands at every required time using the correct technique before returning to food.
Line Cook	Washes hands at every required time and changes gloves after any activity that could contaminate them.
Kitchen Manager	Keeps handwashing sinks stocked, monitors compliance, and coaches staff who skip steps.

RACI matrix

Activity	Prep Cook	Line Cook	Kitchen Manager
Stock handwashing sinks with soap and towels	I	I	R/A
Wash hands at required times	R	R	A
Change gloves after contamination risk	R	R	A
Monitor and coach handwashing compliance	I	I	R/A

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

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Designated handwashing sink with hot and cold water
- Hand soap dispenser
- Single-use paper towels or hand dryer
- Handwashing signage posted at each sink
- Disposable gloves

Personal protective equipment

- Disposable gloves for ready-to-eat food handling

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Check the handwashing sink is stocked** At the start of the shift, the kitchen manager confirms every handwashing sink has soap, paper towels and hot water, and restocks or reports anything missing.	Kitchen Manager	☐
5.2	**Wash hands before starting work** Every staff member washes their hands at a designated handwashing sink before starting their shift and before putting on gloves.	Line Cook	☐
5.3	**Wet hands and apply soap** Wet hands and forearms with warm running water, then apply enough soap to cover all surfaces of the hands and forearms.	Line Cook	☐
5.4	**Scrub for at least 20 seconds** Scrub hands, between fingers, under nails and forearms for at least 20 seconds, then rinse thoroughly under running water. **Checkpoint:** Hands are scrubbed with soap for at least 20 seconds before rinsing.	Line Cook	☐
5.5	**Dry hands with a single-use towel** Dry hands completely with a fresh paper towel or air dryer, and use the towel to turn off the faucet and open the door if needed.	Line Cook	☐
5.6	**Wash hands after touching raw food** Wash hands immediately after handling raw meat, poultry, seafood or eggs and before touching any ready-to-eat food or clean equipment. **Warning:** Never touch ready-to-eat food after handling raw protein without washing hands first, even if switching to a new pair of gloves.	Line Cook	☐
5.7	**Wash hands after other contamination risks** Wash hands after using the restroom, taking out trash, touching your face or hair, handling money, eating, drinking, smoking, or using a phone.	Line Cook	☐
5.8	**Change gloves after any contamination risk** Remove and discard gloves after any activity listed in this SOP that requires handwashing, wash hands, and put on a fresh pair before continuing food work.	Line Cook	☐
5.9	**Avoid bare-hand contact with ready-to-eat food** Use gloves, tongs or other utensils to handle ready-to-eat food instead of bare hands, even right after washing.	Prep Cook	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.10	**Report skin injuries or illness** Report any cut, burn, rash or symptoms of illness such as vomiting or diarrhea to the kitchen manager before starting work, since these may require a bandage, glove or being sent home.	Line Cook	☐
5.11	**Monitor and coach handwashing compliance** During the shift, the kitchen manager observes handwashing at key moments and coaches on the spot if a step is skipped or rushed. **Checkpoint:** Handwashing sinks are used only for handwashing, never for rinsing food or dishes.	Kitchen Manager	☐

6. Quality checks

- Every handwashing sink is stocked with soap and paper towels during service.
- Staff wash hands for at least 20 seconds at each required time.
- No handwashing sink is used for food prep or dishwashing.
- Gloves are changed after every listed contamination risk, not reused all shift.

7. Records

- Handwashing sink stocking checklist
- Staff illness and injury report log
- Handwashing training sign-off sheet

8. KPIs

- Percent of observed handwashing events meeting the 20-second standard
- Number of handwashing coaching moments per shift
- Days since a handwashing sink was found unstocked
- Staff illness reports handled before starting a shift

9. Common mistakes

- Rinsing hands quickly under water without using soap for the full time.
- Using the handwashing sink to rinse a dish or piece of produce.
- Putting on gloves over unwashed hands.
- Forgetting to wash hands after taking out the trash or using a phone.

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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