STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Kitchen Line Check SOP

Document no.	SOP-KIT-012
Revision	1.0
Owner	Sous Chef
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 6 months

1. Purpose

To confirm every line station is set up, stocked, at a safe temperature and ready to produce food to the correct standard before service begins.

2. Scope

Applies to the pre-service check of line stations, holding equipment and plating standards. Ingredient prep itself is covered by the food preparation SOP.

Definitions

Line check	A structured pre-service walkthrough of every station to confirm setup, stock, temperature and plating are ready.
86'd item	A menu item that is no longer available because the kitchen has run out of an ingredient or component.
Plating spec	The recipe card or photo showing exactly how a dish should be plated and portioned.

3. Responsibilities

Line Cook	Sets up and stocks their station, checks temperatures, and reports shortages before service starts.
Sous Chef	Runs the line check across all stations, tastes key items, and confirms the line is ready for service.
Executive Chef	Sets plating specs and reviews line check results for recurring issues.

RACI matrix

Activity	Line Cook	Sous Chef	Executive Chef
Set up and stock each station	R/A	C	I
Check hot and cold holding temperatures	R	A	I
Taste and check plating against spec	C	R/A	I
Confirm the line is ready for service	I	R/A	I

Activity	Line Cook	Sous Chef	Executive Chef
Set and update plating specs	I	C	R/A

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

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Line check checklist by station
- Calibrated probe thermometer
- Plating spec cards or photos
- Par stock sheet for each station
- Point of sale item availability screen

Personal protective equipment

- Closed-toe non-slip shoes

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Arrive and review the line check list** The sous chef reviews the line check checklist and confirms which stations are open for the shift based on the schedule.	Sous Chef	☐
5.2	**Set up each station's tools and pans** Line cooks set out cutting boards, pans, tongs and other tools needed for their station, arranged the same way every shift for consistency and speed.	Line Cook	☐
5.3	**Stock each station to par** Pull prepped ingredients and stock each station container to its par level, checking labels and use-by dates as items are loaded.	Line Cook	☐
5.4	**Check cold holding temperatures** Probe a sample item in each cold station insert or reach-in and confirm it holds at or below 41 degrees Fahrenheit, or as required by your local food code. **Checkpoint:** Every cold holding station reads at or below 41 degrees Fahrenheit before service starts.	Line Cook	☐
5.5	**Check hot holding temperatures** Probe a sample item in each hot holding well or steam table and confirm it holds at or above 135 degrees Fahrenheit, or as required by your local food code. **Checkpoint:** Every hot holding station reads at or above 135 degrees Fahrenheit before service starts.	Line Cook	☐
5.6	**Taste key sauces and components** The sous chef tastes a sample of each active sauce, stock and key component to confirm seasoning and quality are consistent with the recipe.	Sous Chef	☐
5.7	**Check plating against the spec card** Plate a sample of a signature dish and compare it to the plating spec card or photo, checking portion size, placement and garnish. **Checkpoint:** The sample plate matches the plating spec for portion size and presentation.	Sous Chef	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.8	**Confirm equipment is working** Check that ranges, ovens, fryers and holding equipment at each station are on, heating correctly and free of faults before service.	Line Cook	☐
5.9	**Identify and flag low or out-of-stock items** Note any ingredient or menu component that is running low or unavailable and flag it to the sous chef before doors open.	Line Cook	☐
5.10	**86 unavailable items and communicate them** Mark any menu item that cannot be made in the point of sale system as 86'd and announce it to the front of house team before service begins.	Sous Chef	☐
5.11	**Walk the pass and expo area** Check that the pass is clean, plating tools and garnishes are stocked, and ticket printers or order screens are working correctly.	Sous Chef	☐
5.12	**Sign off the line as ready for service** Once all stations pass, the sous chef signs off the line check and confirms with the executive chef or manager that the kitchen is ready to open.	Sous Chef	☐

6. Quality checks

- Every station passes its cold and hot holding temperature check before service.
- Signature dish samples match the plating spec card.
- All 86'd items are flagged in the POS and communicated to the front of house.
- Line check checklist is fully signed off before doors open.

7. Records

- Completed line check checklist
- Pre-service temperature readings
- 86'd item list shared with front of house

8. KPIs

- Percent of line checks completed before scheduled open time
- Number of temperature failures caught during line check versus during service
- Plating consistency score from spot checks
- Number of 86'd items communicated late to servers

9. Common mistakes

- Skipping the temperature check when the kitchen is running behind.
- Stocking a station without checking use-by dates on prepped items.
- Not updating the POS when an item is 86'd, leading to orders the kitchen cannot fill.
- Comparing plating to memory instead of the actual spec card or photo.

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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