STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Kitchen Temperature Monitoring SOP

Document no.	SOP-KIT-005
Revision	1.0
Owner	Kitchen Manager
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To confirm that refrigeration, freezer and hot holding equipment stay within safe temperature ranges throughout the day, and that problems are caught and fixed quickly.

2. Scope

Applies to ongoing checks of walk-in coolers, reach-in units, freezers and hot holding equipment. Cooling and reheating of specific cooked food is covered by a separate SOP.

Definitions

Calibration	Adjusting a thermometer against a known reference point, such as ice water, so its readings are accurate.
Hot holding	Keeping cooked food at or above 135 degrees Fahrenheit so it stays out of the danger zone until served, or as required by your local food code.
Corrective action	The specific step taken when a temperature reading is out of range, such as moving food or calling for repair.

3. Responsibilities

Line Cook	Checks and logs equipment and hot holding temperatures at set times during the shift.
Kitchen Manager	Reviews logs daily, calibrates thermometers, and decides on corrective action for readings out of range.
Maintenance Technician	Repairs refrigeration or hot holding equipment reported as faulty and confirms it is back in range.

RACI matrix

Activity	Line Cook	Kitchen Manager	Maintenance Technician
Check and log equipment temperatures	R/A	C	-
Calibrate thermometers	C	R/A	-
Respond to an out-of-range reading	R	A	I
Repair faulty refrigeration or	I	A	R

Activity	Line Cook	Kitchen Manager	Maintenance Technician
holding equipment			
Review the temperature log daily	I	R/A	-

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

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Calibrated probe thermometer for each station
- Built-in unit thermometers for coolers and freezers
- Temperature log sheet or app
- Ice water for calibration checks
- Equipment repair request form

Personal protective equipment

- Oven mitts or heat-resistant gloves for hot holding checks

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Calibrate thermometers before use** At the start of the shift, check each probe thermometer in a cup of ice water and adjust it if it does not read 32 degrees Fahrenheit, following the manufacturer's calibration steps. **Checkpoint:** Every probe thermometer in use reads 32 degrees Fahrenheit in an ice water bath before its first use of the day.	Kitchen Manager	☐
5.2	**Set the temperature check schedule** Post the times when refrigeration and hot holding checks must happen, generally every 2 to 4 hours, and assign which line cook is responsible for each area.	Kitchen Manager	☐
5.3	**Check walk-in cooler and freezer temperatures** Read and record the built-in thermometer for each walk-in at the scheduled times, confirming the cooler and freezer displays are visible and undamaged. **Checkpoint:** Walk-in coolers hold at or below 41 degrees Fahrenheit and freezers at or below 0 degrees Fahrenheit, or as required by your local food code.	Line Cook	☐
5.4	**Check reach-in units and prep coolers** Record the temperature of each reach-in cooler and prep station cooler using the built-in gauge or a probe thermometer placed in a cup of water inside the unit.	Line Cook	☐
5.5	**Check hot holding equipment** Probe a sample of food in each hot holding unit, such as a steam table or heat lamp station, and record the reading before continuing service. **Checkpoint:** Hot held food stays at or above 135 degrees Fahrenheit, or as required by your local food code.	Line Cook	☐
5.6	**Log every reading immediately** Write or enter each temperature reading on the log at the time it is taken, along with the initials of the person checking, rather than filling in the log later from memory.	Line Cook	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.7	**Flag any reading outside the safe range** If a reading is out of range, immediately tell the kitchen manager and move any at-risk food to a working unit rather than waiting until the next scheduled check. **Warning:** Food held in the danger zone for an extended time must be discarded, even if the unit is later fixed.	Line Cook	☐
5.8	**Take corrective action on faulty equipment** The kitchen manager decides whether to move food, adjust the unit's thermostat, or take the unit out of service, and records the corrective action taken on the log.	Kitchen Manager	☐
5.9	**Submit a repair request for faulty equipment** Log a repair request with the maintenance technician describing the equipment, the fault and the temperature reading, and mark the unit as out of service if food safety is at risk.	Kitchen Manager	☐
5.10	**Confirm equipment is back in range after repair** After the maintenance technician completes a repair, recheck and log the temperature before returning the unit to normal use. **Checkpoint:** Repaired equipment holds a safe temperature for at least 30 minutes before food is returned to it.	Maintenance Technician	☐
5.11	**Review the daily temperature log** At the end of the day, the kitchen manager reviews the log for gaps, repeated near-misses, or units that are trending toward the edge of their safe range.	Kitchen Manager	☐

6. Quality checks

- Every scheduled temperature check for the day is logged with no gaps.
- Thermometers are calibrated at the start of each shift.
- Out-of-range readings show a documented corrective action.
- No unit shows a pattern of repeated near-limit readings without a repair request filed.

7. Records

- Daily equipment and hot holding temperature log
- Thermometer calibration log
- Equipment repair requests and completion notes

8. KPIs

- Percent of scheduled temperature checks completed on time
- Number of out-of-range readings per week
- Average time from an out-of-range reading to corrective action
- Equipment downtime hours from refrigeration or holding faults

9. Common mistakes

- Filling in the temperature log at the end of the shift from memory instead of at each check.
- Not calibrating probe thermometers before the first use of the day.
- Leaving food in a unit that has already failed a temperature check.
- Ignoring a unit that is consistently close to the limit until it fully fails.

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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