STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Restaurant Food Waste Tracking SOP

Document no.	SOP-RST-010
Revision	1.0
Owner	General Manager
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To measure and reduce food waste by logging what is thrown away, why, and using that data to adjust ordering, prep and menu decisions.

2. Scope

Applies to tracking waste from spoilage, over-production, kitchen trim, comps and returned plates. It does not cover the food safety cooling and reheating rules themselves, which are set by the kitchen's own SOPs.

Definitions

Spoilage waste	Food discarded because it expired or went bad before it could be used.
Over-production waste	Food prepped or cooked in excess of what was sold and later discarded.
Plate waste	Food returned uneaten on a guest's plate, whether from a complaint, dislike or portion size.

3. Responsibilities

Line Cook	Logs kitchen waste at the time it is discarded, noting the item, weight and reason.
Server	Notes plate waste and comp-related waste when clearing tables and communicates patterns to the manager.
Kitchen Manager	Reviews the kitchen waste log daily and adjusts prep quantities based on patterns.
General Manager	Reviews the full waste report weekly and decides on menu, portion or purchasing changes.

RACI matrix

Activity	Line Cook	Server	Kitchen Manager	General Manager
Log kitchen waste at the time it happens	R/A	-	C	I
Log plate waste and comps	-	R/A	I	I
Weigh and categorize waste by reason	R	C	A	I
Review waste trends and adjust prep	C	-	R/A	I

Activity	Line Cook	Server	Kitchen Manager	General Manager
Decide on menu or portion changes from waste data	I	I	C	R/A

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

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Food waste log sheet or app
- Kitchen scale for weighing waste
- Waste category list (spoilage, over-production, trim, plate waste, comps)
- Compost and recycling bins where available
- Weekly waste summary report

Personal protective equipment

- Disposable gloves for handling waste

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Set up waste logging stations** Place a scale and log sheet or app near prep and dish areas so staff can weigh and record waste at the point it is thrown away, not after the fact.	Kitchen Manager	☐
5.2	**Log spoilage waste when it is found** When an item is discarded for spoilage, weigh it, and log the item, weight and reason before placing it in the trash or compost.	Line Cook	☐
5.3	**Log over-production waste at the end of service** At the end of service, weigh and log any prepped or cooked item that will not be reused and must be discarded due to quality or shelf life. **Checkpoint:** Every discarded batch of prepped or cooked food is weighed and logged before it is thrown out.	Line Cook	☐
5.4	**Log kitchen trim and prep waste** For high-cost items, weigh unavoidable trim such as vegetable peels or protein fat separately so it is not confused with preventable waste in the report.	Line Cook	☐
5.5	**Note plate waste when clearing tables** When a server notices a plate returned mostly uneaten, note the dish and an approximate reason, such as portion size or the guest disliking it.	Server	☐
5.6	**Log comped or remade items** When an item is comped or remade due to a kitchen error or guest complaint, log it separately from spoilage so comp-related waste can be tracked on its own.	Server	☐
5.7	**Separate waste for disposal** Sort waste into compost, recycling and trash where the restaurant has those programs, keeping food waste separate from packaging waste.	Line Cook	☐
5.8	**Total the daily waste log** At the end of each day, total the logged waste by category and reason, and note the total weight and estimated cost on the daily summary.	Kitchen Manager	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.9	**Review the daily log for immediate fixes** Review the daily total for anything unusual, such as an unusually large over-production loss, and address the immediate cause before the next shift.	Kitchen Manager	☐
5.10	**Compile the weekly waste report** Combine daily logs into a weekly report showing waste by category, item and reason, along with the estimated cost impact. **Checkpoint:** The weekly waste report is compiled and shared with the general manager on the scheduled day.	Kitchen Manager	☐
5.11	**Adjust prep quantities based on trends** Use the weekly report to reduce prep quantities for items with repeated over-production waste, or increase them for items that run out and cause lost sales.	Kitchen Manager	☐
5.12	**Review menu and portion decisions from waste data** The general manager reviews recurring plate waste or spoilage on specific menu items and decides whether to adjust the recipe, portion size or remove the item.	General Manager	☐

6. Quality checks

- Waste is weighed and logged at the point it is discarded, not estimated afterward.
- Spoilage, over-production, trim, plate waste and comps are logged in separate categories.
- The weekly waste report is compiled and reviewed on schedule.
- Prep quantities are adjusted for items showing a repeated over-production pattern.

7. Records

- Daily food waste log
- Weekly waste summary report
- Prep quantity adjustment notes
- Menu and portion change decisions from waste data

8. KPIs

- Total food waste weight per week
- Food waste cost as a percent of food sales
- Over-production waste by item
- Plate waste incidents by dish

9. Common mistakes

- Throwing waste away without weighing or logging it because service is busy.
- Lumping all waste into one category, hiding whether it is spoilage or over-production.
- Reviewing the waste report but never actually adjusting prep quantities.
- Not separating comp-related waste from kitchen error waste, hiding root causes.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Alexa Uskova

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

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