STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Order Picking and Packing SOP

Document no.	SOP-WHS-003
Revision	1.0
Owner	Warehouse Operations Manager
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To fulfill customer and store orders accurately and efficiently, from wave release through packed and labeled cartons ready for shipping.

2. Scope

Applies to picking and packing of outbound orders from warehouse storage locations. Receiving, putaway and the final carrier handoff at shipping are covered by separate SOPs.

Definitions

Pick wave	A batch of orders released together for picking based on carrier cutoff, priority or zone.
Pick list	The sequenced list of locations and quantities a picker must collect for one or more orders.
Short pick	A pick that cannot be completed in full because the location has less stock than the system expects.
Dunnage	Packing material such as air pillows, paper or foam used to protect items and fill empty space in a carton.

3. Responsibilities

Picker	Picks items from assigned locations following the pick list and reports short picks or damage.
Packer	Verifies picked items against the order, packs them securely, and applies shipping labels.
Warehouse Operations Manager	Releases pick waves, resolves short picks and exceptions, and monitors throughput.
Quality Auditor	Performs random audits of packed orders before they leave the packing station.

RACI matrix

Activity	Picker	Packer	Warehouse Operations Manager	Quality Auditor
Release pick wave	I	I	R/A	-
Pick items to order	R	-	A	-

Activity	Picker	Packer	Warehouse Operations Manager	Quality Auditor
Resolve a short pick	R	-	R/A	-
Pack and label order	-	R	A	-
Audit packed orders	-	C	A	R

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

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- WMS handheld scanner or pick-to-light system
- Pick cart or tote
- Packing station with scale
- Cartons, mailers and dunnage in standard sizes
- Packing tape and dispenser
- Shipping label printer
- Short pick and exception log

Personal protective equipment

- Safety shoes
- Cut-resistant gloves for carton opening

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Release the pick wave** Group open orders into a wave by carrier cutoff, priority or shipping zone, and release it in the WMS so pick lists are generated for available pickers.	Warehouse Operations Manager	☐
5.2	**Accept the pick assignment** Log into the handheld or pick-to-light terminal, accept the assigned pick list or cart, and confirm the number of orders and totes loaded.	Picker	☐
5.3	**Pick items by location sequence** Travel the pick path in the sequence shown on the pick list, scan the location barcode, scan or key the item, and confirm the quantity before moving to the next location. **Checkpoint:** Location and item barcode both scan-match before the quantity is confirmed.	Picker	☐
5.4	**Handle a short pick** If the location has less stock than the pick list expects, record the short quantity in the WMS, check adjacent locations once, and flag the SKU to the operations manager instead of guessing. **Warning:** Never substitute a different SKU or size to complete a short pick without written approval.	Picker	☐
5.5	**Stage picked totes for packing** Deliver completed totes to the packing station queue in the order they were picked, keeping each order's items together in its tote.	Picker	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.6	**Verify the order at the pack station** Scan each item from the tote against the order on the packing screen, confirming quantity, size and variant match before selecting a carton. **Checkpoint:** Every scanned item matches the order line; any mismatch is set aside and reported, not packed.	Packer	☐
5.7	**Select carton and add dunnage** Choose the smallest carton or mailer that fits the order, add dunnage to prevent movement, and place any inserts or gift materials as required by the order.	Packer	☐
5.8	**Seal and weigh the package** Seal the carton with tape in an H pattern on top and bottom, then weigh it on the packing station scale and compare the weight to the expected item weight for a sanity check.	Packer	☐
5.9	**Print and apply the shipping label** Print the shipping label generated from the order and apply it flat on the largest surface of the carton, covering any old barcodes or labels completely.	Packer	☐
5.10	**Audit a sample of packed orders** Pull a random sample of packed orders per shift, reopen and check contents against the order, and log the audit result including any error found.	Quality Auditor	☐
5.11	**Stage completed orders by carrier** Move labeled cartons to the outbound staging lane matching their carrier and route, keeping cutoff-priority orders visibly separated.	Packer	☐
5.12	**Close out the wave** Confirm all orders in the wave are picked, packed and staged, resolve any remaining short picks or exceptions, and mark the wave complete in the WMS.	Warehouse Operations Manager	☐

6. Quality checks

- Item and location barcodes both scan-match on every pick line.
- A daily random sample of packed orders is reopened and checked for accuracy.
- Every short pick is logged with a resolution before the wave closes.
- Shipping labels are applied flat with no old barcodes visible.

7. Records

- Pick list completion records in the WMS
- Short pick and exception log
- Pack station audit log
- Wave completion report

8. KPIs

- Picks per hour per picker
- Order packing accuracy rate
- Short pick rate per wave
- Orders staged before carrier cutoff

9. Common mistakes

- Packing an item without scanning it against the order first.
- Substituting a similar SKU to avoid reporting a short pick.
- Leaving old shipping labels visible on a reused carton.
- Mixing items from two orders in the same tote.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Ilia Pirozhenko

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

This is a template. Adapt it to your organization, equipment and local regulations before use.

Scan for the latest version

Opens this template online, where you can download it again in Word, PDF, Excel or CSV — free, no sign-up.

Or add it to Perfect Wiki so your team can find it and ask questions about it in Microsoft Teams, Slack, kChat or Mattermost.