STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Warehouse Putaway SOP

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

1. Purpose

To move received inventory into the correct storage location quickly and accurately, so stock is findable, accessible and safely stored for later picking.

2. Scope

Applies to putaway of pallets and cartons from the receiving staging area into bulk, reserve and pick-face storage locations. Receiving and picking are covered by separate SOPs.

Definitions

Directed putaway	A WMS feature that assigns a specific storage location to each pallet based on slotting rules rather than operator choice.
Slotting	The practice of assigning SKUs to locations based on velocity, size and pick pattern to minimize travel time.
Pick face	The primary, easily accessible location where a SKU is picked from for orders, replenished from reserve storage.
License plate	A unique barcode identifier assigned to a pallet or unit load used to track it through the warehouse.

3. Responsibilities

Putaway Operator	Moves pallets to assigned locations, scans confirmations, and reports blocked or full locations.
Warehouse Operations Manager	Maintains slotting rules, prioritizes putaway tasks, and resolves location exceptions.
Forklift Operator	Transports pallets to reserve or bulk locations requiring lift equipment.
Inventory Clerk	Investigates and corrects location discrepancies found during putaway or later audits.

RACI matrix

Activity	Putaway Operator	Warehouse Operations Manager	Forklift Operator	Inventory Clerk
Maintain slotting rules	I	R/A	-	C
Prioritize putaway queue	I	R/A	-	-

Activity	Putaway Operator	Warehouse Operations Manager	Forklift Operator	Inventory Clerk
Move pallet to assigned location	R	A	R	-
Resolve blocked or full location	R	R/A	-	C
Correct a location discrepancy	I	A	-	R

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

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- WMS handheld scanner
- Pallet jack or forklift
- Slotting guide or location assignment report
- License plate labels
- Location signage and rack labels
- Blocked location exception log

Personal protective equipment

- Steel-toe safety shoes
- High-visibility vest
- Gloves for handling strapping and stretch wrap

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Review the putaway queue** Check the WMS putaway task queue at the start of the shift, prioritizing fast-moving SKUs and pallets blocking the receiving staging area.	Warehouse Operations Manager	☐
5.2	**Accept a putaway task** Scan or accept the next putaway task on the handheld, which shows the pallet's license plate and the system-directed storage location.	Putaway Operator	☐
5.3	**Scan the pallet before moving** Scan the license plate label on the pallet to confirm it matches the task before lifting it, so the wrong pallet is never moved to a directed location. **Checkpoint:** The scanned license plate matches the pallet shown on the putaway task screen.	Putaway Operator	☐
5.4	**Transport the pallet to its location** Move the pallet by pallet jack or forklift directly to the directed location, following warehouse traffic and pedestrian right-of-way rules.	Forklift Operator	☐
5.5	**Verify the location is correct and clear** Check the rack location label matches the directed location on the task, and confirm the bay has room and correct weight capacity for the pallet. **Warning:** Never force a pallet into a location that is already occupied or under its weight or height limit.	Putaway Operator	☐
5.6	**Place the pallet safely** Place the pallet squarely on the rack beam or floor location, fully seated and not overhanging the aisle, and check for stability before releasing it.	Forklift Operator	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.7	**Confirm the putaway in the WMS** Scan the location barcode to confirm the putaway in the WMS, which updates the system location for that license plate.	Putaway Operator	☐
5.8	**Handle a blocked or full location** If the directed location is blocked, full or damaged, do not force the placement; select an approved override location if your WMS allows it, or flag the exception to the operations manager.	Putaway Operator	☐
5.9	**Replenish the pick face if needed** If the SKU's pick face is below its minimum, direct part of the pallet to replenish the pick face location before sending the remainder to reserve storage.	Putaway Operator	☐
5.10	**Update signage for new SKUs** For a newly introduced SKU or location, confirm rack labels and location signage are current, and request updated labels if missing.	Warehouse Operations Manager	☐
5.11	**Review slotting periodically** Review slotting assignments on a set schedule, moving high-velocity SKUs closer to shipping and low-velocity SKUs to less accessible locations.	Warehouse Operations Manager	☐
5.12	**Audit putaway accuracy** Spot-check a sample of completed putaway tasks against physical locations weekly, and route any mismatch to the inventory clerk for correction. **Checkpoint:** Weekly putaway accuracy sample meets the warehouse's accuracy target before the audit is closed.	Inventory Clerk	☐

6. Quality checks

- License plate is scanned and matched before every pallet move.
- System location is confirmed by scan immediately after physical placement.
- Blocked or full locations are resolved the same shift, not left overnight.
- Weekly putaway accuracy sample meets the warehouse's target.

7. Records

- Putaway task completion log in the WMS
- Blocked location exception log
- Slotting review notes
- Putaway accuracy audit results

8. KPIs

- Putaway task completion time from staging to confirmed location
- Putaway location accuracy rate
- Number of blocked or overridden putaway tasks per week
- Pick face stockout rate linked to late replenishment

9. Common mistakes

- Placing a pallet in a location without scanning to confirm it in the WMS.
- Forcing a pallet into an occupied or overweight location.
- Leaving fast-moving SKUs slotted far from the pick and pack area.

- Skipping the pick face replenishment check during putaway.

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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