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# Introduction to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

## What are SOPs?

*SOPs*, or *Standing Operating Procedures*, are an important part of having a food safety management system in place. An SOP is a written document with clear, detailed, step-by-step procedures on how to perform specific tasks within your facility. A facility may have several SOPs created for various tasks.

## Why write SOPs?

SOPs provide a facility with daily, consistent operations. It is also a useful training tool when new employees are hired, or when employees need to review or be re-trained in a process. SOPs not only provide direction, but also improve communication within a facility. It helps staff create better conditions during food production and minimize food safety risks. If your goal is to consistently provide safe, high quality foods and services to your customers, SOPs will help you achieve this goal.

## What processes might require SOPs?

Think about the areas in your operation where SOPs are needed. Start with the areas which you currently spend the most time communicating about (i.e. handwashing). Other SOPs can include Cleaning/Sanitizing, Cold Hold & Hot Hold, Cooking, Cooling, Personal Hygiene, Receiving, Reheating, Time as a Public Health Control, ...& many more!

## How do you write SOPs?

SOPs are most effective when well-written in simple language, in a format that is easy to understand, and in direct terms. If employees speak another language, another version of the SOP should be made available. Procedures should include the following information:

- **Purpose** – *Why are these procedures being written?*
- **Role** – *Who is responsible for the following procedures?*
- **Instructions & Frequency** – *How and where will these procedures be completed properly? What are the step by step procedures? When and how often do we follow these procedures?*
- **Monitoring** – *What documentation activities are we using to verify and track the procedures?*
- **Corrective Action** – *What actions are necessary if the correct procedures were not followed?*

## How do I know my SOP is working?

Test out the procedures! This will help you add steps that were missed or remove steps that were unnecessary. Don't forget to update your facility's SOPs as needed and train staff on any new updates. A sample SOP and sample template are provided. If you need additional guidance, contact the Bethlehem Health Bureau.

## Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Checklist

It is important for every facility to have a set of standard operating procedures (SOPs). SOPs will guide employees on how to do tasks correctly and what to do when something does not meet the standard procedure.

<b>My facility has procedures in place for:</b>	
	Chemical Use and Storage
	Clean Up and Disinfection of Vomiting/Diarrheal Accidents
	Cleaning and Maintenance of Non-Food Contact Surfaces and Facilities
	Cleaning and Sanitizing of Food Contact Surfaces and Equipment
	Cold Holding
	Cooking
	Cooling
	Cross Contamination
	Date Marking
	Discarded and Damaged Food
	Employee Health
	Employee Training
	Food Allergens
	Food Manager Certification/Person-in-Charge
	Food Security
	Glove Use
	Handwashing
	Hot Holding
	Microwave Use
	Pest Control
	Receiving Food Deliveries
	Reheating
	Shellfish Tracking
	Thawing
	Thermometer Use and Calibration
	Time as a Public Health Control
	Washing Fruits and Vegetables



# Standard Operating Procedures for

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Task of Food Process)*

**Purpose**

*Why are these procedures written?*

**Role**

*Who is responsible for following these procedures?*

**Instructions &  
Frequency**

*How and where will these procedures be completed properly? What are the step by step procedures? When and how often do we follow these procedures?*

**Monitoring**

*What documentation activities are we using to verify & track the procedures?*

**Corrective Actions**

*What actions are necessary to take if we did not follow the correct procedures?*

**Prepared By (Signature):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reviewed & Tested By (Signature):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



Bethlehem Health Bureau  
To request this information in an alternate format,  
call (610) 865-7083 [askbhb@bethlehem-pa.gov](mailto:askbhb@bethlehem-pa.gov)  
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# Standard Operating Procedures for

## *Cooking*

*(Task of Food Process)*

<b>Purpose</b>	<i>Why are these procedures written?</i>
<i>To prevent foodborne illness by making sure that all foods are cooked to the appropriate internal temperatures</i>	
<b>Role</b>	<i>Who is responsible for following these procedures?</i>
<i>Certified Food Managers (CFMs) and any other employees preparing and handling food with cooking responsibilities in the kitchen</i>	
<b>Instructions &amp; Frequency</b>	<i>How and where will these procedures be completed properly? What are the step by step procedures? When and how often do we follow these procedures?</i>
<i>1. Food items that are potentially hazardous must be cooked in the kitchen using the convection oven, stovetop, broiler, or griddle.</i> <i>2. Cook food items to the following proper internal temperatures:</i> <i>a. 165°F at 15 seconds</i> <i>    ✓ Poultry, stuffed food items</i> <i>b. 155°F at 15 seconds</i> <i>    ✓ Ground meats, ground seafood, eggs for later service</i> <i>c. 145°F at 15 seconds</i> <i>    ✓ Beef, pork, veal, lamb, fish, shellfish, eggs for immediate service</i> <i>d. 135°F at 15 seconds</i> <i>    ✓ Fruits, vegetables</i> <i>3. Take the temperature of the food item using a clean, sanitized, and calibrated thermometer. For the time indicated above, the temperature should match the minimum cook temperature listed. The food item name and temperature may be recorded onto the “Cooking” or “Cooking &amp; Reheating” log posted nearby.</i>	
<b>Monitoring</b>	<i>What documentation activities are we using to verify &amp; track the procedures?</i>
<i>Food item names and temperatures will be recorded onto a log daily as needed. After food employees have logged in entries, managers will verify by initialing. See the assigned log posted next to grill/stove area. Logs will be kept on file for 1 year.</i>	
<b>Corrective Actions</b>	<i>What actions are necessary to take if we did not follow the correct procedures?</i>
<i>1. Alert the Person-In-Charge (PIC).</i> <i>2. Continue cooking the food item until the proper temperature is reached.</i> <i>3. Food items that have not reached the minimum cook temperature and that have not been served must be discarded. The cooking process must be restarted with a new food item.</i> <i>4. Re-train the employee on the cooking process including internal cook temperatures.</i>	
<b>Prepared By (Signature):</b> _____	<b>Date:</b> _____
<b>Reviewed &amp; Tested By (Signature):</b> _____	<b>Date:</b> _____



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