

Food Safety Program, for Processors and Distributors

FACT SHEET #21

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are an important component of your food safety system because they ensure consistency in daily operations. They contain detailed, written instructions of routine operations. Some examples of SOPs include: labelling chemicals, storing utensils, receiving raw materials. Cleaning and sanitation procedures are known as Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs).

SOPs can be very useful for training employees because they provide step-by-step instructions on how to perform tasks.

Elements

The elements considered in SOPs depend on the tasks performed. SOPs for sanitation (SSOPs) include recording the results of the procedure and taking action if a deviation occurs. Other SOPs, such as hand washing, just describe the steps to successfully complete the task.

SOPs should include:

- **name** of the person who wrote it
- **approval** name or initials of the person approving the document (optional)
- **date** it was written
- **purpose** (optional)
- **version number** if the document was modified (optional)
- **name of the person(s) responsible** for performing the task (ex: all personnel, sanitation crew)
- **frequency** of the described activity (ex: daily, monthly)
- **detailed instructions/procedures** to be performed
- **record** where the activities performed are documented
- **deviation/correction** if applicable (ex: equipment that's still obviously soiled should have an SSOP saying to re-clean it)

SOPs should be:

- simple – concise, easy to understand and easy to follow
- detailed – step-by-step instructions so anyone can perform the task
- specific for your facility – should represent how daily operations are performed in your facility.
- reflect what you do
- updated – periodically reviewed to ensure they are accurate and up-to-date

Training:

Employees need to be aware of why and how SOPs are important for the implementation of the food safety system. Make sure all employees are trained in SOPs.

Related links:

Examples of SOPs can be found at the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) at sop.nfsmi.org/HACCPBasedSOPs.php

Example of standard operating procedure (SOP)

SOP 1.1- HANDWASHING

Issued by: Tom Frank, HACCP Co-ordinator

Date: May 07, 2007

Purpose: to prevent or minimize contamination of food, ingredient and packaging materials by employees

Responsibility: applies to all the employees working in the facility, visitors and contractors

Frequency: as written in the company's policies

Procedure:

1. Roll up sleeves to expose the wrists.
2. Wet hands and wrists under warm water and apply soap from the dispenser.
3. Rub hands together vigorously. Scrub for at least 20 seconds. Scrub in between and around fingers. Scrub fingertips and wrists.
4. Rinse hands and wrists under warm running water.
5. Dry hands with a clean, single-use paper towel.
6. Turn off water tap using the paper towel.
7. Discard the used paper towel in the trash can.

SSOP #P3.3- Cleaning and sanitizing food contact surfaces

Written by: Tom Frank, HACCP Co-ordinator

Approved by: Betty Smith, QA Manager

Date: June 12, 2007

Version: 1.0

Purpose: to prevent foodborne illness by ensuring that all food contact surfaces are properly cleaned and sanitized (sinks, tables, equipments, utensils, thermometers, carts)

Responsibility: applies to all the employees responsible for cleaning and sanitizing food contact surfaces

Frequency: after using food contact surfaces and at any time contamination occurs

Record: cleaning and sanitation record

Procedure:

1. Remove food products and packaging materials from food contact surfaces before cleaning.
2. Scrape food and soil.
3. Pre-rinse the food contact surface with hot water right after processing.
4. Prepare cleaning chemical solution XXX. (See SOP #P1.8 for preparing XXX solution.)
5. Apply the cleaning chemical, using blue brushes to remove soil from the surface.
6. Let the chemicals sit on the food contact surface for 10 minutes.
7. Rinse with potable water.
8. Visually inspect the equipment and food contact surfaces for the presence of food residues.
9. Sanitize the food contact surface with the sanitizing solution. (See SOP #P1.8 for preparing sanitizing solution.)

Corrective action: If food residues are found during inspection, food contact surfaces must be re-cleaned.

For information on the Food Safety Program contact the [CVO/Food Safety Knowledge Centre](#).
For technical information, call 204-795-7968 or 204-795-8418 in Winnipeg; or e-mail foodsafety@gov.mb.ca.

For general information, contact your local [GO Centre](#).