

SOPS NEEDED FOR GAPS AND HOW TO WRITE THEM

Well written standard operating procedures, provide direction, improve communication, reduce training time, and improve work consistency.

How to write an SOP:

1. Watch someone do the task
2. Write down everything they do, breaking it into 10 steps or less, long steps should be broken into sub-steps – This becomes your first draft
3. Ask employees or co-workers to review and suggest changes
4. Have someone test the SOP by following all of the steps exactly as written – make any changes needed
5. Post the SOP where workers can see it, keep another copy in your Food Safety Plan
6. Train all workers to follow the SOP and explain why it is important to follow

General SOP for Cleaning and Sanitizing Food Contact Surfaces

There are 4 general steps that should always be used for cleaning and sanitizing surfaces that come in contact with food. For your SOPs on cleaning harvest and packing containers, you should note if you are using a hose, power washer, or dunk tank, and any other relevant details, such as the type of disinfectant used.

1. Pre-rinse surface with clean water to remove any visible soil
2. Wash with food-safe soap and water, and brush
3. Rinse with water to remove soil and soap residues
4. Sanitize with disinfectant
 - If using Storox or other hydrogen peroxide/peracetic acid product, note the percent and parts per million used, how measured, etc...
 - If using chlorine, note percent solution used, and how measured, etc...

Following are some examples of SOPs and a list of SOPs required by the USDA GAPs Audit. Your SOPs should reflect your operation, that is, add the names of people to be informed of incidents, phone numbers to call, products to use, and exact places to dispose of contaminated items.

EXAMPLES OF SOPs

__[G-3] If you provide field workers with water to drink in the field there needs to be an SOP that indicates you provide potable water for field workers in some type of container (describe container), the potable water source used to fill the container, how often, and an SOP for cleaning and sanitizing the container on a scheduled basis. The water container should also be plainly labeled as “Drinking water.”

__[G-13] Policy and SOP on how to handle product and surfaces that come in contact with bodily fluids

1. Put on latex gloves
2. If large enough, isolate contaminated area by marking off with tape or string
3. Notify food safety coordinator _____
4. Dispose of any contaminated product in a covered trash bin
5. Wash and sanitize surfaces first with soap and water and then with 10% bleach solution
6. Remove and wash any affected clothing
7. Record incident in illness/injury log

__[1-19] SOP FOR TREATING COMPOST

1. The compost pile should be maintained an internal temperature between 130° and 150° degrees Fahrenheit.
2. It must achieve a minimum of 131° F for 3 days at a depth of 3 feet from the surface of the pile in the static or ‘precondition’ stage, or in the turned windrow phase, have achieved a minimum of 131° F at either the one foot or three foot depth for a minimum of 15 days
3. The pile will be turned a minimum of 5 turnings during the period while it exceeds 131°F in order to kill bugs, seeds and any internal parasites or disease in the compost.
4. Temperatures and dates of turning compost piles are recorded in the compost log
5. If storing compost or other soil amendments prior to application, the pile is covered to reduce the chance of runoff, leaching, wind spread, or recontamination.

__[3-7] SOP FOR TREATING PROCESSING WATER

1. If necessary, rinse out dunk tank to remove soil
2. Fill dunk tank with water
3. Measure temperature of water – make sure that it is not greater than 10 degrees colder than product for tomatoes, cantaloupes, peppers, apples, and potatoes or processing water could be drawn into fruit pulp.

4. Measure and add disinfectant so that it is at appropriate level (you will need to write your own instructions depending on disinfectant and size of tank)
5. If using chlorine, measure pH. pH should be between 6 and 7.5, Chlorine levels should be between 50 and 200 ppm, depending on the crop
6. Monitor level of disinfectant (how often? may depend on crop being washed, explain how you monitor the level – test strips, digital or automatic monitor)
7. Monitor temperature (how often?)
8. Water in dunk tank should be changed (describe how often)

CHECKLIST OF SOPs REQUIRED BY USDA GAPs

GENERAL SECTION

__ [G-13] Policy and SOP on how to handle product and surfaces that come in contact with bodily fluids

__ [G-14] First aid policy and SOP for cuts and injuries

FARM REVIEW

__ [1-19] Policy and SOP (if applicable) on how composted manure is treated

FIELD HARVESTING AND PACKING

__ [2-5] SOP for how to respond if there is a toilet overflow, septic discharge or tipped over field sanitation unit

__ [2-6] Policy and SOP for cleaning and sanitizing field harvest containers (may vary by type of crop – e.g. containers used for leafy greens may be cleaned more frequently than those used for root crops)

__ [2-7] Policy and SOP for cleaning and sanitizing all hand harvesting equipment and implements (knives, etc...)

__ [2-9] Policy and SOP for cleaning and sanitizing bulk hauling vehicles

__ [2-11] SOP for how to handle glass or plastic breakage and possible contamination of product

__ [2-12] SOP for how to handle contamination of product by pesticides, chemicals, petroleum or other contaminating factors

__ [2-19] Policy and (if applicable, SOP) for using only new or sanitized containers for packing product (cleaning SOP not needed if you are only using new containers)

__ [2-21] Policy and SOP for uniquely identifying product for traceability

HOUSE PACKING

__ [3-4] SOP for monitoring temperature of water in dump tanks (if necessary)

__ [3-6] SOP for cleaning and/or sanitizing water contact surfaces such as dump tanks, hydrocoolers, etc..

__ [3-7] SOP for treating processing water to reduce risks of microbial contamination (addition of disinfectants, measuring pH (if necessary), monitoring of temperature and disinfectant level, how frequently processing water is changed (can be per type of crop), whether crop is single, double or triple washed, etc...)

__ [3-8] SOP for cleaning and/or sanitizing food contact surfaces

__ [3-11] SOP for cleaning and sanitizing ice machine – this must be done on a regular schedule and recorded in a log

__ [3-26] SOP for how product is handled if it is dropped or spilled on floor

__ [3-31] SOP for Pest control program for house packing facility

STORAGE AND TRANSPORTATION

__ [4-7] SOP for how product is handled if it is dropped or spilled on floor

__ [4-14] SOP for pest control program for storage facility

__ [4-24] SOP for checking and cleaning transportation equipment

Source:

<http://www.uvm.edu/~susagctr/Documents/gapresHowtoWriteSOPsforGAPs412.pdf>