



Catering SOP Template

A standard operating procedure (SOP) is a documented, step-by-step instruction for performing a catering task the same safe way every time. Use this template to write a catering SOP for any task in your operation, from pre-event planning and commissary prep to transport, on-site setup, and breakdown. Replace the prompts in each section with your own detail, then have it reviewed and approved before use.

How to use it: fill in the header, complete each section, and keep the revision history up to date. You can print and complete this on paper, or build the same SOP as a digital checklist in GoAudits so staff complete it on mobile with photos, timestamps, and an audit trail.

SOP header

SOP title		SOP number	
Version		Effective date	
Prepared by		Review date	
Approved by		Department / site	

1. Purpose

State why this SOP exists and what it should achieve (for example, to keep hot food safe during transport from the commissary to the event venue).

2. Scope

Define where and to whom the SOP applies: the tasks, event types, sites, shifts, and roles it covers, and anything it does not.

3. Responsibilities

List who is responsible for carrying out, supervising, and verifying the procedure (for example, kitchen lead, event lead, food safety lead).

4. Definitions

Explain any terms, abbreviations, or acronyms used (for example, danger zone, time as a control, commissary) so every reader interprets the SOP the same way.

5. Materials and equipment

List everything needed to perform the task: ingredients, packaging, hot boxes and cool boxes, PPE, probe thermometers, and any forms or logs.

6. Procedure (step by step)

Write each action as a short, ordered step in plain language. Include the critical limits and checks that make the task safe.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

7. Monitoring and verification

State what to check, how often, who checks it, and how it is recorded (for example, probe and record holding temperatures every 30 minutes on the temperature log).

8. Corrective actions

Describe what to do when something is out of limits: the immediate fix, who to tell, and how to stop it happening again.

9. Records

List the records this SOP produces and where they are kept (for example, temperature log, transport log, training records).

10. Revision history

Version	Date	Description of change	Approved by
1.0		Initial version	

Worked example: Hot-Holding During Transport SOP

This filled example shows how the template looks in practice for a common catering task. Use it as a model, then adapt the detail to your own equipment, temperatures, and limits.

SOP title	Hot-holding food during transport	SOP number	CT-004
Version	1.0	Effective date	01 / 02 / 2026
Prepared by	Kitchen Lead	Review date	01 / 02 / 2027
Approved by	Operations Manager	Department / site	Off-site catering

1. Purpose

To keep hot food safe from the commissary to the venue by holding it above the safe temperature throughout transit, so it does not enter the danger zone before service.

2. Scope

Applies to all events that require hot food to be transported for more than 20 minutes, for all kitchen and event staff involved in packing and delivery.

3. Responsibilities

The kitchen lead confirms temperatures and packs the food. The event lead checks temperatures on arrival and records them. The food safety lead verifies the SOP is followed during event audits.

6. Procedure (step by step)

1. Confirm food has reached 75°C (167°F) or above before packing.
2. Load food into pre-heated hot boxes and close them fully.
3. Record the departure time and the temperature of one item per box.
4. On arrival, probe one item per box and record the temperature.
5. If any item is below 63°C (145°F), apply the time-as-a-control rule and notify the event lead before serving.
6. Record all readings on the transport log.

7. Monitoring and verification

The event lead probes and records temperatures on arrival for every delivery. The food safety lead reviews transport logs weekly and checks probe calibration monthly.

8. Corrective actions

If food is below 63°C (145°F) on arrival, do not serve it on the hot line. Apply the time-as-a-control limit or discard the food, record the issue, and review packing method and transport times if it happens again.

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