

Warehouse Standard Operating Procedure

Department: Warehouse Operations

Version: [1.0]

Document ID: [SOP-DEPT-###]

Effective Date: [MM/DD/YYYY]

1. Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure establishes guidelines for warehouse operations to ensure accurate inventory management, efficient order fulfillment, and safe material handling practices.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all warehouse personnel including receiving clerks, pickers, packers, shippers, inventory control staff, and warehouse supervisors.

This procedure applies to:

- Receiving and put-away personnel
- Order pickers and packers
- Shipping and dispatch staff
- Inventory control specialists
- Warehouse supervisors and managers
- Forklift operators and material handlers

Exclusions:

[Describe any activities, processes, or personnel NOT covered by this SOP]

3. Definitions

The following terms have specific meanings within this procedure. Defined terms are capitalized when used throughout this document.

Term	Definition
Cycle Count	Periodic inventory verification process for specific locations

FIFO	First In, First Out - inventory rotation method
Pick	Retrieving items from storage locations to fulfill orders
Put-away	Process of moving received goods to designated storage locations
SKU	Stock Keeping Unit - unique product identifier
WMS	Warehouse Management System - software for inventory and operations

4. Responsibilities

The following roles and positions have specific responsibilities for this procedure:

Role/Position	Responsibilities
[Warehouse Manager]	Will oversee all warehouse operations and ensure KPIs are met
[Inventory Control]	Will maintain inventory accuracy and conduct cycle counts
[Receiving Supervisor]	Will manage inbound operations and quality verification
[Shipping Supervisor]	Will manage outbound operations and carrier coordination
[Warehouse Associates]	Will execute picking, packing, and material handling tasks safely
[Forklift Operators]	Will operate equipment safely and maintain certifications

5. Warehouse Procedures

5.1 Receiving

1. Verify delivery against purchase order and packing slip
2. Inspect for damage and note any discrepancies on delivery receipt
3. Record receipt in WMS with quantity, condition, and lot/serial numbers

4. Apply location labels and barcodes if required
5. Move to staging area for put-away
6. Complete put-away within 24 hours of receipt

5.2 Order Picking

1. Review pick list and verify order priority and shipping method
2. Follow optimal pick path through warehouse zones
3. Scan each item location and SKU to confirm correct item and quantity
4. Report any inventory discrepancies immediately to Inventory Control
5. Use proper handling for fragile, hazardous, or temperature-sensitive items
6. Deliver completed picks to packing station with documentation

5.3 Packing and Shipping

- ☐ Verify all items against packing slip and pick ticket
- ☐ Select appropriate packaging materials for product protection
- ☐ Include all required documentation (packing slip, customs forms, etc.)
- ☐ Apply correct shipping label and carrier-specific markings
- ☐ Weigh package and verify dimensions match system entry
- ☐ Route to correct carrier staging area by cutoff time

5.4 Safety Requirements

- ☐ Steel-toed boots required at all times in warehouse
- ☐ High-visibility vest required in forklift traffic areas
- ☐ Proper lifting technique: bend knees, keep back straight, lift with legs
- ☐ Maximum manual lift weight: 50 lbs (use equipment for heavier items)
- ☐ Report all accidents, injuries, and near-misses immediately
- ☐ Keep aisles, exits, and fire equipment access clear at all times

6. Inventory Accuracy Metrics

Track and maintain the following inventory and fulfillment accuracy metrics:

Metric	Target	Current	Variance	Action Required
Location Accuracy	>99%			
SKU Accuracy	>99%			

Quantity Accuracy	>98%			
Pick Accuracy	>99.5%			
Shrinkage Rate	<0.5%			

7. Returns Processing Workflow

7.1 Returns Receipt Process

1. Receive package and verify RMA (Return Merchandise Authorization) number
2. Inspect item condition and photograph any damage for records
3. Record return in WMS with reason code and condition assessment
4. Route to appropriate disposition area based on condition

7.2 Disposition Matrix

Condition	Disposition	Process	Timeline
New/Unopened	Restock	Return to primary inventory location	Same day
Like New (opened)	Restock	Inspect, repackage if needed, restock	24 hours
Damaged - Repairable	Refurbish	Route to refurbishment area	Per schedule
Damaged - Unrepairable	Dispose/Salvage	Write off inventory, dispose properly	Weekly batch
Defective	Vendor Return	Process RTV per vendor agreement	Per vendor terms

8. Cycle Count Schedule

Conduct cycle counts according to ABC classification and value-based frequency:

Class	% of SKUs	% of Value	Count Frequency
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A - High Value/Velocity	20%	80%	Monthly
B - Medium Value/Velocity	30%	15%	Quarterly
C - Low Value/Velocity	50%	5%	Annually

8.1 Cycle Count Process

- ☐ Generate count list from WMS based on schedule
- ☐ Verify location is accessible and safe to count
- ☐ Count items twice independently (blind count method)
- ☐ Investigate all variances greater than 1% or \$100
- ☐ Adjust inventory in WMS with supervisor approval
- ☐ Document root cause of significant variances

9. Shipping Exception Log

Document and track all shipping exceptions and their resolution:

Date	Order #	Exception Type	Root Cause	Resolution	Resolved By

Common exception categories and escalation procedures:

Category	Description	Escalation
Address Issue	Invalid or incomplete shipping address	Contact customer within 2 hours
Carrier Delay	Missed pickup or transit delay	Notify customer, track for

		resolution
Damage in Transit	Package damaged after carrier handoff	File carrier claim, reship if needed
Wrong Item Shipped	Incorrect SKU or quantity sent	Priority reship, conduct root cause analysis
Lost Package	Package missing after carrier handoff	File carrier claim, reship priority

10. Emergency and Exception Procedures

10.1 Emergency Response

In case of emergency, follow the procedures below. Safety of personnel takes priority over all other considerations.

1. Ensure immediate safety of all personnel in the area
2. Contact emergency services if required (911 or local emergency number)
3. Notify supervisor/manager immediately
4. Follow facility emergency evacuation procedures if applicable
5. Document the incident using the Incident Report form

10.2 Exception Handling

When standard procedures cannot be followed due to unusual circumstances:

1. Assess the situation and identify the specific deviation required
2. Obtain verbal approval from [Supervisor/Manager] before proceeding
3. Document the exception, including justification and approver
4. Complete the Exception Request Form within 24 hours
5. Submit for formal review during the next scheduled procedure review

WARNING: Exceptions should only be made when necessary and must be properly documented. Repeated exceptions may indicate the need for procedure revision.

11. Related Information

The following documents and references relate to this procedure:

Category	Reference
Related Policies	Inventory Management Policy, Safety Policy,

	Quality Policy
Related SOPs/Procedures	SOP-WH-002 Receiving, SOP-WH-003 Shipping, SOP-WH-004 Forklift Operations
Related Forms	Receiving Checklist, Cycle Count Form, Returns Processing Form, Exception Report Form
External References	OSHA Warehouse Safety Standards, DOT Hazmat Shipping Regulations (if applicable)

12. Document Control

SOP Owner	[Warehouse Manager / Operations Manager]
Approved By	[Director of Supply Chain / VP Operations]
Contact Email	[warehouse@company.com]
Contact Phone	[(XXX) XXX-XXXX]
Review Schedule	Annual or upon significant changes to layout, WMS, or operational processes

13. Revision History

Document all revisions to maintain a complete audit trail:

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	[MM/DD/YYYY]	Initial release

14. Authorization and Approval

Name	Role	Signature	Date
	Prepared By		

	Reviewed By		
	Approved By		

15. Documentation of Training

I have read and understand the content of this Standard Operating Procedure. I have received training specific to the procedures, hazards, and emergency protocols described herein.

Note: All personnel who will perform tasks covered by this SOP must sign below prior to conducting any work. Additional signature pages may be attached as needed.

Printed Name	Signature	Date
[Manager/Supervisor]		

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