PETPOOJA

SOP MANUAL

Cloud Kitchen Operations SOP

Standard Operating Procedures for running a delivery-only kitchen in India. Multi-brand management, order dispatch, packaging, aggregator platforms, and FSSAI compliance.

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FSSAI
Compliant
Schedule 4 aligned

Multi
Brand Ready
Run 3-5 brands

Delivery
Focused
Zomato + Swiggy

01 Kitchen Opening & Daily Setup

Before the first order hits any platform

- [ ] **Turn on all cooking equipment and check for faults** — Daily
  Burners, deep fryers, tandoor, ovens, grills, exhaust hood. Log any equipment not working in the maintenance register. Cloud kitchens can't afford equipment downtime during peak hours.

- [ ] **Check refrigerator (1-4 degrees C) and freezer (-18 degrees C) temperatures** — Daily
  Record in the temperature log. If out of range, do not use stored food until corrected. Cloud kitchens hold higher inventory for multi-brand menus, so temperature failures affect more items.
  FSSAI Schedule 4, Part V, Clause 2

- [ ] **Boot up all aggregator tablets and POS system** — Critical
  Zomato, Swiggy, and any direct ordering tablets. Confirm internet connectivity. Check that all brands are showing 'online' status. Verify menu prices and item availability match today's stock.

- [ ] **Verify packaging inventory for all brands** — Daily
  Count containers, lids, tamper-evident seals, bags, cutlery kits, napkins, and brand-specific stickers for each brand. A packaging shortage during peak hours means rejected orders.

- [ ] **Check mise en place for all active brands**
  Each brand has its own prep list. Cross-check against expected order volumes (use last week's data for the same day). Flag shortages to the kitchen manager before going online.

- [ ] **Confirm staff attendance and assign stations**
  Cloud kitchens run tight teams. Assign each cook to their brand station(s). If someone is absent, reassign or reduce menu availability for that brand. At least one FoSTaC-trained person must be present.
  FSSAI Schedule 4, Part II, Clause 1

- [ ] **Review yesterday's order rejections and customer complaints**
  Pull rejection data from each aggregator dashboard. Identify patterns: late dispatch, item unavailable, wrong order, cold food. Address the root cause before going live today.

- [ ] **Set platform-specific prep times based on today's staffing**
  If short-staffed, increase prep time on aggregator platforms by 5-10 minutes. It's better to promise 35 minutes and deliver in 30 than promise 25 and deliver in 40.

02 Multi-Brand & Station Management

Running multiple brands from a single kitchen

Brand Station Setup

- ✓ **Assign dedicated stations for each brand's core items**
  Brand A (biryani) gets the rice and gravy station. Brand B (pizza) gets the oven station. Brand C (momos) gets the steamer. Shared equipment like fryers gets a rotation schedule.

- ✓ **Keep brand-specific packaging at each station**
  Containers, stickers, menu inserts, and bags for Brand A stay at Station A. Never mix packaging across brands. One wrong container and the customer sees the wrong brand name.

- ✓ **Maintain separate prep sheets per brand**
  Each brand has its own daily prep list based on historical order data. The biryani brand needs rice soaked by 10 AM. The pizza brand needs dough proved by 11 AM. Different timelines, same kitchen.

- ✓ **Use shared base ingredients efficiently across brands**
  Onion-tomato gravy base can serve the biryani brand and the curry brand. Identify 5-8 base preparations that work across multiple brands. This cuts prep time and reduces waste.

Menu Engineering for Cloud Kitchens

- ✓ **Limit each brand to 15-25 menu items**
  More items mean more ingredients, more prep, and more waste. The best-performing cloud kitchens in India keep menus tight. A biryani brand doesn't need 40 varieties.

- ✓ **Design menus around shared cooking stations**
  If two brands both need the tandoor, stagger their peak items. Or build one brand around grilled items and another around fried items. Station conflicts during peak hours kill delivery times.

- ✓ **Update menu availability in real-time across all platforms** Real-time
  If paneer runs out at 2 PM, mark all paneer items unavailable on Zomato AND Swiggy within 5 minutes. A POS system like Petpooja POSS can sync this automatically across platforms.

- ✓ **Track item-level profitability monthly**
  Food cost + packaging cost + aggregator commission per item. Remove items where total cost exceeds 75% of selling price. Replace with higher-margin alternatives.

03 Order Receiving & Kitchen Workflow

From order ping to kitchen ticket

- ✓ **Accept orders within 60 seconds of receiving the ping** — Under 60s
  Aggregator platforms penalise late acceptance. Auto-accept is risky if you can't fulfil. Manual accept with a dedicated person monitoring tablets during peak hours works better.
- ✓ **Print or display the KOT (Kitchen Order Ticket) immediately** — Every order
  Every order gets a ticket with: brand name, order number, items, special instructions, and promised delivery time. No verbal orders in a cloud kitchen. Everything on paper or screen.
- ✓ **Route tickets to the correct brand station**
  In a multi-brand kitchen, the wrong ticket at the wrong station wastes minutes. Colour-code tickets by brand or use a kitchen display system (KDS) that routes automatically.
- ✓ **Prioritise orders by promised delivery time, not arrival time**
  An order due in 15 minutes takes priority over one due in 30, even if the 30-minute order came first. Display remaining time prominently on the KOT.
- ✓ **Handle multi-item orders as a single batch**
  If one order has 3 items from the same brand, prepare all 3 together. Don't send 2 items to the dispatch area while the 3rd is still cooking. Incomplete orders = bad ratings.
- ✓ **Flag special instructions immediately**
  No onion, extra spicy, allergy notes. Read these BEFORE cooking starts, not after. Train cooks to check the special instructions line on every ticket before firing the order.
- ✓ **Reject orders only as a last resort, with a reason logged**
  Every rejection hurts your platform ranking. If you must reject, log the reason (item unavailable, equipment down, overwhelming volume) and take corrective action to prevent repeat.

POS Integration Saves Minutes

A cloud kitchen POS like Petpooja POSS consolidates Zomato, Swiggy, and direct orders into a single screen. No switching between 3 tablets. One dashboard, automatic KOT printing, and real-time menu sync across all platforms.

04 Food Preparation & Delivery Quality

Cooking for a 30-minute journey, not an immediate plate

- ✓ **Cook for transit, not for table** — Key Principle
  Food that sits in a delivery bag for 20-30 minutes behaves differently. Crispy items get soggy. Curries thicken. Rice dries out. Adjust recipes specifically for delivery: slightly more gravy, separate crispy elements.

- ✓ **Maintain consistent portion sizes using standardised scoops and ladles**
  A customer who gets 250g one day and 200g the next will complain. Use numbered ladles for each dish. Weigh 10 random orders per shift to verify consistency.

- ✓ **Separate wet and dry items in packaging**
  Gravy in one container, rice in another. Salad and raita in separate cups. Crispy items (papad, fried snacks) in paper-lined containers, never touching any liquid.

- ✓ **Use the two-spoon tasting method for every batch**
  Ladle into a clean tasting spoon, never dip back. Cloud kitchens serve hundreds of portions from one batch. Taste consistency matters more than in a dine-in restaurant.

- ✓ **Discard food left in the danger zone (5-63 degrees C) for over 2 hours** — Critical
  Cloud kitchens often pre-cook components. Set timers for every batch at room temperature. If unsure how long something has been out, discard it.
  FSSAI Schedule 4, Part V

- ✓ **Cook fresh during peak hours, don't rely entirely on pre-cooked stock**
  Pre-cooked biryanis held for 3 hours taste different from fresh ones. Time your batch cooking to align with peak order windows (12-2 PM, 7-10 PM). Freshness shows in ratings.

- ✓ **Check cooking oil TPC before each frying session**
  Use a portable TPC meter. Oil must not exceed 25% Total Polar Compounds. Cloud kitchens fry more volume per day than most dine-in restaurants, so oil degrades faster.
  FSSAI Order 24-Jul-2018

05 Packaging & Labelling SOP

The last thing you control before it reaches the customer

Packaging Standards

- ✓ **Use tamper-evident packaging for every order** — Mandatory
  Sealed bags with brand stickers, stapled bags, or heat-sealed containers. The customer must be able to see if the package was opened during transit. FSSAI and aggregator platforms both require this.
  FSSAI Directions on Packaging, 2022

- ✓ **Use food-grade, microwave-safe containers only**
  No newspaper wrapping. No recycled plastic containers unless ISI-marked. Containers must display the ISI or FSSAI-approved food-grade symbol. Check with your supplier.
  FSSAI (Packaging) Regulations 2018

- ✓ **Pack hot and cold items in separate bags**
  A hot biryani next to a cold raita for 20 minutes ruins both. Use separate compartments or separate bags within the delivery bag.

- ✓ **Include cutlery, napkins, and condiments based on brand standards**
  Some brands include sauce sachets, some don't. Standardise per brand. Missing cutlery is the #1 complaint in cloud kitchen reviews.

- ✓ **Seal the outer bag with a branded sticker showing order number**
  Rider picks up, checks order number on sticker against app. No confusion when 15 orders are sitting on the dispatch counter.

FSSAI Labelling Requirements

- ✓ **Display FSSAI licence number on every package** — Mandatory
  Printed on the container, lid, or a sticker. The 14-digit FSSAI licence number must be visible to the customer. No exceptions.
  FSS (Licensing & Registration) Regulations, 2011

- ✓ **Include 'best before' or 'use by' time for perishable items**
  For food delivered within hours, print or stamp the preparation time and a 'consume within X hours' note. FSSAI requires this for all food businesses.
  FSS (Labelling & Display) Regulations, 2020

- ✓ **Mark veg/non-veg with the correct colour symbol** — Mandatory
  Green circle for vegetarian, brown/maroon circle for non-vegetarian. Must be on the container, not just the bag. FSSAI mandates this for all packaged food.
  FSS (Packaging & Labelling) Regulations 2011, Regulation 2.2.2

- ✓ **Declare allergen information where applicable**
  If a dish contains nuts, dairy, gluten, or shellfish, it should be mentioned. While not yet strictly enforced for cloud kitchens, FSSAI is moving towards mandatory allergen declarations.
  FSS (Labelling & Display) Regulations, 2020

06 Dispatch & Rider Handoff SOP

Getting the right order to the right rider in under 2 minutes

- ✓ **Set up a dedicated dispatch counter near the kitchen exit** — Layout
  Orders move from cooking station to packaging station to dispatch counter. The dispatch counter is where riders pick up. Keep it separate from the cooking area. Riders should never enter the kitchen.
- ✓ **Organise orders on the dispatch counter by platform and order number**
  Zomato orders on the left, Swiggy in the middle, direct orders on the right. Or use numbered shelves. When 20 orders are waiting, a rider can't afford to search.
- ✓ **Verify every order against the KOT before sealing** — Every order
  One person checks: all items present, correct brand packaging, special instructions followed, cutlery included. Then seals the bag. This 30-second check prevents wrong orders.
- ✓ **Hand off to the rider within 2 minutes of the rider arriving**
  Rider arrival time is tracked by aggregator platforms. Delays here count against your 'average preparation time' metric. Have orders ready before the rider arrives, not after.
- ✓ **Confirm the order number verbally with the rider**
  Rider says the order number or last 4 digits. Dispatch person matches it against the bag sticker. Handing over the wrong bag is the most embarrassing (and costly) cloud kitchen mistake.
- ✓ **Log dispatch time for every order**
  When was the order accepted? When was it packed? When was it handed to the rider? Track these 3 timestamps. If average dispatch exceeds your promised prep time, something in the process is broken.
- ✓ **Keep the dispatch area clean, well-lit, and ventilated**
  Riders standing in a dirty, dark hallway don't handle your food carefully. A clean, organised dispatch area signals professionalism and protects food during the handoff.

07 Aggregator Platform Management

Your Zomato and Swiggy listings are your storefront

- ✓ **Update menu photos and descriptions quarterly**
  Stale photos hurt click-through rates. Invest in proper food photography once per quarter. Each brand on each platform needs its own set of photos that match actual serving portions.

- ✓ **Respond to every negative review within 24 hours** — Within 24h
  Aggregator algorithms factor in response rate. A polite, specific response ('We're sorry the biryani arrived cold. We've switched to insulated containers.') is better than a generic template.

- ✓ **Track platform commissions and reconcile weekly** — Weekly
  Zomato and Swiggy charge 15-30% commission depending on your plan. Reconcile every week against actual payouts. Flag discrepancies immediately. Keep records for GST input credit.

- ✓ **Run platform promotions strategically, not constantly**
  Discounts during off-peak hours or for new menu items make sense. Permanent discounts erode margins. Track ROI for every promotion: did it bring new customers or just discount existing ones?

- ✓ **Monitor your 'restaurant score' on each platform weekly** — Weekly
  Zomato and Swiggy both have internal scoring systems based on prep time, rejection rate, customer rating, and responsiveness. A lower score means lower visibility in search results.

- ✓ **Keep platform menus in sync with POS menu at all times**
  If you add a new item on Swiggy, add it on Zomato and your POS the same day. Price mismatches across platforms confuse customers and can violate platform terms.

- ✓ **Switch to 'busy mode' instead of rejecting orders during rush**
  Most platforms let you increase prep time or pause new orders temporarily. This is better than rejecting individual orders, which tanks your acceptance rate metric.

Centralise with a POS

Managing 3 tablets for 5 brands across 2 platforms is chaos. A POS like Petpooja POSS integrates Zomato, Swiggy, and direct orders into one screen with automatic menu syncing, so a price change or item toggle updates everywhere at once.

08 Inventory & Procurement SOP

Managing ingredients across multiple brands

- [ ] **Maintain a unified inventory across all brands** — Daily
  Onions, oil, and spices serve every brand. Track inventory at the ingredient level, not the brand level. When onion stock hits 20%, it affects all brands equally.

- [ ] **Calculate reorder points based on combined brand demand**
  If Brand A uses 5 kg chicken/day and Brand B uses 3 kg, your reorder point is based on 8 kg/day. Factor in delivery lead time from your supplier (usually 24 hours in metros).

- [ ] **Conduct physical stock count every evening**
  Compare actual stock against what the system says. Cloud kitchens with 3+ brands have more inventory variance than single-brand kitchens. A 10-minute count saves procurement errors.

- [ ] **Track wastage by brand and by ingredient**
  Which brand wastes the most? Which ingredient? If Brand C wastes 15% of its paneer, the menu or portions need adjustment. Wastage above 5% of food cost needs immediate investigation.

- [ ] **Place purchase orders based on next-day forecast**
  Use historical order data by day-of-week. Monday's order volume is different from Saturday's. Over-ordering on a Monday wastes inventory. Under-ordering on a Saturday means stockouts.
  Standard procurement practice

- [ ] **Inspect every delivery against the purchase order**
  Weigh items, check temperatures (chilled at 1-5 degrees C, frozen at -18 degrees C), verify quality, check expiry dates. Log rejections with supplier name and reason.
  FSSAI Schedule 4, Part V, Clause 4

- [ ] **Follow FIFO for all stored ingredients**
  First In, First Out. New stock goes behind old stock. Label every container with date received. Cloud kitchens handle more SKUs than single-brand kitchens, so FIFO discipline matters more.
  FSSAI Schedule 4, Part V, Clause 3

09 Hygiene, Cleaning & FSSAI Compliance

No front-of-house doesn't mean lower standards

Daily Hygiene & Cleaning

- ✓ **Staff must wash hands before entering the kitchen and between tasks** — Every time
  20 seconds, liquid soap, running water, paper towels. Handwashing station at the kitchen entrance is mandatory. No exceptions, even for the owner.
  FSSAI Schedule 4, Part II, Clause 3

- ✓ **Clean and sanitise all prep surfaces between brands**
  If Station A switches from biryani prep to pizza prep, sanitise the surface. Cross-contamination between brands means cross-contamination between cuisines.

- ✓ **Mop floors, clean drains, and empty waste bins at end of each shift**
  Cloud kitchens generate more waste per square foot than dine-in restaurants (more packaging waste). Don't let bins overflow during peak hours. Empty at 3/4 full.
  FSSAI Schedule 4, Part I

- ✓ **Deep clean all equipment weekly: fryers, ovens, exhaust hoods** — Weekly
  Weekly schedule: Monday fryers, Tuesday ovens, Wednesday exhaust, Thursday storage, Friday floor scrub. Rotate cleaning duties. Log completion.

FSSAI Compliance for Cloud Kitchens

- ✓ **Obtain FSSAI licence for every brand operating from the kitchen** — Mandatory
  Each brand name needs its own FSSAI registration or licence. One kitchen running 5 brands needs 5 FSSAI licences (or one licence with all brand names listed). Verify with your FSSAI consultant.
  FSS (Licensing & Registration) Regulations, 2011

- ✓ **Display FSSAI licence copies at the kitchen entrance**
  All licences visible and current. Inspectors visit cloud kitchens too. Being delivery-only doesn't exempt you from physical inspections.
  FSS Act 2006, Section 27

- ✓ **Maintain food safety records: temperature logs, cleaning logs, pest control**
  Keep at least 12 months of records. Temperature log (twice daily), cleaning schedule (daily sign-off), pest control service reports (monthly/quarterly), staff medical certificates (annual).
  FSSAI Schedule 4

- ✓ **Ensure FoSTaC-trained food safety supervisor on every shift** — Every shift
  FSSAI mandates at least one FoSTaC-certified person per food business. For cloud kitchens with multiple shifts, ensure coverage across all operating hours.
  FSSAI Circular on FoSTaC Training

- ✓ **Comply with local municipal trade licence and fire NOC**
  Cloud kitchens need a trade licence, fire NOC, and sometimes a separate health/food licence from the municipal corporation. Requirements vary by city. Check with your local authority.

10 Kitchen Closing & End-of-Day

Shutting down operations after the last order

- ✓ **Go offline on all aggregator platforms 30 minutes before closing**
  Don't accept a new order at 10:55 PM when you close at 11 PM. Going offline early prevents last-minute orders that rush your team and compromise food quality.

- ✓ **Complete all pending orders before starting closing procedures**
  No order should be in 'preparing' status when you start shutting down. Clear the board first. Then start closing.

- ✓ **Turn off all gas burners, ovens, and grills. Close the main gas valve.** Critical
  Close the main gas valve, not just individual burner knobs. Verify no pilot lights remain on. This is the #1 kitchen safety step, for cloud kitchens and dine-in restaurants alike.

- ✓ **Store all leftover prepared food in labelled, sealed containers**
  Label: item name, brand, date, time. Refrigerate within 30 minutes. Discard anything at room temperature for over 2 hours. Be strict. Serving yesterday's biryani labelled as today's kills trust.

- ✓ **Complete end-of-day physical stock count**
  10 minutes. Count key items: proteins, dairy, vegetables, packaging materials. Compare against opening stock minus items used. Variance above 5% needs investigation tomorrow morning.

- ✓ **Record the day's wastage by brand and ingredient**
  What was wasted, how much, and why (expired, overproduction, wrong order, customer return). Review weekly for trends. This directly impacts your food cost percentage.

- ✓ **Reconcile the day's orders across all platforms**
  Total orders accepted, completed, rejected, cancelled. Revenue by brand, by platform. Flag anything unusual: sudden spike in cancellations, unusual refund amounts.

- ✓ **Deep clean all surfaces, equipment, and floors**
  Follow the cleaning checklist from Section 9. Move portable equipment, clean underneath. Clear all drains. A clean kitchen overnight means no pest issues in the morning.
  FSSAI Schedule 4, Part I

- ✓ **Record refrigerator and freezer temperatures in the evening log**
  Compare with morning readings. If temperatures rose during the day, the refrigerator may be overloaded or the door seal may be failing. Investigate before it causes spoilage.
  FSSAI Schedule 4, Part V, Clause 2

- ✓ **Secure all entry points, close windows, cover drains**
  Cloud kitchens in commercial areas attract pests at night. All doors closed, windows shut, drain covers in place. Lock chemical storage. Set pest traps if applicable.

- ✓ **Prepare shift notes for tomorrow's opening team**
  Equipment issues, low stock items, supplier delivery expected, pending customer complaints, any platform-level changes. The morning shift should start informed, not surprised.

Track Everything Digitally

Paper checklists get lost. Petpooja Tasks lets you assign daily SOPs to specific staff, collect photo proof of completion, and send WhatsApp alerts when tasks are overdue. Digital records also make FSSAI audit preparation much simpler.

This checklist is provided by Petpooja for informational purposes. Verify all compliance details with official sources before acting.

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PETPOOJA

AUTOMATE CLOUD KITCHEN SOPS

Stop managing SOPs on *paper and WhatsApp*

Petpooja gives cloud kitchens a complete stack: POSS for unified order management across Zomato, Swiggy, and direct channels. Tasks for daily SOP compliance with photo-verified proof. Purchase for ingredient management and vendor payouts. All connected, all in one dashboard.

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