

FOOD STORE: DEFINITION AND TYPES

A food store is a clean, well-ventilated, properly illuminated, easy to operate and efficient place used by a catering establishment according to its catering policy. A well-controlled storeroom and cellar provides a daily check on all issues and costs, and helps to lower the cost of raw materials (food beverage cost), by controlling pilferage, wastage, and reducing the possibility of frauds by user department.

Necessity to Have a Store

. It is very necessary to have a store in a catering facility for the following reasons:

1. Successful and smooth operations
2. A storekeeper can save double the amount of his salary by controlling theft, waste, and spoilage by
 - Keeping a track on receiving and issuing control.
 - Maintaining records of shortages/spoilage.
 - Maintaining reasonable par stock as per business volume and popularity of menu items.

Types of Stores

According to the nature of food and beverage commodities, stores may be categorized in the following types:

Perishable food store: These are used to store perishable food items such as meat, poultry, game, fish, dairy products, fats, vegetables, and fruits.

Frozen store: These are used for storing of frozen foods, which must be placed immediately in a deep freeze.

Non-perishable items or dry store (groceries store): These are used for storing pulses, cereals, sugar, flour, jams, pickles, bottled foods, canned foods, breads, cakes, etc.

Cellar: It is a dark and silent room in the purchase department, hidden from public view. It is run jointly by the purchase and food and beverage department. It is an ideal place to store alcoholic beverages as it is dark, airy, and quiet, with a constant temperature, and protected from unpleasant smells.

Structural Features, Cleanliness, and Shelving

The following points with respect to the structural features, cleanliness, and shelving may be borne in mind while designing the layout of a store

- Store should be airy and free from moisture (dampness).
- The maintenance of a standard of hygiene requires that the walls and ceilings be free of cracks.
- Floors of the store should be tough enough to hold heavy traffic, and easy to clean and wash.
- There should be no right angle corner in between floor and wall to prevent accumulation of dirt.
- There should be sufficient lighting-natural and artificial-in all the areas and storekeeper's desk should be well illuminated.
- A store should have a separate issuing counter/window.
- The ceiling of store should not be less than 12 feet from floor level.
- A makeup counter is an essential feature and should be located at the center of the store for holding commodities before issuing to the user department.

- Storekeeper should be provided with a suitable working table along with space to keep documents.
- Shelving:

For perishable foods Shelving should be slatted to permit maximum circulation of air in refrigerated facilities.

For nonperishable food items Solid steel shelving is usually preferred.

Recommended Storage Temperatures

Foods must be stored at correct temperatures. The optimum storage temperature varies depending on the nature of the item.

Temperatures for Frozen Food Items

Meat. Fish

Frozen foods

Ice-cream

-20°C to -16°C (-4 to 3°F)

20°C to -15°C (-4 to 3°F)

-20°C to -16°C (to 3°F)

-22°C to -18°C (-8 to 0°F)

Best Practices and Storage Procedures

The following points comprise best practices in storage procedures and should be followed scrupulously.

1. Foods should be generally divided into three categories: perishable frozen and dry items from the receiving dock and inspected with respect to quality, quantity, and delivery performance. If any discrepancies are there, they should be reported to the higher authorities for necessary action/documentation.
2. Most frequently used items should be stacked near the entrance area of the store.
3. There should be a definite place for each commodity.
4. Food items like spices, herbs, etc. delivered in unsealed containers such as paper bags, and boxes should be transferred to suitable airtight containers.
5. Stock rotation should be on FIFO (first in and first out) basis.
6. Items should be grouped if they are similar commodities such as bottled or canned items.
7. Meat items should be hung on hooks with drip trays underneath to collect any blood.
8. Humidity level should be approximately 90 per cent.
9. Meat and poultry should be stored separately.
10. Cuts of meat may be brushed with oil or wrapped in oiled greaseproof paper.
11. Decayed or spoiled vegetables should not be stored.
12. Vegetables should be stored separately on racks in a cool and dry place.

13. Hard fruits and stone fruits should be stored in cold store.
14. Eggs have a tendency to absorb smells. So store them away from other foods at 1-4°C in refrigerated equipment and use in rotation.
15. 18. Rotation of dry goods should be on the basis of last in last out.
16. 19. Storeroom should never be left open and unattended.
17. 20. Proper key control should be implemented.

ROLE OF STOREKEEPER

The primary role of a storekeeper is to store and to maintain adequate stocks of materials with minimum loss through theft and spoilage. Key functions of a storekeeper are as follows:

Stock Control

Establishing standards and standard procedures for stock control should address the following concerns:

1. Stock taking
2. Determining the value of stock held in stores
3. Comparing actual physical stock value with the book value of the stock
4. Determining rate of stock turnover
5. Establishing stock levels
6. Maintaining stock records

Stock Taking

Stock taking is an important task and should be undertaken by the staff from the control or accounts department together with the members of the food and beverage management team. It is generally undertaken by the following two methods.

Monthly inventory method : The process of taking a physical inventory of products on hand in all storage areas at the end of the month is called a monthly inventory.

Perpetual inventory method : The process of maintaining a continuous record of all purchases and issues is called a perpetual inventory.