Standard Operating Procedure: Goods Receiving in the Warehouse

SOP-WH-003 · Inbound operations

Metro Distribution Warehouse (fictional company, for illustration)

SOP number	SOP-WH-003
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Owner	Warehouse Manager
Next review	01 April 2027

1. Purpose

To make sure every delivery is received accurately, safely and on time, that quantity and quality are checked against the purchase order, and that stock is recorded correctly in the system before it is stored.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all inbound deliveries from suppliers, transfers from other branches and customer returns received at the main warehouse during receiving hours (Sunday to Thursday, 08:00 to 17:00).

3. Definitions

Term	Meaning
PO	Purchase order issued to the supplier.
ASN	Advance shipping notice sent by the supplier before delivery.
GRN	Goods receipt note created when goods are accepted into stock.
Quarantine	A marked area for goods held until a quantity or quality issue is resolved.
FIFO / FEFO	Stock rotation: first in, first out / first expired, first out.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Receiving Clerk	Checks documents, counts and inspects goods, and prepares the GRN.
Forklift Operator	Unloads and moves pallets safely.
Quality Inspector	Inspects goods according to the quality plan.
Warehouse Supervisor	Supervises daily receiving and approves discrepancies.
Warehouse Manager	Owns this SOP and reviews receiving performance.
Purchasing	Resolves supplier issues and amends purchase orders.

5. Equipment and records

- Handheld scanner and printer for pallet labels.
- Pallet jack and forklift.
- Weighing scale and measuring tape.
- Inspection checklist (Form WH-F-07).
- GRN screen in the ERP system.
- Quarantine labels and photo camera.

6. Procedure

1. Plan the delivery. Check the ASN and the expected-deliveries list the day before. Reserve a dock door and assign staff.
2. Gate check. Verify the driver's identity, the vehicle plate and the delivery note. Record the arrival time in the dock log.
3. Inspect the vehicle. Check that seals are intact and look for damage, leaks or signs of tampering before opening. Photograph any problem.
4. Unload safely. Wear protective equipment, respect load limits and unload one pallet at a time. Never stack above the marked height.
5. Match the documents. Compare the delivery note and invoice with the PO: supplier, item codes, quantities, batch and expiry dates.
6. Count and inspect. Count cartons and units, check labels and packaging, and inspect a sample according to the quality plan (section 7).
7. Record discrepancies. Note shortages, overages, damage or wrong items on the delivery note and have the driver sign it. Move affected goods to the quarantine area.
8. Create the GRN. Enter the accepted quantities in the system on the same day and print pallet labels showing location, batch and expiry.
9. Put away. Move goods to the assigned location following FIFO or FEFO rules, scan the location and confirm the put-away in the system within 24 hours.
10. Close the file. File the signed documents, update the dock log and report discrepancies to Purchasing before the end of the shift.

7. Quality inspection criteria

Check	Acceptance standard	Action if not met
Packaging	Clean, dry, sealed and undamaged.	Quarantine and photograph.
Labelling	Item code, batch and expiry match the PO.	Hold and contact Purchasing.
Quantity	Matches the PO (tolerance of 2% for bulk items).	Record the variance and request a supplier credit note.
Expiry date	At least 80% of shelf life remaining.	Reject, or obtain written approval.
Temperature (chilled goods)	2 to 8 °C at receipt.	Reject and report immediately.

8. Handling discrepancies

Situation	Action	Responsible
Shortage	Receive the actual quantity, record the shortage and notify Purchasing within 24 hours.	Receiving Clerk
Overage	Receive only the PO quantity unless Purchasing approves.	Warehouse Supervisor
Damaged goods	Reject or quarantine, take photos and claim from the supplier.	Quality Inspector
Wrong item	Do not receive; arrange the return with the supplier.	Purchasing
No purchase order	Hold at the dock and do not receive until approved.	Warehouse Supervisor

9. Safety and housekeeping

- Wear safety shoes, a high-visibility vest and gloves in the receiving area.
- Only trained and authorised operators may drive forklifts.
- Keep walkways and dock doors clear at all times.
- Report spills, damaged pallets and near misses immediately.

10. Performance indicators

Indicator	Target
Dock-to-stock time	24 hours or less
Receiving accuracy	99.5% or more
GRNs posted on the same day	98% or more
Supplier on-time delivery	95% or more
Reported safety incidents	Zero

11. Records and approval

Receiving records (delivery notes, inspection forms, GRNs and photos) are kept for five years. This SOP is reviewed every year and after any significant incident.

Prepared by: Warehouse Manager

Approved by: Operations Director

Sample document for illustration only. Company names, times and figures are fictional. A customised SOP for your warehouse, country and language is available at allbizdoc.com.