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# SOP: Pre-Soak Tray System with Timed Soaking

Kitchen / Food & Beverage



**Purpose:** To reduce water consumption and improve cleaning efficiency by introducing a structured pre-soaking process for trays, pans, and utensils.

### Why this matters

Soaking trays and utensils before washing helps remove food residue and reduces scrubbing time. However, leaving items in running water or frequently refilling soak bins wastes large amounts of water. This SOP provides a simple, timed system to soak effectively whilst reducing water consumption



### Required Tools and Materials

- A durable pre-soak bin or container (plastic or stainless steel are good options)
- A kitchen timer or wall clock
- A measuring jug (to track water use if needed)
- Labels or signage to indicate "Start" and "Change Water" times
- (Optional) Natural degreaser or soaking agent (approved by management)

## Daily Setup



### Fill the Pre-Soak Tray:

- Use only the amount of water needed to submerge the base of the items (typically between 5 -10 cm in depth).
- Use cold or lukewarm water, not hot water unless it is required for a specific reason.
- Add a small amount of approved soaking solution if necessary.

### Label the Tray:

- Clearly label the tray with a sign:  
***"Soaking Station – Use for 15 Minutes Only"***

### Set the Timer:

- Place a timer or set a wall clock nearby to monitor soaking time.

## Using the Soak Tray (During Service)



### 1. Collect Dirty Items:

- Scrape off food into the bin before placing trays or utensils into the soak tray.
- Only soak items with stuck-on food or grease

### 2. Start Timer:

- Begin the soak time (recommended: 15–20 minutes per batch).
- Place new items in batches, not one at a time.

### 3. After Soaking:

- Remove items and clean in the dishwashing area or machine as usual.
- You should notice less scrubbing is needed, saving time and water in cleaning.

## Water Use & Change Schedule



### 1. Re-use Soak Water:

- If water is not heavily soiled, continue using it for multiple batches (up to 2–3 hours during steady service). You may wish to check this first with your Health and Safety team to ensure hygiene parameters
- Do not leave items in water longer than 20 minutes as they may develop odour or staining.

### 2. Change Water:

- Change soak water every 2–3 hours, or sooner if it becomes greasy or cloudy.
- Always change the water at the end of each shift.

## End of Shift Procedure

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1. Empty and clean the soak tray thoroughly with hot water and sanitiser.
2. Dry and store it in a designated area.
3. Record soak tray usage (optional) in the kitchen logbook or checklist.

## Reminders for Staff



- Do not use running water for soaking items, use the tray instead.
- Use the soak tray for trays, pans, utensils, and similar items, but not for delicate or electrical components.
- Communicate with colleagues to keep the soak station running smoothly during shift changes.
- This is a shared responsibility and everyone should follow the system.



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