

# Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) - Pallet Sorting Operation

## 1. Scope and Purpose

This SOP outlines the procedures for inspecting and sorting pallets into designated categories: **RU (Ready to Use Pallets)** and **AR (Awaiting Repair Pallets)**. The objective is to ensure that only high-quality pallets are shipped for use while separating and addressing defective pallets.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Inspectors (2 per station):**
  - Examine each pallet based on set criteria.
  - Flip and sort pallets into **\*\*RU\*\*** and **\*\*AR\*\*** stacks.
  - Repair pallet if possible.
  - Ensure proper stacking alignment.
- **Forklift Operator:**
  - Moves sorted stacks to designated locations.
  - Keeps work areas clear for continuous workflow.
  - Keeps pallets staged for uninterrupted workflow.
- **Supervisor:**
  - Oversees operations and ensures adherence to sorting criteria.
  - Continuously monitors teams output to make sure they are on track to meet sorting goal.
  - Tracks daily throughput on the Manual Sort Tracker form.

## 3. Pallet Inspection Criteria

### *RU Criteria:*

- ✓ No broken or missing boards
- ✓ No protruding nails or loose fasteners
- ✓ No severe cracks in stringers or deck boards
- ✓ No contamination from product spillage or external substances
- ✓ No warping or out of square pallets that affects stacking stability
- ✓ All raised nails greater than 1/8" must be removed, cut off, or hammered flush
- ✓ No twisted blocks protruding outside the perimeter of the pallet greater than 1/2"

- ✓ All debris (shrink wrap, cardboard, slip sheets, stickers, staples, tape, etc.) must be removed
- ✓ No loose material (gravel, dirt, cobwebs, etc.)
- ✓ No loose or splintered wood that can be removed by hand with minimal effort

#### **AR Criteria:**

- ✗ Missing or severely damaged boards
- ✗ Protruding nails that pose a safety hazard
- ✗ Major cracks or splits in stringers
- ✗ Unstable or heavily warped pallets
- ✗ Pallets with mold, excessive moisture, or contamination
- ✗ Loose or missing fasteners causing structural instability
- ✗ Any pallet that does not meet the **RU** criteria

## **4. Sorting Procedure**

### **1. Setup:**

- a. Stage warehouse work area with pallets in stacks of 9 high for sorting.
- b. Leave enough space in between pallet stacks for crew to manipulate pallets.
- c. Leave enough space for team to place pallets on either side of stacks.
- d. Inspectors ensure proper safety gear is worn while inspecting pallets.

### **2. Inspection & Sorting:**

- a. Teams of 2 visually inspect and flip the pallet.
- b. Remove any loose wood and hammer any nails that are protruding from pallet if that makes the pallet suitable for RU classification.
- c. Track number of pallets repaired (removing loose wood, hammering in nails, etc.)
- d. The two team members place the pallet in the appropriate stack of either AR or RU according to pallet inspection specs.

### **3. Stack Transition:**

- a. Once a stack is complete, the team moves to the next stack.
- b. The forklift operator removes the sorted stacks and transports them to their designated warehouse locations.

### **4. Warehouse Storage Locations:**

- a. **RU Pallets:** Placed in designated area of warehouse or on dropped trailer.
- b. **AR Pallets:** Moved to designated area for already sorted AR pallets.

## 5. Outbound RU+:

- a. Do a Visual Inspection of load going out.
- b. Use Leaf Blower on all pallets to remove any loose debris.

## 5. Safety Guidelines

- **Lifting & Handling Safety:**
  - Use proper lifting techniques (bend knees, keep back straight).
  - Work as a team of 2 when flipping pallets and moving to correct stack.
- **PPE Requirements:**
  - Gloves, safety glasses, and steel-toed boots.

## 6. Quality Control & Efficiency Metrics

- **Daily Checklists for Supervisors** (e.g., "Did you perform hourly audits? Did the crew meet the sorting number goal for the day")
- **Sorting Rate Tracking** (e.g., "Goal: Sort 1500 pallets per shift per team.")
- **Final Logs** (e.g., "Number of pallets inspected and number of "RU pallets" created)

## 7. Troubleshooting & Common Issues

- **Uncertainty on Pallet Quality:**
  - When in doubt, place it in the AR stack.
  - Ask for clarification of recurring questionable defects.

## 8. End of Shift

- **End-of-Shift Cleanup:**
  - Remove debris, nails, or broken wood from warehouse floor.
  - Make sure all counts are accurate of sorted pallets
  - **Send final count image to Location's Group Text.**
  - Stage floor for next shift.

This SOP ensures an efficient pallet sorting process while maintaining safety, quality control, and operational consistency.