
FREE TEMPLATE PACK

12 restaurant SOP templates

Ready-to-copy standard operating procedures for the kitchen, the floor, the bar and the manager on duty.

Written for Marlow, a fictional 70-seat restaurant with a 12-seat bar, open for lunch and dinner six days a week. Where a number comes from regulation, it is the US FDA Food Code unless stated otherwise; check the rules where you trade.

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How to adapt them

1. Replace "Marlow" with your venue, and the roles with the names your team uses.
2. Change times, temperatures and equipment to match your kitchen and local rules.
3. Test each SOP on your newest starter before you print it.
4. Post each page where the work happens, and review it every six months.

M-01 Opening the restaurant

Applies to	Opening manager
When	Every day, 90 minutes before the first booking
Time needed	30 to 40 minutes
You need	Keys, alarm code, temperature log, till floats, the day's bookings
Owner	General manager, reviewed October 2026

1. Disarm the alarm, open the staff door only, and walk the whole building before anyone else comes in: doors, windows, toilets, storerooms and the yard.
2. Check that power, gas, hot water and the extraction fans are working.
3. Read the thermometer on every fridge and freezer, including the bar fridges, and write each reading on the temperature log.
4. Check that every handwash sink has hot water, soap and paper towels.
5. Take the till floats from the safe, count each one with a second person and sign the float sheet.
6. Switch on the tills, card terminals, kitchen screens and printers, and send one test order from a till to the kitchen.
7. Read last night's handover note and today's bookings. Note large tables, allergies flagged in advance and anyone off sick.
8. Brief the team 15 minutes before doors open: covers, specials, dishes that have run out, allergens in the specials, sections.

Standard: every fridge at 41°F (5°C) or below, freezers frozen hard, floats correct and signed, the test order shows on the right station, briefing done before doors open.

If something is wrong: if a fridge is above 41°F, move its contents to a working unit and tell the head chef before anything from it is used; if a float is short, don't open that till and call the general manager.

Why it matters: a problem found at ten in the morning costs far less than the same problem found at eight at night.

Adapted for

Approved by

Date

M-02 End-of-day cash-up

Applies to	Closing manager and each till holder
When	After the last check of the day is closed
Time needed	About 15 minutes per till
You need	End of day report, float sheet, cash bags, a second person
Owner	General manager, reviewed October 2026

1. Close all open tabs and checks on the till. Nothing carries over without a manager's say-so.
2. Print or open the end of day report.
3. Count the drawer with a second person present, by denomination, and take out tomorrow's float.
4. Compare cash counted with cash expected on the report and write down the difference.
5. Match card totals against the terminal batch.
6. Bag the takings, seal the bag, write the till, date and amount on it, and both sign it.
7. Put the bag and the float in the safe and lock it.

Standard: each drawer matches the report within five dollars.

If something is wrong: recount together, check for refunds and items that were served but never rung up, then log the difference and tell the general manager.

Why it matters: small gaps found the same night can be explained; found a week later they can't. What each line of the report means is covered in [reading the Z report](#).

Adapted for

Approved by

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M-03 Closing and locking up

Applies to	Closing manager, last to leave
When	After cash-up, every night
Time needed	20 minutes
You need	Signed station closing lists, keys, alarm code, handover log
Owner	General manager, reviewed October 2026

1. Collect the signed closing list from each station: kitchen, floor and bar.
2. Walk the kitchen line and check every appliance is off. Fridges and freezers stay on.
3. Check the walk-in: nobody inside, food covered and labelled, door shut, temperature written on the log.
4. Check that toilets, storerooms and the yard are empty, and that the back door and fire exits are shut.
Never chain or block a fire exit.
5. Confirm the cash bags and floats are in the safe and the safe is locked.
6. Write the handover note for the morning: anything broken, anything running low, any incident or complaint.
7. Switch off the lights, set the alarm, lock the front door and check it from outside.

Standard: every closing list signed, the alarm confirms it is set, and the handover log has an entry for the night.

If something is wrong: if the alarm will not set, find the open zone and close it; never leave the building unset, and call the general manager if it still fails.

Why it matters: the last person out is responsible for everything left switched on, open or insecure overnight.

Adapted for

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K-01 Receiving deliveries

Applies to	Chef on duty or the nominated receiver
When	Every delivery, food or drink
Time needed	10 to 15 minutes
You need	Probe thermometer, sanitising wipes, the purchase order, receiving log, date labels
Owner	Head chef, reviewed October 2026

1. Stop what you are doing and meet the driver. Chilled food left by the back door is warming up.
2. Check the delivery against the purchase order before signing anything: items, quantities and prices.
3. Probe chilled goods between two packs, without piercing sealed packaging, and write the temperature on the receiving log.
4. Check frozen goods are frozen hard, with no wet boxes or large ice crystals that show they thawed and refroze.
5. Check use-by dates, damaged packaging and dented cans, and the look and smell of fish and meat.
6. Weigh anything priced by weight.
7. Put chilled and frozen goods away first, within 15 minutes, dated and with new stock behind old.
8. Note shortages and rejected items on the invoice, sign it and record the quantities received.

Standard: chilled food at 41°F (5°C) or below, frozen food frozen solid, hot food at 135°F (57°C) or above. The Food Code allows a few exceptions, such as milk and shell eggs, at up to 45°F (7°C).

If something is wrong: refuse the item, write the reason and temperature on the invoice, have the driver sign it and tell the head chef the same day.

Why it matters: once you sign, a warm delivery is your problem rather than the supplier's. Credits, supplier scorecards and ordering are covered in [procurement and vendor management](#).

Adapted for

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K-02 Kitchen cleaning schedule

Applies to	All kitchen staff, by station
When	Every shift, plus the weekly and monthly tasks on the schedule
Time needed	Built into each shift; about 45 minutes at close
You need	Detergent, sanitiser and test strips, colour-coded cloths, the schedule sheet on the wall
Owner	Sous chef, reviewed October 2026

1. Make up sanitiser at the start of each shift to the concentration on the label and check it with a test strip. Replace it when it is dirty or tests below range.
2. Clean food-contact surfaces in four steps every time: wash with detergent, rinse, sanitise, leave to air dry.
3. During service, clean and sanitise boards, knives and surfaces between raw and ready-to-eat food, and at least every four hours for anything in constant use.
4. Clean as you go: wipe spills when they happen and empty bins before they are full.
5. At close, do the daily tasks for your station and initial each one on the schedule.
6. Do the weekly and monthly tasks on the day the schedule assigns them, and initial those too.

How often	Tasks
Every shift	Prep tables, boards, slicer, probe thermometers, handwash sinks, door handles, floor swept
Daily at close	Flat-top and grill, fryers filtered, ovens wiped, sinks, floors mopped, bins emptied and washed
Weekly	Walk-in shelves and floor, extraction filters, inside the reach-in fridges, dry store
Monthly	Behind and under equipment, walls and ceiling above the line, ice machine as the manufacturer instructs

Standard: sanitiser in range on the test strip, and every line of the schedule initialled.

If something is wrong: if a task was missed, do it before the next service and tell the sous chef; if the same task is missed week after week, the schedule is wrong, so change it.

Why it matters: the Food Code requires surfaces in constant use with perishable food to be cleaned at least every four hours, and an inspector will ask to see the schedule.

Adapted for

Approved by

Date

K-03 Reheating food for hot holding

Applies to	All cooks
When	Any cooked and cooled food going back into hot holding
Time needed	Up to two hours, usually far less
You need	Stove, oven or combi, calibrated probe, sanitising wipes, hot-holding log
Owner	Head chef, reviewed October 2026

1. Take out only what you expect to sell this service.
2. Reheat on the stove, in the oven or in the combi. Never reheat in the bain-marie or hot cupboard; they are built to hold heat, not to raise it.
3. Stir sauces and soups so the heat reaches the middle.
4. Sanitise the probe and take the temperature in the thickest part.
5. When it reaches 165°F (74°C), keep it there for 15 seconds, then move it to hot holding.
6. Write the time and temperature on the hot-holding log.
7. Probe hot-held food every two hours and record it.
8. House rule: reheat once only. What is left at the end of service is thrown away.

Standard: 165°F (74°C) for 15 seconds, reached within two hours, then held at 135°F (57°C) or above.

If something is wrong: if the food has not reached 165°F within two hours, throw it away; if hot-held food is found below 135°F, tell the chef, who reheats it to 165°F only if it was above 135°F at the last check.

Why it matters: slow reheating leaves food sitting in the range where bacteria grow fastest.

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K-04 Cooling cooked food

Applies to	All kitchen staff, every shift
When	Any cooked food that will not be served within the hour
Time needed	10 minutes of work, plus cooling time
You need	Shallow gastronorm trays, ice bath or blast chiller, calibrated probe, cooling log
Owner	Head chef, reviewed October 2026

1. Write the time and temperature on the cooling log when the food comes off the heat.
2. Divide large batches into shallow trays, no more than about 5 cm deep.
3. Place the trays in an ice bath or the blast chiller, uncovered, with space between them.
4. Stir sauces and soups every 15 minutes.
5. Probe at the two-hour mark and record it.
6. Cover, label with the product and date, and move to the walk-in once at 41°F (5°C) or below.

Standard: from 135°F (57°C) to 70°F (21°C) within two hours, then to 41°F (5°C) or below within a further four.

If something is wrong: if the food is still above 70°F at two hours, reheat it to 165°F and start again, or throw it away, and tell the head chef.

Why it matters: the range in between is where bacteria multiply fastest.

Cooling sits inside a wider food safety plan. In the EU, Regulation 852/2004 requires food businesses to run procedures based on HACCP principles, and in England many small kitchens use the Food Standards Agency's Safer Food, Better Business pack to do it. The wider system is covered in [HACCP and restaurant food safety](#).

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F-01 Taking an allergy order

Applies to	Servers, bartenders taking food orders, the chef on the pass
When	Every time a guest mentions an allergy or intolerance
Time needed	Two to three minutes
You need	The current allergen matrix, the till
Owner	Floor manager and head chef, reviewed October 2026

1. Ask which allergen, and whether it is an allergy or a preference.
2. Check the dish against the allergen matrix. Never guess and never rely on memory.
3. Enter the order with the allergy modifier on every affected item, not as a note at the end.
4. Tell the chef on the pass in person as well.
5. The chef confirms the dish can be made safely, or offers an alternative.
6. The plate goes to the table with the person who took the order, or with a manager, not with a runner who doesn't know.

Standard: the allergen appears on the kitchen ticket for every affected item, checked against all nine major US allergens (milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soy and sesame), or the 14 that the EU and UK list.

If something is wrong: if you are not sure, say you can't guarantee the dish, and don't serve it.

Why it matters: one mistake can put a guest in hospital, and the restaurant is liable. The matrix itself, and how to keep it right when the menu changes, is the subject of [restaurant allergen management](#).

Adapted for

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F-02 Handling a complaint at the table

Applies to	Servers and the floor manager
When	Any time a guest is unhappy, at the table or at the door
Time needed	A few minutes, plus the fix
You need	The till, the shift handover log
Owner	Floor manager, reviewed October 2026

1. Go to the table straight away and listen to the whole complaint without interrupting or explaining.
2. Apologise once and mean it. Don't argue about whether the guest is right.
3. Offer something specific, such as a remake, a different dish or taking it off the bill, or ask what would put it right.
4. If the problem is the food, take the plate to the pass yourself and tell the chef.
5. Tell the floor manager about anything beyond a simple remake.
6. Record any void or comp on the till with the right reason.
7. Go back to the table after the fix and check it is now right.
8. Write the complaint and what you did in the handover log.

Standard: the guest is acknowledged within a minute and every complaint is logged, including the ones that were fixed.

If something is wrong: if a guest reports illness, an injury or something found in the food, fetch the manager at once, keep the item, write down the details and offer help without admitting fault.

Why it matters: a complaint handled well often brings the guest back, and the log shows which dishes and shifts keep causing them.

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B-01 Checking ID and refusing service

Applies to	Bartenders, and servers who serve alcohol
When	Every alcohol order from anyone who looks under 30, and any guest who appears drunk
Time needed	Under a minute
You need	A date-of-birth card at the till, the refusals log
Owner	Bar manager, reviewed October 2026

1. Ask for ID from anyone who looks under 30, every time, including regulars you haven't checked before.
2. Accept only a valid government-issued photo ID with a date of birth: passport, driving licence or national ID card.
3. Take the ID in your hand. Check the photo against the face, the date of birth, the expiry date and any sign of tampering.
4. Compare the date of birth with the card at the till, which shows the latest date a guest can be born on to be served today.
5. If there is no acceptable ID, refuse politely and don't debate it.
6. Also refuse anyone who appears drunk, and anyone buying for someone who is.
7. Use the house line: "I'm sorry, I can't serve you another drink tonight. Can I get you some water or call you a taxi?"
8. Tell the manager and write the refusal in the log: time, a short description and the reason.

Standard: no alcohol served under the legal age (21 in the US, 18 in the UK, where many venues use a Challenge 25 policy), and every refusal logged.

If something is wrong: if the guest becomes aggressive, step back and let the manager handle it; never go round the bar to argue.

Why it matters: serving a minor or a drunk guest can cost the venue its licence.

Adapted for

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Date

B-02 Pouring spirits and building cocktails

Applies to	Bartenders
When	Every drink that contains a spirit
Time needed	Part of every drink
You need	Jiggers or measured pourers, the cocktail spec book, the wastage sheet
Owner	Bar manager, reviewed October 2026

1. Pour every spirit with a jigger or a measured pourer. No free pouring.
2. Fill the jigger to the line, held level over the glass or tin.
3. Build cocktails from the spec book: same order, same glass, same ice, same garnish.
4. Ring every drink on the till before or while you make it. No drink leaves the bar without a ticket.
5. Write spills, wrong drinks and returns on the wastage sheet.
6. Check the measured pourers every Monday by pouring into a jigger, and replace any that pour long.

Standard: the house pour is 1.5 oz (44 ml). In the UK, gin, rum, vodka and whisky must be sold in 25 ml or 35 ml measures or multiples of them, and the venue must display which it uses.

If something is wrong: if a drink comes back, remake it to spec and log the first one as wastage.

Why it matters: a little extra on every pour adds up to bottles a week, which is why **bar pour cost** is watched so closely.

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B-03 Washing glasses and handling ice

Applies to	Bartenders and barbacks
When	Throughout service and at close
Time needed	Two to three minutes per rack
You need	Glasswasher, detergent and rinse aid, racks, lint-free cloths, ice scoop, broken-glass bin
Owner	Bar manager, reviewed October 2026

1. Before the first load, check the glasswasher is up to temperature and the detergent and rinse aid are not empty.
2. Empty glasses into the bar sink and remove straws, fruit and lipstick before racking.
3. Rack glasses upside down, by type, without overfilling and never one inside another.
4. Run the full cycle and don't open the door mid-cycle.
5. Let glasses air dry upside down. Polish only with a clean, dry, lint-free cloth.
6. Check every glass and put anything chipped or cracked in the broken-glass bin.
7. Fill glasses with ice using the scoop, never the glass itself, and keep the scoop in its holder, not in the ice.
8. If a glass breaks in or near the ice well, stop using it, melt all the ice with hot water, clean the well and refill it.

Standard: glasses clear, dry, without smears or chips, washed at the temperature on the machine's data plate.

If something is wrong: if glasses come out cloudy or greasy, check detergent, rinse aid and temperature, and call the service company if they are right.

Why it matters: a shard of glass in the ice is invisible until a guest finds it.

Adapted for

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Date
