



Coffee Shop SOP Manual

[Cafe Name] – [Year]

This manual is the operating standard for [Cafe Name]. It collects the standard operating procedures (SOPs) that keep every drink, shift, and location consistent. Replace each [bracketed field] with your own details. The defaults provided are tested starting points; adapt them to your menu, equipment, and local regulations.

SECTION 1

How to Use This Manual

This manual turns the knowledge in your best baristas' heads into written procedures anyone can follow on their first shift. Each SOP defines what must be done, how it is done, who is responsible, and how it will be checked. Start with the highest-risk, highest-frequency tasks (opening and closing, drink prep, food safety, and cash handling), then build out the rest over the following weeks.

1.1 The SOP Format

Every SOP in this manual follows the same audit-ready format, so each one can be observed and scored during an inspection:

- **Purpose** – why the procedure exists.
- **Scope** – which roles and locations it applies to.
- **Procedure** – step-by-step instructions with measurable criteria.
- **Frequency** – how often the task is performed.
- **Responsibility** – who performs it and who verifies it.
- **Evidence** – the photo or record that proves it was done.

If a step cannot be measured or verified, rewrite it until it can. "Steam milk until hot" cannot be checked; "steam milk to 140–150°F (60–65°C)" can.

1.2 Version Control

Each SOP carries an owner, a last-updated date, and a version number on its footer line. Review every SOP at least quarterly, and immediately after a new menu item, a new machine, a supplier change, or a recurring mistake. When an SOP is revised, retire the previous version and notify the team.

1.3 Putting SOPs to Work

A written SOP only changes anything once it becomes a checklist staff complete on shift. Turn each procedure into an on-shift checklist, verify completion with photos and timestamps, and run periodic spot audits. Section 10 covers how to audit against these SOPs and hold standards across locations.

SECTION 2

Opening & Closing Procedures

Opening and closing are the highest-frequency procedures in the cafe and set the tone for the entire trading day. A clear handover bridges the two, so the closing team sets up the opening team for success.

SOP 2.1 – Open the Cafe

OWNER: Opening barista / duty manager • LAST UPDATED: [date] • VERSION: 1.0

PURPOSE

Get the cafe fully ready to serve to standard before the first customer.

SCOPE

All opening shifts, every location.

PROCEDURE

1. Arrive [30] minutes before opening; disarm the alarm and record arrival time.
2. Walk the floor: check for overnight damage, leaks, pests, and cleanliness.
3. Power on and warm up the espresso machine ([15–20] min) and grinders.
4. Dial in the first grind: target 18g in, 36g out, 25–30 seconds. Adjust grind until in range.
5. Check fridge and display temperatures: chilled $\leq 40^{\circ}\text{F}$ (5°C). Record readings.
6. Stock the station and pastry case; date-check all items, removing anything past its use-by.
7. Count the cash float and confirm it matches the recorded amount.
8. Review the previous shift's handover notes and confirm staffing.

FREQUENCY

Daily, before opening.

RESPONSIBILITY

Opening barista performs; duty manager verifies.

EVIDENCE

Completed opening checklist, recorded temperatures, photo of stocked counter.

SOP 2.1 • Owner: [name] • Last updated: [date] • v1.0

SOP 2.2 – Close the Cafe

OWNER: Closing barista / duty manager • LAST UPDATED: [date] • VERSION: 1.0

PURPOSE

Secure the cafe, protect equipment, and leave it ready for the next open.

SCOPE

All closing shifts, every location.

PROCEDURE

1. Stop serving at close; complete final customer orders.
2. Backflush the espresso machine with detergent; clean group heads, wands, and portafilters.
3. Clean and sanitize all surfaces, equipment, and floors per the cleaning schedule (Section 5).
4. Store, cover, date, and label all food; discard anything that cannot be held safely.
5. Reconcile the till, prepare the deposit, and secure cash per Section 2.4.
6. Power down equipment in the correct sequence; check gas, water, and switches.
7. Complete the handover log for the opening team.
8. Secure all entry points and arm the alarm; record departure time.

FREQUENCY

Daily, at close.

RESPONSIBILITY

Closing barista performs; duty manager verifies.

EVIDENCE

Completed closing checklist, photo of cleaned station, signed cash reconciliation.

SOP 2.2 · Owner: [name] · Last updated: [date] · v1.0

2.3 Shift Handover

At every shift change, the outgoing lead briefs the incoming lead on outstanding customer issues, low stock or orders due, equipment problems, staffing changes, and any messages from the owner or area manager. Record the handover so nothing is lost between shifts.

2.4 Cash Handling

Count cash at the start and end of every shift. Record the float, sales, and any discrepancy. Report shortfalls over \$[X] to the [owner / area manager] within 24 hours. Restrict safe access to [designated roles] and bank deposits [daily / per schedule].

SECTION 3

Barista & Drink Preparation

This is where cafe consistency is won or lost, so it carries the most detail. Document a recipe card for every drink on your menu, including seasonal specials, so any barista can make any item correctly.

3.1 House Espresso Standard

Variable	Standard	Acceptable range
Dose (in)	18 g	17.5–18.5 g
Yield (out)	36 g	34–38 g
Shot time	27 s	25–30 s
Water temp	201°F (94°C)	200–203°F (93–95°C)
Milk temp	145°F (63°C)	140–150°F (60–65°C)

Recalibrate the grinder at open and after any change in beans, weather, or shot time drifting out of range. A shot that runs too fast needs a finer grind; too slow needs coarser.

SOP 3.2 – Steam Milk for a Flat White

OWNER: Shift lead • LAST UPDATED: [date] • VERSION: 1.0

PURPOSE

Deliver consistent milk texture and temperature on every flat white.

SCOPE

All baristas, every shift, espresso station.

PROCEDURE

1. Fill the jug to just below the spout base with cold milk.
2. Purge the steam wand for two seconds.
3. Insert the tip just below the surface; stretch two to three seconds to create microfoam.
4. Submerge the tip slightly and steam to 140–150°F (60–65°C) – the jug should be too hot to hold for more than three seconds.
5. Turn off the steam, then wipe and purge the wand immediately.
6. Swirl and tap the jug; pour within 10 seconds for the best texture.

FREQUENCY

Every flat white; technique applies to all milk drinks.

RESPONSIBILITY

Barista performs; shift lead spot-checks texture during peak.

EVIDENCE

Spot-audit observation; customer feedback trend.

SOP 3.2 • Owner: [name] • Last updated: [date] • v1.0

3.3 Drink SOPs to Document

Build a recipe card in the same format for each of the following: espresso and ristretto, americano, latte, cappuccino, cortado, mocha, hot chocolate, batch/filter brew (with brew ratio and a dump time so nothing sits past [60] minutes), pour-over, cold brew, iced drinks, and every seasonal special. Note milk alternatives separately, since oat, soy, and almond all steam differently.

SECTION 4

Food Handling, Safety & Hygiene

These SOPs keep the food side of your cafe safe and legal, and they apply even if all you serve is pastries and toasties. Allergen cross-contact, chilled storage, and date control all carry real risk.

△ **Regulation:** A cafe is a food business in the eyes of the law. In most regions you are required to keep documented food safety procedures based on HACCP principles, along with daily records. Confirm the exact requirement with your local food authority, and treat the food side as a food business, not an afterthought.

SOP 4.1 – Temperature Control & Logging

OWNER: Duty manager • LAST UPDATED: [date] • VERSION: 1.0

PURPOSE

Keep food out of the temperature danger zone and prove it with records.

SCOPE

All chilled, hot-held, and delivered food, every location.

PROCEDURE

1. Check and record fridge and display temperatures at open, mid-shift, and close: chilled $\leq 40^{\circ}\text{F}$ (5°C).
2. Hold any hot food at $\geq 140^{\circ}\text{F}$ (60°C); record at each service period.
3. On delivery, check chilled goods are $\leq 40^{\circ}\text{F}$ (5°C) before accepting; reject and log anything out of range.
4. Record every reading in the temperature log; flag and act on any out-of-range result immediately.

FREQUENCY

At open, mid-shift, close, and on every delivery.

RESPONSIBILITY

Barista records; duty manager reviews daily.

EVIDENCE

Completed temperature log; photo of delivery probe reading.

SOP 4.1 · Owner: [name] · Last updated: [date] · v1.0

4.2 Allergen Management

Label every item with its allergens and keep an up-to-date allergen matrix at the counter. Use separate utensils and storage for allergen-containing items (a nut cake stored next to nut-free items is a genuine hazard). Train staff to answer allergen questions accurately and to escalate when unsure.

4.3 Date Labeling, FIFO & Personal Hygiene

Label and date everything; rotate stock first in, first out. Cover and store food correctly. Enforce handwashing on arrival and between tasks, illness reporting, and uniform standards. Keep daily due-diligence records that prove compliance to an inspector.

SECTION 5

Cleaning & Equipment Maintenance

Cleaning protects hygiene; maintenance protects your most expensive kit. Run both to a fixed schedule rather than by memory.

5.1 Cleaning Schedule

Frequency	Tasks
Daily	Counters, tables, floors, restrooms, steam wands, drip trays, milk fridges, bins.
Weekly	Grinders and hoppers, shelving, behind and under equipment, dishwasher filter.
Monthly	Descaling, extraction and vents, fixture deep-cleans, stockroom reset.

5.2 Equipment Maintenance

- **Espresso machine:** backflush with water every [2] hours and with detergent at close; descale [monthly, or per water hardness].
- **Grinders:** brush out daily, clean the burrs weekly, check calibration.
- **Steam wands and portafilters:** purge and wipe after every use; soak portafilters [nightly].
- **Refrigeration:** check seals and temperatures daily; log and report faults at once.

SECTION 6

Customer Service & Front-of-House

These SOPs turn "be friendly" into something you can train and check.

- **Greeting:** greet every customer within 10 seconds of them reaching the counter; make eye contact and wear a visible name badge.
- **Order taking:** confirm the order back, enter it accurately at the POS, and give a clear wait time.
- **Mobile and online orders:** follow the [pickup] workflow; stage and label orders so they are easy to collect.
- **Complaint recovery:** listen, apologize, fix it on the spot where possible, and log it. Escalate anything you cannot resolve to the duty manager.
- **Cleanliness and turnover:** clear and wipe tables within [3] minutes; keep the floor and restrooms checked hourly.

SECTION 7

Inventory, Ordering & Suppliers

Keep stock flowing without waste or stockouts.

- **Par levels:** set a minimum and reorder point for every item, including milk alternatives and packaging.
- **Ordering:** count stock and place orders on [days]; record what is ordered and when it is due.
- **Receiving:** check temperature, quality, and quantity against the order; reject and log anything wrong.
- **Suppliers:** keep an approved supplier list; review each supplier [annually] with a self-assessment.
- **Waste:** log waste daily so you can see what you are losing and why.

SECTION 8

Staff, Training & Admin

In a sector with high staff turnover, this layer keeps quality from collapsing every time someone leaves.

- **Onboarding:** Week 1 covers facility orientation, safety, and core SOPs for the role; Month 1 covers all role SOPs plus a supervised practical assessment.
- **Barista sign-off:** no one works the bar solo until assessed against the espresso, milk, and drink SOPs and signed off by a [shift lead].
- **Conduct:** uniform, hygiene, and behavior standards apply to every shift.
- **Daily reporting:** record sales, waste, incidents, and notes for the next shift.

SECTION 9

Health, Safety & Emergencies

Write these before you need them; they are rarely used and easy to skip, which is exactly why they matter.

- **First aid:** procedures for burns, slips, and cuts; keep a stocked, accessible kit and a named first aider.
- **Fire and evacuation:** clear exits, monthly extinguisher checks, and a posted evacuation plan.
- **Incident reporting:** log every injury, customer incident, and near-miss within [24] hours; report serious incidents to the [owner] immediately.
- **Chemical safety (COSHH):** store cleaning chemicals correctly with safety data sheets on file.
- **Contingencies:** written rules for a power outage, refrigeration failure, equipment breakdown, and security incident, so staff act rather than guess.

SECTION 10

Quality Control & Audits

SOPs only hold if they are checked. A structured audit program confirms the standards in this manual are followed on every shift and across every location.

10.1 Types of Checks

- **Self-audits:** daily or weekly checks by the duty manager using digital checklists, submitted automatically.
- **Spot audits:** periodic owner or area-manager checks that verify self-audit results are accurate.
- **Mystery shopping:** unannounced visits scored against the front-of-house standards in Section 6.

10.2 Scoring & Corrective Actions

Score every audit on a percentage basis with a minimum passing score of [90]%. When a check fails, raise a corrective action with a description, the required fix, an owner, a deadline, and the evidence needed to close it (usually a photo). Track actions centrally so nothing is lost, and review scores across locations to spot drift before customers do.

10.3 Keeping Standards Consistent Across Locations

Run every site from this one central set of SOPs, push updates everywhere at once, and compare per-site scores on the same schedule. Consistency across locations is a measurement problem as much as a documentation one: if you cannot see how each cafe is performing, you cannot hold the line.

Turn this manual into scored digital checklists

GoAudits converts your SOPs into mobile checklists your team completes on shift, with photo and timestamp proof, action plans, and a multi-site score dashboard. Start a 14-day free trial, or book a demo to see it on your own SOPs.

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