

Restaurant Opening & Closing Checklist

Checklist · US · Updated 2026-07-13 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

A restaurant opening and closing checklist is the written sequence of tasks staff complete before the doors open and after the last guest leaves — temperature checks, sanitizer setup, line readiness at open; shutdown, cleaning, cash-out, and lock-up at close. It turns the two most error-prone hours of the day into a signed routine anyone trusted with keys can run.

The opening checks are also your daily health-inspection readiness: an inspector can walk in during service, and the operator who verified cooler temperatures, sanitizer concentration, and handwashing stations at 8 a.m. has nothing to scramble for. The closing checks protect the other end — the cash, the equipment left running, and the building itself.

This checklist covers the opening food safety checks, front-of-house setup, the closing shutdown and cleaning sequence, and the cash-out and security routine, with a sign-off line for each section.

Purpose and scope

This checklist sets out how [Your company] opens and closes [location] each day. It applies to every keyholder and to all staff rostered on opening or closing shifts. The opening manager signs the opening sections before doors open; the closing manager signs the closing sections before setting the alarm.

Completed checklists are the daily record that the routine happened — file them at [system/location].

Opening — food safety checks

1. Walk the building on arrival: check for signs of forced entry before unlocking. If anything looks wrong, do not enter — call [police/manager] from a safe distance.
2. Check and record all cooler and freezer temperatures on the temperature log — cold holding at 41°F or below per the FDA Food Code. Flag any unit out of range to [name/role] and do not use food from it until cleared.
3. Check dates and condition of prepped items from yesterday; discard anything out of date or of doubtful history and record it on the waste log.
4. Set up handwashing stations: soap, paper towels, and warm water at every station — an unstocked hand sink is one of the most common inspection findings.
5. Mix sanitizer buckets and test the concentration with test strips ([sanitizer type and target range per manufacturer label]); record the result.
6. Turn on cooking and holding equipment in the order listed for the site ([equipment list and warm-up times]) and confirm hot-holding units reach 135°F or above per the FDA Food Code before loading food.

Opening — line and front of house

1. Stock and organize the line to the prep list; label and date everything that gets portioned or opened.

2. Check restrooms: clean, stocked, and working — then recheck at [frequency] through the day.
3. Count each register drawer against the standard float ([amount]) with a second person where possible and record it.
4. Walk the dining room and entry: floors dry and clear, exits unobstructed, signage and lighting on, temperature comfortable.
5. Brief the team: today's menu changes, 86'd items, reservations or events, and one safety or service point — then unlock the doors at [time], not before this checklist is signed.

Closing — kitchen shutdown and cleaning

1. Confirm all guests have left, including restrooms, then lock the doors at [time].
2. Shut down cooking equipment in the listed order and confirm fryers, ranges, ovens, and hoods are off — off, not idle. [Filter/cover fryers per site procedure.]
3. Wrap, label, date, and refrigerate all remaining food; discard anything that sat out beyond its safe window and record it on the waste log.
4. Check and record closing cooler and freezer temperatures on the temperature log.
5. Run the closing cleaning tasks from the kitchen cleaning schedule: line, prep surfaces, floors, and the dish area run empty and clean.
6. Take trash and recycling to [location], lock the dumpster area, and close the back door — propped back doors are the classic closing-time security hole.

Closing — cash-out and security

1. Cash out each drawer away from windows and public view, with two people where staffing allows; record takings against the POS report and never adjust a number to make it balance.
2. Restore floats, seal takings, and secure everything in the safe; note any variance for [name/role] before leaving.
3. Do the final walk-through: equipment off, faucets off, windows shut, interior doors closed, nobody left in the building — including walk-ins and restrooms.
4. Turn off lights per the site list, set the alarm, exit within [number] seconds, and test the final door lock before leaving.
5. Record the close on the daily sheet: time, your name, and anything unusual to hand over to the opening team.

Records and review

Signed opening and closing checklists, temperature logs, and waste logs are kept at [system/location] for [period]. They are your evidence trail for the health inspector, your insurer, and any investigation into a loss.

This checklist is reviewed [frequency, e.g. quarterly], after any inspection finding or security incident, and whenever the menu, equipment, or hours change. Owner: [name/role]. Next review due: [date].

How to use this template

1. Walk the open and the close with your most experienced manager and reconcile what they actually do with this template — then keep the better version.
2. Fill in your real equipment list, in the exact on/off order, and your sanitizer type and target concentration from the manufacturer's label.
3. Check your state and local food code for anything stricter than the FDA Food Code baseline and adjust the checks to match.
4. Split the checklist by station if more than two people open or close, so each person signs for their own tasks.
5. Audit a week of completed checklists each month — unsigned lines and identical times every day both tell you the checklist is being pencil-whipped.

Official guidance

- › [FDA — Food Code](#)
- › [FDA — Retail food protection](#)

This template is provided in good faith and for general information — it is not legal advice. Adapt it to your organisation and, where your sector carries specific legal requirements, have the finished document reviewed by a qualified adviser. The live version at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/restaurant-opening-closing-checklist> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.