

# Restaurant Staff Training SOP

SOP · UK · Updated 2026-08-09 · Square brackets are placeholders to replace with your own details.

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A restaurant staff training SOP is the written procedure for how a restaurant trains its team: the training path for each role across front-of-house, kitchen and back-of-house, when food safety and allergen training happen, how shadowing works, who signs off competence, and how training is refreshed when menus and procedures change.

Restaurants mostly train by osmosis — a new starter follows whoever is on shift, absorbs their habits good and bad, and is running a section by Friday. With turnover as high as hospitality's, the gaps compound fast: menu knowledge that stops at "I think there are nuts in it", stations run by people who were never signed off, and no records when an inspector or an allergen incident demands them. A written SOP is how the Tuesday lunch crew and the Saturday night crew end up trained to the same standard.

This template is the restaurant-specific version of our general staff training SOP. It is deliberately jurisdiction-neutral: it quotes no training levels, allergen lists, or legal intervals, and instead points you to your local food safety authority for the current rules where you operate.

## Purpose and scope

This SOP sets out how [Your company] trains restaurant staff at [site name]: the training path for each role, when food safety and allergen training happen, how shadowing and sign-off work, and how training stays current as menus change. It applies to everyone on the rota — full-time, part-time, casual and agency staff — from their first shift.

It works alongside our food safety management system ([e.g. HACCP-based plan / national scheme pack]) and our general staff training procedure. Where this SOP and the food safety management system differ, the food safety management system wins and this SOP is corrected.

## Roles and responsibilities

- [General manager / owner] owns this SOP and the training matrix, and answers for every sign-off made under it.
- [Head chef / kitchen manager] owns kitchen and back-of-house training content; [restaurant manager / FOH manager] owns front-of-house content.
- Shift managers deliver or arrange training, run knowledge checks, and record completions on the shift they happen — not afterwards.
- Training buddies are named, signed-off staff, chosen in advance — never simply whoever is standing closest on the night.
- Every team member: do not run a station or section you have not been signed off on, and never guess the answer to an allergen question.

## The core path — every role

Before anyone works their first service, they complete the core path:

- Fire and emergency procedures for the building, including evacuation routes, assembly point, and what to do mid-service.
- Accident, incident and near-miss reporting — what counts, and who to tell.
- Personal hygiene and fitness-to-work rules, including when illness means staying away from food and who to notify.
- Allergen basics: where the allergen matrix lives, the never-guess rule, and how to route an allergen question to the right person.
- Conduct essentials: [dress code, phone policy, till and cash handling, service of intoxicated customers — list yours].

## Front-of-house training path

Front-of-house staff are trained and signed off on:

- Menu knowledge — every dish, what is in it, how it is cooked, and an honest answer to "what is it like?". Knowledge checks repeat at every menu change.
- Allergen conversations: taking an allergen order, flagging it to the kitchen using [dockets/system], confirming the right plate at the pass, and what to do when the answer is uncertain — say so, check, or offer an alternative. Never guess.
- Service steps: greeting, order-taking, [your table service standards], handling complaints, and the limits of their comp and refund authority.
- Systems: POS operation, [reservations/table management system], and end-of-shift cash-up.
- Age-restricted sales where [Your company] serves alcohol: checking ID, refusing service, and the licensing conditions that apply at your premises.

## Kitchen and back-of-house training path

Kitchen and back-of-house staff are trained and signed off on:

- Food safety controls for their station: temperature checks and logging, cross-contamination and allergen separation, date labelling and rotation, and the cleaning schedule they own.
- Station-by-station competence: each section ([prep, larder, grill, fry, pastry, pot wash — list your stations]) is trained and signed off separately. Sign-off on one station does not carry to another.
- Knife skills and equipment safety, including any equipment that must not be used before specific training or [age restrictions you apply].
- Deliveries and storage: checking goods in, rejecting unsafe deliveries, and putting stock away in the right order.
- Safe use of cleaning chemicals, waste handling, and pest awareness.

## Food safety and allergen training

Food safety training at [Your company] is scheduled by role, not by convenience:

- Before the first shift handling food: instruction in the essentials of food hygiene — hand washing, personal hygiene, fitness to work — delivered and recorded before food is touched.
- Within [timescale] of starting: food hygiene training to the level your local food safety authority expects for the role — higher for anyone preparing open food and for supervisors. [State the course or level [Your company] uses, and whether you require certificates.]
- Allergen training for everyone who takes orders, serves food, or prepares it: the allergen matrix, cross-contact in the kitchen, and the exact words to use with customers.
- The allergen matrix is kept at [location/system], is versioned, and is updated before any menu or recipe change reaches service — see the new-menu rollout section.
- Where certificates are required or chosen ([list]), copies are filed with the training record and expiry dates are tracked by [name/role].

## Shadowing structure

1. Assign each starter a named training buddy who is signed off on the role being taught.
2. Observe: the starter shadows [number] shifts watching the buddy work the role, with time off the floor to ask questions.
3. Assist: the starter works the role alongside the buddy, who checks and corrects in real time.
4. Lead: the starter runs the role or station with the buddy observing, through at least [number] services including one peak service.
5. Sign-off: [manager / head chef] confirms competence against the training matrix. Sign-off is earned by demonstrated competence, not by number of shifts survived.
6. Until sign-off, the starter does not run a section, station, or service alone.

## Sign-off and training records

For every completed training item, the record shows:

- What was trained, the date, and who delivered and verified it.
- How competence was checked — knowledge check, observed service, or test dishes — and the result.
- The version of the menu, allergen matrix, or procedure the training was delivered against.
- The next refresher due date.
- The trainee and the trainer confirm the record on the shift it happens — never reconstructed later. Records are kept in [system/location] for [retention period] and produced on request for inspections, audits, and insurers.

## Refresher cadence

- Every topic in the training matrix has a stated refresher cycle. Refresh food safety and allergen training at least every [twelve months], or sooner where your local food safety authority, insurer, or certification scheme expects it.

- Menu knowledge refreshes at every menu change — see new-menu rollouts below.
- Out-of-cycle refreshers are triggered by: an inspection finding, a food safety or allergen near-miss, a complaint that reveals a knowledge gap, a change to equipment or procedures, or a return from [number] weeks' absence.
- A missed refresher is treated like an expired sign-off: the person does not work the affected station or take allergen orders until it is done.

## New-menu rollouts

1. Update the allergen matrix and dish spec sheets before the new menu is served to anyone — no dish goes on sale before its allergen information exists.
2. Train the kitchen on each new dish — spec, portioning, allergen separation, holding — signed off per station.
3. Brief front-of-house with a tasting and a written crib: what each dish is, what is in it, what to recommend, and its allergens.
4. Update the POS and check that dockets carry the right allergen flags before first service.
5. Knowledge-check front-of-house and kitchen on the new dishes before they serve them; anyone who misses the check is briefed before their next shift.
6. Record the rollout: date, menu version, who was trained, and who signed it off.

## Review and ownership

[Job title] owns this SOP and the training matrix. Both are reviewed every [twelve months] and whenever the menu changes materially, a new station or piece of equipment arrives, an inspection or incident exposes a gap, or your local food safety authority updates its guidance.

## How to use this template

1. List your actual roles and stations first — the training matrix should mirror your floor plan and kitchen sections, not a generic org chart.
2. Check your local food safety authority's current guidance on food hygiene and allergen training before setting levels, courses, or certificate requirements.
3. Set shadow-shift counts and sign-off criteria per role, and name who is allowed to sign off — competence checks fail when anyone can tick the box.
4. Decide where training records and the allergen matrix live, and version both, so every sign-off can name exactly what it was against.
5. Walk the new-menu rollout section against your last menu change — the gaps you find are the ones to fix before the next one.
6. Run the SOP on your next real starter, fix what did not survive contact with service, then brief every manager on it.

## Official guidance

**TrainedTeam**Free template · full version and updates at <https://trainedteam.com/templates/restaurant-staff-training-sop>

- › [GOV.UK — Running a food business: staff training and hygiene](#)
- › [GOV.UK — Allergen guidance for food businesses](#)
- › [HSE — Providing training and information](#)

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-staff-training-sop> is kept current; this file is a snapshot.