

OPERATOR TOOLKIT

Opening & Closing Checklist Pack

Printable shift checklists by role — front of house, back of house, bar and manager — with sign-off lines, a weekly deep-clean rota and a manager verification log. Assign one owner per list, initial with a time, and spot-check a few items every night.

READ THIS FIRST

How to make these checklists stick

A checklist fails for one of three reasons: it is too long, it is unowned, or nobody ever verifies it. This pack is built to avoid all three. Every list fits one page, every list has one owner per shift, and the manager verifies a rotating sample instead of re-checking everything.

- 1. Assign by name.** “The closers” is not a person. At the start of each shift, the manager writes one name on each list. A task assigned to everyone is assigned to no one.
- 2. Initial with a time.** Each completed line gets initials; the finished list gets a completion time and the owner’s name at the bottom. It takes seconds and it changes behaviour, because completing and skipping no longer look identical.
- 3. Verify a rotating handful.** The manager on duty spot-checks three to five items per shift — different ones every night — and initials the verification line. Staff learn that any item might be the one that gets checked. The verification log at the back of this pack gives you a week per page.
- 4. Edit ruthlessly.** Cross out tasks that do not apply, write in the ones we missed, and re-print quarterly. Every dead item left on a sheet teaches the team the whole sheet can be ignored. A checklist your team edited is one they will actually run.
- 5. Let the POS carry its share.** Drawer counts, void and comp review, and the daily sales summary belong to your POS closeout, not to memory. The manager pages here assume you run them every night.

OPENING · FRONT OF HOUSE

Opening — Front of house

Target: finished 15 minutes before doors. Typical time: 30–45 minutes.

Done	Task	Initials
	Lights on, music on, thermostat set to service temperature	
	Walk the entrance: glass, door handles, mats, sidewalk sign or patio out	
	Chairs down; tables wiped, level and set to standard	
	Menus checked — pull anything worn, stained or out of date	
	Sanitizer buckets mixed and test-stripped at each station	
	Server stations stocked: roll-ups, condiments, straws, to-go supplies	
	Coffee, tea and fountain machines on, first batch brewed and tasted	
	Bathrooms: cleaned overnight? stocked — paper, soap, bin liners	
	Reservations and large parties reviewed; floor plan adjusted	
	POS terminals awake and logged in; receipt paper loaded	

Concept-specific lines — write in your own: _____

Owner (name):

Completed at (time):

Verified by (MOD): _____

OPENING · BACK OF HOUSE

Opening — Back of house

Equipment first, then stock, then temperatures. Typical time: 45–60 minutes.

Done	Task	Initials
	Hood/ventilation on first, then fryers, ovens, grills, steam table	
	Walk-in and reach-ins: door seals intact, temperatures logged on every unit	
	Any product left out overnight or out of temp — flag it, do not serve it	
	Line stocked to par from the prep list; backups pulled to thaw	
	Date checks: rotate FIFO, discard anything expired or unlabelled	
	Sanitizer buckets and towels at every station; test strips used	
	Handwash sinks stocked: soap, paper towels, nothing stored in them	
	Dish area ready: machine on, chemicals checked, racks clear	
	Receiving area clear; invoices from yesterday filed for the office	
	Line check with the manager or chef: setup, temps, taste	

Pair this page with a temperature log if your health authority requires recorded readings — our Daily line check & food safety log covers it.

Owner (name):

Completed at (time):

Verified by (MOD): _____

OPENING · BAR

Opening — Bar

Count money before you touch product. Typical time: 30–45 minutes.

Done	Task	Initials
	Count the float against the slip; sign the count sheet	
	Wells stocked and faced; speed rails to par	
	Juices and mixes: dated, tasted, topped up; batch cocktails checked	
	Garnishes cut and covered; fruit from last night inspected or tossed	
	Kegs: levels checked, blow-outs swapped, CO2 pressure verified	
	Draft lines: first pour tested from every tap	
	Glassware racks full; polish anything spotted	
	Ice bins filled; scoops out of the ice, on their holders	
	Bar top, rails and mats wiped and dry	
	Bar POS logged in; spill sheet and comp log blank and ready	

Owner (name):

Completed at (time):

Verified by (MOD): _____

OPENING · MANAGER ON DUTY

Opening — Manager

The manager opens the business, not just the building. Typical time: 20–30 minutes plus the walkthrough.

Done	Task	Initials
	Alarm off, walk the perimeter: doors, windows, any sign of entry	
	Safe count verified against last night's closeout sheet	
	Each drawer counted and issued; bar float issued against signature	
	Yesterday's daily sales report reviewed: sales, voids, comps, variances	
	Any cash variance over threshold: note it and raise it today, not next week	
	86 list cleared or confirmed; specials and price changes entered in the POS	
	Bookings, events and staffing checked against today's forecast	
	Line check walked with the opening cook; FOH walkthrough with a guest's eyes	
	Deliveries expected today: who receives, where invoices go	
	Five minutes with the team before doors: specials, 86s, targets	

Owner (name):

Completed at (time):

Verified by (MOD):

CLOSING · FRONT OF HOUSE

Closing — Front of house

Closing starts when the last table is greeted, not when it leaves. Typical time: 30–45 minutes after last guest.

Done	Task	Initials
☐	Tables and chairs wiped; dining room reset for tomorrow	
☐	Floors swept and mopped; mats moved, not mopped around	
☐	Condiments consolidated, capped, refrigerated where required	
☐	Server stations broken down and wiped; linen bagged	
☐	Coffee and fountain equipment cleaned per schedule	
☐	Bathrooms: cleaned, stocked, bins emptied	
☐	Trash out; boxes broken down; back door locked after	
☐	Lost and found logged; guest items labelled with date and table	
☐	Lights, music and signs off; thermostat to overnight setting	
☐	Windows, doors and patio locked and checked twice	

Owner (name):

Completed at (time):

Verified by (MOD):

CLOSING · BACK OF HOUSE

Closing — Back of house

Wrap, label, date — before anything else. Typical time: 45–60 minutes.

Done	Task	Initials
	Line broken down: product wrapped, labelled, dated, back in the walk-in	
	Cold-holding temperatures logged one last time	
	Equipment cleaned and shut down in reverse of opening order	
	Flat-top, grill and fryer cleaned on schedule — “tomorrow” is how buildup wins	
	Hood filters and deep-clean items done on their assigned night (see rota)	
	Cutting boards, tools and small wares washed, sanitized, air-drying	
	Dish machine drained, cleaned, left open; final rack put away	
	Floors swept, degreased and squeegeed; drains cleared	
	Trash and grease out; dumpster area tidy; pest doors shut	
	Walk-in door firmly shut, seal checked, curtain in place	

Owner (name):

Completed at (time):

Verified by (MOD): _____

CLOSING · BAR

Closing — Bar

The bar close protects tomorrow's first pour. Typical time: 30–45 minutes.

Done	Task	Initials
	Last call handled per house policy; bar top cleared	
	Liquor locked; count any bottles your policy requires	
	Draft taps capped; lines rinsed on their cleaning schedule	
	Garnishes covered and dated or tossed — fruit flies are a choice	
	Juices and mixes capped, dated, refrigerated	
	Ice bins drained and wiped; scoops racked	
	Glassware washed and racked; last rack from the machine put away	
	Mats pulled and washed; bar floor swept and mopped	
	Drains cleaned and treated; towels bagged	
	Bar POS closed out; drawer pulled to the office with the MOD	

Owner (name):

Completed at (time):

Verified by (MOD): _____

CLOSING · MANAGER ON DUTY

Closing — Manager

This page is where the money lives. Do it in this order, every night.

Done	Task	Initials
	Every drawer counted against the POS closeout — with a second person present	
	Variance over threshold? Investigate tonight while memories are fresh; log it	
	Voids, comps and discounts reviewed line by line — five minutes, every night	
	Daily sales report run and filed; tomorrow's notes written down	
	Deposit prepared and secured with a witness; safe counted and locked	
	Tips paid or recorded per your tip policy	
	Labor check: everyone clocked out? fix missed punches now	
	Final walk: heat sources off, water off, walk-in shut, lights out	
	Alarm set; doors locked; parking lot glance for stragglers	
	Anything broken, 86'd or weird tonight — written where the opener will see it	

Owner (name):

Completed at (time):

Verified by (MOD):

WEEKLY DEEP-CLEAN ROTA

Spread the heavy jobs across the week

Daily lists stay short because the heavy jobs live here. Assign each night's job to the closing team, initial when done. Adjust to your equipment and local requirements.

Night	Deep-clean task	Done / initials
Monday	Fryers boiled out; oil filtered or changed; test oil quality	
Tuesday	Reach-ins emptied, shelves washed, gaskets wiped	
Wednesday	Hood filters through the dish machine; hood exterior degreased	
Thursday	Walk-in: floors, shelves, fan guards; FIFO audit	
Friday	Bar: draft line check, soda guns torn down, coolers wiped	
Saturday	FOH: high dusting, vents, windows, menu wipe-down	
Sunday	Ovens and flat-top deep clean; equipment casters and walls behind the line	

MANAGER VERIFICATION LOG

Spot-check log — one week per page

Each shift, pick three to five items from any list — different ones every night — check them yourself, and log the result. Print a fresh copy each week.

Day	Shift	Items checked (list + line)	Pass ?	Follow-up / notes	MOD initials
Mon	AM / PM				
	AM / PM				
Tue	AM / PM				
	AM / PM				
Wed	AM / PM				
	AM / PM				
Thu	AM / PM				
	AM / PM				
Fri	AM / PM				
	AM / PM				
Sat	AM / PM				
	AM / PM				
Sun	AM / PM				
	AM / PM				

More free tools — recipe costing, prep lists and par levels, daily sales report, labour planner and more — at novaryq.com/resources. Guides for running a better restaurant at novaryq.com/blog.