

The Daily Operations SOP Framework

A documentation and checklist standard for beverage retail and foodservice operations.

I. Documentation Method

- Shadow the founder or current operator through complete shift cycles, opening through close, across multiple days to capture variation. Transcribe every action, not just the “important” ones.
- Convert the transcription into discrete, checkable procedures. AI-assisted transcription now compresses this step from weeks to days.
- Treat the resulting document as version-controlled and living. Revise on staff input and operational learning, not on a fixed annual cycle.

II. Required Checklist Categories

- **Opening Procedures:** station and equipment setup, ingredient prep, inventory pre-check, sanitation pass, final walkthrough before doors open.
- **Closing Procedures:** equipment shutdown and cleaning, end-of-day inventory count, cash reconciliation, financial close-out steps.
- **Shift Handover Protocol:** inventory and cash drawer counts communicated between outgoing and incoming staff, plus a running issue log so nothing gets lost between shifts.
- **Equipment Maintenance Cadence:** daily, weekly, and monthly maintenance tiers, with a defined escalation path when something needs repair, not just cleaning.
- **Health and Safety Procedures:** handling protocols, food-safety compliance, spill and breakage response, emergency procedures.

III. Quality Control Layer

- Standardize preparation specs precisely: temperature, timing, ratio, documented per product, not left to staff judgment.
- Run a recurring tasting or cupping audit, weekly is a reasonable cadence, to catch consistency drift before a customer does.
- Build customer feedback into the QC loop formally, as a data input, not an informal complaint channel.

IV. Why Documentation Alone Isn't Enough

- Writing the SOP is the easy half. The harder half is training staff to understand the reasoning behind each procedure, since teams that understand why a step exists follow it more consistently and catch when it needs to change. A checklist without that context degrades into box-checking within a few months.

V. Diligence Signal

- A documented SOP system de-risks key-person dependency, the most common hidden liability in an owner-operated retail target.
- Its absence signals a founder-bottlenecked operation, a red flag in any post-close continuity assessment.