

Bar & Pub Checklists

Goods-In · Cellar, Kegs & Gas · Beer Line Cleaning · Opening & Responsible Service · Glassware, Ice & Bar Hygiene · Closing, Cash & Pour Cost

Goods-In: Kegs, Spirits & Bar Deliveries

Cellar losses start at the delivery door. Count every keg and case. Write the date on every one. Never sign for stock you have not checked yourself.

COUNT AND CHECK BEFORE YOU SIGN

- ☐ **Count every keg, cask, case, and gas cylinder against the delivery note and your order**
A short delivery means you lose money you already paid for. It can also mean a tap runs dry at your busiest time. Sign only for what you actually counted.
- ☐ **Write down the date code on every keg and cask. Reject anything you cannot sell before it goes bad.**
If you never date your stock, you cannot rotate it. It sits too long and pours old beer that you already paid full price for.
- ☐ **Check the temperature of chilled deliveries - bar food, dairy, juice, and cut garnish - with a probe. It must read 0–5°C (32–41°F). Reject anything above 8°C (46°F).**
Stock that arrives warm spoils early. Garnish and mixers you paid for end up in the bin before the weekend.
- ☐ **Check gas cylinders. Confirm the correct gas blend, an in-date test stamp, and that each cylinder is chained upright. Test connections for leaks with the regulator on.**
A leaking CO2 or mixed-gas line can empty a cylinder overnight. You lose the gas, and the cellar becomes unsafe to enter.

GET IT INTO THE CELLAR SO IT ROTATES AND SELLS

- ☐ **Stack new kegs and casks behind the stock already there (the oldest stock first, FIFO). Write the tap-on date on each one in chalk.**
The oldest container gets used first. Nothing sits in the corner too long while a newer keg is on tap.
- ☐ **Count spirits and wine into a locked store. Get two signatures on the intake sheet.**
Full bottles are the easiest stock to steal from the building. A counted, locked intake is the cheapest way to stop that.
- ☐ **Log every shortage, breakage, wrong item, and warm case before the driver leaves. Ask for credit on each one.**
If you do not claim credit, you lose that money. Tracking accuracy by supplier is what fixes your next order.

Cellar, Kegs & Gas

Cold, clean, in date, and safe to walk into. The cellar decides what the tap can pour.

TEMPERATURE FROM KEG TO GLASS

- ☐ **Write down the cellar and keg cold store temperature at opening, mid-shift, and closing.**
Beer held at the wrong temperature pours cloudy, foams at the tap, and tastes flat. That is the fastest way to lose a regular draught customer.
- ☐ **Check that the python (trunk line) cooler and its pump are running, and that the line is cold at the font.**
A cold cellar with a broken python still serves a warm pint. The last few metres of line decide if you win or lose the sale.
- ☐ **Before service starts, check the temperature of the first pour on each line against its serving target.**
Serving temperature is what the customer actually tastes. One degree off can mean a returned pint.

KEGS, CASKS AND GAS

- ☐ **Check tap-on dates against your sell-through window, and take off anything past it**
A keg left on gas too long pours slow and flat. Every pint from it is worse than what the brewer made.
- ☐ **Read and log the gas cylinder contents or pressure. Change cylinders before service starts, never during it.**
Running out of gas at your busiest time stops every draught line at once. It also causes foam in the first pints after you change the cylinder.
- ☐ **Before you enter the cellar, check the ventilation is running and the CO2 alarm reads clear.**
CO2 has no smell and collects near the floor. A leaking cellar can hurt someone before it costs you any money.

CELLAR HYGIENE AND LINE CONDITION

- ☐ **Clean and sanitise keg couplers, cask taps, spears, and the cellar floor and drains.**
The coupler is the first thing beer touches after it leaves the keg. A dirty coupler can dirty a freshly cleaned line again within days.
- ☐ **Write down when each beer line was installed. Put its replacement date in your diary.**
Old tubing holds bacteria (biofilm) that survives even a strong clean (caustic). You cannot scrub your way out of an old line.

Beer Line Cleaning Cycle

Clean every line on schedule, and sign and date each clean. Hour for hour, this is the job that pays back the most.

RUN THE CYCLE AND PROVE IT

- ☐ **Clean every line on schedule - 14 days (Brewers Association) or 7 days (Cask Marque). Do not skip a line just because it was quiet.**
About one pint in three is poured through a line that is overdue for cleaning. The quiet line is usually the worst one.
- ☐ **Sign and date the cleaning log for each line. Write down who did the cleaning.**
A clean with no signature cannot be proven. The log shows which line was missed, and it is what you show a brewer, auditor, or insurer.
- ☐ **If a line is past its replacement date, clean it more often, or replace the tubing.**
Biofilm on old tubing grows back within a day of a caustic clean. Old lines need cleaning more often, or need to be replaced.

CLEAN IT PROPERLY, NOT QUICKLY

- ☐ **Circulate cleaner at the stated strength for the full contact time. Do not just rinse it through.**
A rushed clean leaves live biofilm behind. You have spent the beer and the work, and gained nothing.
- ☐ **Take apart, soak, and brush the taps, spouts, nozzles, sparklers, and keg couplers.**
The tap and spout are the dirtiest part of the whole system. They are also the last thing the beer touches on its way out.
- ☐ **Clean fob detectors every cycle. Take them fully apart and hand-clean them quarterly.**
A dirty fob detector causes foaming in the line. This dumps beer you could have sold into the drip tray every time you change a keg.
- ☐ **Rinse until you cannot detect any cleaner. Pull a pint through and taste it before the line goes back into use.**
Leftover cleaner spoils the taste of the first pints. Tasting the beer is the only proof the clean worked.

CHECK THE SYSTEM AND COST THE CLEAN

- ☐ **Time how long it takes to pour a pint. At about 59 ml per second, a US 16 fl oz (473 ml) pint takes about 8 seconds, and an imperial 568 ml pint takes about 9.6 seconds.**
If your pour is far from the right rate for your pint size, you have a pressure or blockage problem. That problem later shows up as foam, waste, and short measures.
- ☐ **Write down how much beer each line loses to cleaning. Compare that to what poor quality is costing you.**
The beer lost to cleaning is small and easy to measure. The beer lost to poor quality is large and hard to see. Put both numbers on the same page.

Opening & Responsible Service

The licence on the wall, correct measures on the optics, ice in the well, and every server briefed before the first customer arrives.

LEGAL BEFORE THE DOORS OPEN

- ☐ **Display the licence, licence summary, permitted hours, price list, and measures notices. Make sure they are all current.**
Trading outside your licence, or without the required notices, is the one mistake that can close the bar, not just cost you a sale.
- ☐ **Brief the shift on the ID policy. Confirm the refusals log is open on the bar.**
Test buyers succeed far more often than most operators expect. A refusals log written at the time is your best defence.
- ☐ **Brief the shift on refusing service to drunk customers, and on what to offer them instead.**
Servers rarely refuse an obviously drunk customer unless they have trained and practised it. Making it up on the spot does not work.

SET UP TO POUR ACCURATELY

- ☐ **Check that optics, thimble measures, jiggers, and lined glasses hold the correct legal amount. Make sure they are undamaged and stamped.**
A worn measure or an unlined glass either gives the customer too little, or gives away your profit. Both cost you money.
- ☐ **Fill the ice wells. Keep the scoop in its holder outside the ice. Do not store or chill anything buried in the ice.**
Ice counts as food. Germs usually get in through the machine, the well, and the scoop, not the water supply.
- ☐ **Prepare, date-label, and chill garnish, juice, and dairy at 0–5°C (32–41°F).**
Garnish costs little on its own, but it becomes a big waste cost. Prep that is not dated gets thrown out instead of sold.

SET UP TO SELL

- ☐ **Pull and check every tap. Each one should pour clear, cold, and with the right amount of foam.**
The first pour tells you which line has a problem, before a paying customer finds out.
- ☐ **Face and fill the back bar. Remove any draught line you cannot sell through before it goes bad.**
Stock you cannot sell through ties up your cash and goes stale on the line. Keep what sells, and remove what does not.

- ☐ **Review last night's cash variance, fob and waste log, and any items that sold out. Adjust today's stock levels (par) if needed.**
Last night's numbers are the only thing that stops tonight from repeating the same loss.

HYGIENE & SAFETY

- ☐ **Ask every staff member if they feel sick before the shift starts.**
Sick staff can spread illness through food and drinks. Send a sick worker home.
- ☐ **Have staff wash hands and put on clean gloves before they touch ice, garnish, or drinks.**
Dirty hands spread germs into drinks and garnish. Clean hands and gloves stop this.
- ☐ **Mix your wipe-down sanitizer to the correct strength (ppm) before you open.**
Weak sanitizer does not kill germs. The correct strength keeps bar surfaces safe.
- ☐ **Check that the allergen list for bar food, garnish, and cocktail mixers is correct and on display.**
Customers with allergies need correct information. A wrong or missing list can cause harm.

Glassware, Ice & Bar Hygiene

A dirty glass ruins a perfect pint. Wash it hot, sanitise it to the right strength, and keep the ice as clean as the water it came from.

THE GLASSWASHER ITSELF

- ☐ **Check wash and rinse temperatures for your machine's type. Hot-water mechanical rinse: 82°C (180°F). Stationary-rack single-temperature: 74°C (165°F). Chemical-sanitising spray-type wash: at least 49°C (120°F).**
A machine that does not reach the right temperature just moves warm, dirty water around. It spreads film onto glasses instead of removing it.
- ☐ **Test sanitiser strength with strips. Chlorine: 50–100 ppm. Iodine: 12.5–25 ppm. Quats: follow the maker's instructions.**
Sanitiser at the wrong strength either does nothing or spoils the taste of the next drink. Test strips cost only pennies a day.
- ☐ **Change the wash water. Clean the filters, jets, seals, and racks. Descale the machine on schedule.**
The glasswasher itself is often the source of the film you are trying to wash off.

BEER-CLEAN GLASS

- ☐ **Run a beer-clean test (sheeting, salt, or lacing) on a sample of glasses each shift.**
The film that ruins the head on a beer is invisible until you test for it. Testing is the only way to find it before a customer does.
- ☐ **Keep beer glasses separate from glasses used for dairy, cream, cocktails, or food, and from their racks.**
Fat left on a glass ruins the head on a beer. One milkshake glass in the beer rack can spoil the whole wash cycle.
- ☐ **Air-dry glasses upside down on a slatted or louvred surface. Do not polish beer glasses with a cloth.**
A cloth puts fat and fibres straight back onto a glass you have just cleaned.

ICE AND BAR SURFACES

- ☐ **Keep the ice scoop in its holder outside the bin. Keep the machine lid closed. Do not store or chill anything in the ice.**
The water supply is almost always clean. Dirty ice is almost always caused by handling or the machine, both of which you control.
- ☐ **Empty, drain, and sanitise ice wells every night. Deep-clean the ice machine on the maker's schedule.**
Mould and biofilm inside the machine are much harder to kill than dirt on the surface. A scheduled deep clean is the only real fix.
- ☐ **Sanitise bar tops, soda guns and holsters, speed rails, pourers, and bottle necks. Check the handwashing sink has hot water, soap, and towels.**
Surface sanitising and handwashing are the two checks that inspected venues fail most. Both happen within arm's reach of the drink.

Closing - Cash, Stock & Pour Cost

Count the cash, count the stock, and put a price on the difference. Nightly numbers are what stop a slow leak from becoming a big loss.

CASH

- ☐ **Count the cash drawer blind. Then check it against the Z-report and card settlement. Log the difference, in cash and as a percent of takings.**
Counting blind is what makes the difference meaningful. Counting the drawer against a total you already know tells you nothing.
- ☐ **Review voids, comps, refunds, no-sales, and re-opened tabs. A manager must sign every one.**
Misusing voids and comps is the most common bar scam. It stays hidden until someone reviews it every night.
- ☐ **Secure or bank the takings. Update the running trend of differences, by shift and by server.**
A scam can run for many months before anyone notices. Tracking the trend by person is what catches it sooner.

STOCK AND POUR COST

- ☐ **Dip, weigh, or scan open spirit bottles. Count wine by the bottle. Put the numbers on the closing stock sheet.**
You cannot see spirit losses without counting. An extra 25 ml on every round never shows up on the till.
- ☐ **Read keg levels or flow meters. Log the volume of draught poured against the volume sold.**
Draught is the hardest stock in the bar to count, and the easiest to lose. The meter or the dip reading is the only honest number you have.
- ☐ **Add up fob and drip tray loss, spills, line-cleaning loss, breakages, and comps as recorded waste.**
Drip tray losses are real money, and can run to thousands a year on a bar with many taps. You can only cut what you have counted.
- ☐ **Calculate actual usage compared with expected usage, and pour cost. Look into any line or spirit that is outside the target range.**
Comparing actual usage with expected usage is the one check that catches over-pouring, unrung drinks, and short deliveries all at once.

LOCK IT DOWN

- ☐ **Lock the spirits store, isolate the gas, and secure the cellar and ice machine. Keep the coolers, python, and cold store switched on.**
Turning the cooler off overnight is the most expensive way to save money in the building. Warm lines mean a whole cellar of cloudy, flat beer tomorrow.
- ☐ **Sign off the refusals and incident log. Book the next surprise stock count.**
A signed refusals log protects your licence. Surprise counts stop a small loss from running on for a year.

HYGIENE & SAFETY

- ☐ **Wipe down and sanitize bar tops and touch points at close, at the correct sanitizer strength (ppm).**
Germs build up on touch points during service. Sanitizing at close stops overnight growth.
- ☐ **Look for signs of pests in the cellar and bar before you lock up.**
Pests often show up at night when the bar is quiet. Catch them early to stop an infestation.
- ☐ **Lock away cleaning chemicals (COSHH) from drinks, food, and glassware.**
Chemicals stored near drinks can contaminate them. Locked storage also protects staff and customers.

Weekly Checks

Do these checks once a week, not every day.

FULL PEST INSPECTION

- ☐ **Do a full pest inspection of the cellar, bar, and storage areas once a week.**
A daily glance can miss early signs. A full weekly check catches problems before they grow.
- ☐ **Check traps, drains, and entry points for signs of pests.**
Pests often enter through drains and gaps. This check catches entry points early.
- ☐ **Write down what you find and the date of the check.**
A written record proves the check happened. It also helps you spot a pattern.

THERMOMETER & PROBE CALIBRATION

- ☐ **Calibrate every probe thermometer used for deliveries and drinks once a week.**
A probe can drift out of true over time. A wrong reading can hide an unsafe temperature.
- ☐ **Check the probe reads 0°C (32°F) in ice water, or use a certified reference.**
Ice water gives a known, reliable test point. This confirms the probe is accurate.
- ☐ **Replace or repair any probe that fails calibration before you use it again.**
A faulty probe gives false readings. Using it can let unsafe stock pass as safe.

DEEP-CLEAN POST-MIX & SODA GUN LINES

- ☐ **Take apart the post-mix (syrup and soda) dispensing lines and soda gun nozzles once a week.**
Daily wiping cleans only the outside. Sugar and syrup build up inside the lines.
- ☐ **Deep-clean and sanitize every part, then rinse it before you put it back together.**
Old syrup residue feeds bacteria and mold inside the lines. Sanitizing removes this build-up.
- ☐ **Sign and date the log after each deep clean.**
A signed log proves the clean happened. It also shows when the next one is due.