

Frozen Yogurt Shop Checklists

Machine Cleaning & Heat Treatment · Opening · Topping Bar · Weighing, Temperatures & Waste · Goods-In · Closing

Mix & Toppings Delivery Check

Every hopper dump and every trashed topping starts here. Only accept mix and toppings that will sell in time, at the right temperature.

ACCEPT ONLY STOCK THAT WILL SELL

- ☐ **Check the temperature of every liquid mix delivery at the door. Reject it if it is above 5°C (41°F).**
Warm mix has already lost shelf life you paid for. Every later check assumes it arrived cold. Reject it - do not risk it.
- ☐ **Reject mix, dairy sauces, and cut fruit that are close to their use-by date**
If shelf life is too short, it means a hopper dump or a trashed topping you already paid for. Set a minimum number of days before expiry, and stick to it.
- ☐ **Count cases, bags, and boxes against the order. Write down every item that is missing.**
A short mix delivery means a dead tap later in the week. An over-delivery means mix you have to dump. Write down any mismatch and ask for credit the same day.
- ☐ **Check mix cartons and bags for damage, leaks, or swelling before you sign for the delivery**
A damaged carton is a contamination route straight into the hopper. This is the exact problem that supply chain checks look for. Reject it and write it down.

SET UP STOCK ROTATION BEFORE IT REACHES THE BACK ROOM

- ☐ **Write the use-by date on every mix carton and topping tub as soon as it arrives**
You cannot rotate stock you did not date. Dating it on arrival tells the next shift which carton to open first.
- ☐ **Put new stock behind older stock. Use the oldest stock first (FIFO), based on the use-by date, not the delivery day.**
The oldest mix goes into the hopper first. Nothing gets forgotten and wasted behind a fresh pallet.
- ☐ **Pour toppings into sealed, dated containers. Store nuts and other allergens separately, with nothing stored above them.**
Open bags in the back room start every topping-bar cross-contact problem. Undated tubs turn into waste you can only guess at.

Opening - Machine Ready, Bar Ready

Test the machine before the first cup, zero the scale (tare) before the first sale, and fill every bin before the first customer.

TEST THE MACHINE BEFORE THE FIRST DRAW

- ☐ **Read and write down the hopper temperature on every barrel before you draw (target: no more than 5°C / 41°F)**
The hopper temperature at opening tells you if last night's mix is safe to sell or if it must be dumped. Find out before you serve it, not after.
- ☐ **Confirm the overnight heat-treatment cycle finished with no error code**
If the cycle fails on a machine holding mix overnight, the mix is unsafe. The barrel needs a full teardown before you serve from it.
- ☐ **Draw and throw away the first serving from each barrel. Check the color, texture, and smell.**
The first draw carries anything that settled overnight. Dump it, and use it as your daily check on every flavor's look, feel, and smell.
- ☐ **Weigh a standard test draw and compare it against your target amount of air mixed in (overrun)**
A light draw means too much air. That causes soft texture, customer complaints, and - if you price by weight - product you gave away for free.

GET READY TO SELL - AND TO CHARGE CORRECTLY

- ☐ **Zero the scale using a clean, empty cup of every size you use**
If you skip this, customers pay for the cup itself. This exact mistake has led to weights-and-measures fines in this industry.
- ☐ **Fill every topping bin to the fill line and level it off. Wipe the sneeze guard clean.**
A full-looking bar sells more at a self-serve bar. A half-empty bin looks picked-over and makes customers buy less overall.
- ☐ **Use one clean, sanitized utensil per bin. Keep the handle up - never buried in the product.**
A handle resting in the topping is the easiest way to cause contamination. One shared scoop can spread every allergen on the bar.
- ☐ **Confirm every flavor tap is working and listed on the board. Sign off or swap out any that are not.**
If a customer finds a dead tap at the machine, that visit is lost. A board that matches reality protects the visit and the sale.

USE YESTERDAY'S NUMBERS

- ☐ **Review yesterday's waste, sell-out, and machine-downtime log before you set today's stock level (par)**
Adjust today's mix batches and topping fills: up where things sold out, down where things were wasted. Stop repeating the same loss.

HYGIENE & SAFETY

- ☐ **Ask every staff member if they feel well before the shift starts.**
Sick staff can spread germs through food. Send them home if they feel unwell.
- ☐ **Check the handwash station has soap, hot water, and paper towels.**
Staff cannot wash hands well without full supplies. Refill anything that is empty.
- ☐ **Check the restrooms are clean and fully stocked before you open.**
Dirty or empty restrooms can fail a health inspection. They also put off customers.

Soft-Serve Machine - Cleaning, Heat Treatment & Overrun

This is the most important routine in the store. Hit the cleaning schedule, sanitize properly, and prove the product is good afterward.

HIT THE CLEANING SCHEDULE EVERY TIME

- ☐ **Follow the maker's written teardown schedule. Write down the date and your initials each time.**
Reported cleaning schedules for soft-serve machines vary widely, from daily to every two weeks. No study checks whether operators actually follow their own written procedure (SOP). A dated, initialed log is the only proof that you hit your schedule.
- ☐ **Clean and sanitize every part you handle by hand - spouts, nozzles, draw handles, drip trays - every 4 hours (US FDA Food Code baseline; outside the US, follow your own local health authority's schedule)**
Heat treatment cleans the sealed barrel, but not the parts your hands and the customer's cup touch. Under the US FDA Food Code (4-602.11), these parts stay on a 4-hour cleaning schedule no matter what the barrel's cycle is. Outside the US, follow the schedule your local health authority requires.
- ☐ **During teardown, remove and brush-clean the O-rings, seals, scraper blades, and beater shaft, one at a time**
Residue builds up in the seals and blades. A barrel that is only rinsed, not taken apart, is how a machine that looks clean still fails a germ count test.

SANITIZE PROPERLY, NOT JUST SO IT LOOKS CLEAN

- ☐ **Mix sanitizer to the strength shown on the label, and check it with a test strip before use**
Half of operators who use sanitizer use it the wrong way. A solution that is too weak gives you a false sense that the machine is clean.
- ☐ **Wash, then rinse, then sanitize, in that order. Leave the sanitizer on for the time shown on the label.**
Sanitizer on a dirty surface does nothing. Sanitizer wiped off too soon does nothing either. The order and the wait time are what make it work.
- ☐ **Check the O-rings, seals, and gaskets when you put the machine back together. Replace anything cracked, flattened, or discolored.**
A worn seal lets mix leak into places you cannot clean, and it takes the barrel out of spec. A cheap part can cause an expensive shutdown.

PROVE THE RESULT - CONSISTENCY, OVERRUN, AND PRODUCT

- ☐ **Restart the machine, refill it, and confirm the hopper reaches and holds the right temperature before the first sale**
If a barrel will not cool down after cleaning, that is a full day of lost sales - unless you catch it at reassembly instead of at the first customer.
- ☐ **Check overrun after every clean: weigh a set amount of mix going in, then weigh the same amount of finished product coming out**
Putting the machine back together changes how much air it mixes in. Catch it here, and you protect texture and yield with one 60-second check. Frozen yogurt has no federal minimum weight rule - 21 CFR 135.110's 4.5 lb/gal rule only applies to ice cream and frozen custard, so it only affects you if you also make those.
- ☐ **Send a product sample for lab testing on your set schedule, and keep the certificate on file**
A test result is the only proof that your cleaning schedule actually works, and your only defense when an inspector asks.

Topping Bar & Self-Serve Hygiene

An open bar means shared utensils and customer hands touching things. Control the utensils, protect the product, and protect customers with allergies.

CONTROL THE UTENSILS AND THE HANDS

- ☐ **Swap every scoop, tongs, and ladle for a clean one on a timed schedule. Write down each swap.**
Utensils are the one thing every customer touches, and no one person is responsible for them. A timed swap schedule is the only method that works on a busy Saturday.
- ☐ **Wash your hands between every task that is not serving. Gloves do not replace handwashing.**
People wash their hands less often when wearing gloves than without them. A gloved hand that touched a bin lid is still the contamination route.
- ☐ **Wipe and sanitize bar surfaces, utensil rests, and the sneeze-guard glass at every rotation**
Sticky sauce rings and a smeared sneeze guard cost you the sale before they ever cost you an inspection score.

PROTECT THE PRODUCT IN THE BINS

- ☐ **Refill from a fresh container. Never pour new topping on top of old topping.**
Topping off a bin hides the oldest product at the bottom forever. Rotate the bin instead, so nothing goes bad out of sight.
- ☐ **Keep dairy, cut fruit, and other toppings that can spoil chilled at no more than 5°C (41°F). Check and write it down.**
The bar is the warmest place in the store. Toppings that can spoil will spoil early if they are not kept cold - and that is waste you already paid for.
- ☐ **Throw away any bin a customer has touched directly, dropped a used spoon into, or overfilled onto the counter**
Losing one bin is cheaper than one incident, and much cheaper than a recall or an outbreak in a dairy product.

PROTECT THE ALLERGY CUSTOMER AND YOUR PROFIT

- ☐ **Use separate utensils, and keep nuts and other listed allergens away from other toppings**
A shared scoop turns every bin into a nut bin. Keeping allergens separate is the only control that actually works on an open self-serve bar.
- ☐ **Write down topping waste for each bin at closing, along with the reason**
This data stops you from refilling a topping that never sells, and helps you cut the fill level on toppings that never clear out.

Weighing Accuracy, Temperatures & Waste

Charge customers exactly what you serve, keep mix at exactly the right temperature, and turn every dump into a number you can bring down.

CHARGE EXACTLY WHAT YOU SERVE

- ☐ **Zero the scale for every cup size at opening, mid-shift, and closing**
The scale's zero point can drift every time you restart it or open a new batch of cups. A cup that is not zeroed means you overcharge on every single sale.
- ☐ **Check the scale against a known test weight and write down the reading**
A scale that is zeroed but still inaccurate fails an inspection just as badly, and it quietly overcharges or undercharges all day.
- ☐ **Confirm the price per weight is shown correctly at the scale**
Customers must be able to see what they are paying per unit. An outdated price sign loses you money on every cup.

CONTROLLING TEMPERATURE MEANS CONTROLLING SPOILAGE AND TEXTURE

- ☐ **Write down the hopper temperature on every barrel three times a day (target: no more than 5°C / 41°F)**
Almost all machines pass when checked. The log's real value is catching the one machine that has drifted, before it costs you a whole hopper.
- ☐ **Act right away if the temperature is out of range: stop serving from that barrel, write down the time, and tell a manager**
The difference between catching a drift in 30 minutes and catching it after a full day is the difference between a quick reset and a full dump plus teardown.
- ☐ **Write down the frozen storage temperature at -18°C (0°F) and the chilled topping storage temperature at no more than 5°C (41°F)**
Back-of-house temperature failures show up days later as texture complaints and spoiled toppings, once you can no longer trace the cause. The 5°C (41°F) chilled limit is a food-safety cold-holding requirement. The -18°C (0°F) frozen figure is standard industry practice - confirm it against your own freezer's spec sheet.

MAKE WASTE A NUMBER YOU MANAGE

- ☐ **Record every waste event and its reason: dumped mix, expired topping, machine fault, or overdraw**
The reason you write down is what tells you if you have an over-ordering problem or an equipment problem. Each needs a different fix.
- ☐ **Track waste as a percent of purchases every week, against your target**
Set a target and work to bring it down. In a shrinking industry, every point of waste cuts straight into your chances of survival.

Closing - Record, Clean Up & Protect

Write down the numbers, make a clear decision on every hopper, and leave the machine so tomorrow's opening only takes 10 minutes.

RECORD THE DATA THAT DRIVES TOMORROW

- ☐ **Enter today's waste, sell-outs, and machine-downtime minutes into the log**
Tomorrow's mix batches and topping fills depend on this data. Close the loop every night, or you will repeat the same loss.
- ☐ **Write down how much of each flavor was drawn. Flag any flavor that is below your minimum sales level for rotation.**
A flavor nobody draws still takes up a barrel, a mix carton, and a spot on the menu. Rotate it out while customers still expect something new.
- ☐ **Reorder mix and toppings that are below par before the order cut-off time**
If you miss the cut-off, tomorrow opens with a dead tap. That is the one failure that actually makes customers walk out.

CLEAN UP AND START THE CYCLE

- ☐ **Make a clear decision for each hopper: run the approved heat-treatment cycle, or dump it and tear it down. Never just 'leave it and see'.**
Leaving mix in overnight is the most common practice in this business, and it is only safe on a machine built and running the right cycle for it.
- ☐ **Take apart, wash, sanitize, and air-dry all hand-cleaned parts and the draw area**
Parts stacked away wet, or a sticky draw handle, undo the whole cleaning cycle before the first cup tomorrow.
- ☐ **Empty, wash, sanitize, and air-dry the topping bins, lids, and utensils. Store them dry and upside down.**
Bins that are washed but stored damp grow back what the sanitizer just killed. Drying is part of the cleaning, not something you do after.

PROTECT STOCK OVERNIGHT

- ☐ **Seal and date toppings that can spoil, and put them back in the chiller at no more than 5°C (41°F)**
The cheapest waste to avoid is a tub you already opened and already paid for.
- ☐ **Confirm every machine is left in the correct overnight mode. Never switch it off.**
A machine switched off overnight ruins the mix inside it and can take hours to cool back down. That means a late opening and a lost morning.
- ☐ **Reconcile the cash, and check the difference between weight sold and what you expected**
Comparing weight sold against mix used is your fastest way to catch scale (tare) errors, overrun drift, and giving away free product.

HYGIENE & SAFETY

- ☐ **Take all trash out to the outside bin before you lock up.**
Trash left inside overnight attracts pests.
- ☐ **Look for signs of pests near bins, corners, and storage areas.**
A quick look catches a pest problem before it grows.
- ☐ **Clean and sanitize the dining room tables and restrooms before you leave.**
A clean dining room protects your health rating and your reputation.

Weekly Checks

Do these checks once a week. They are not daily checks.

PEST INSPECTION, CALIBRATION & DEEP CLEAN

- ☐ **Do a full pest inspection of the whole store once a week.**
A full inspection finds entry points that a quick daily look misses.
- ☐ **Calibrate every thermometer and probe against a known temperature once a week.**
A thermometer that reads wrong can hide an unsafe temperature.
- ☐ **Deep-clean and sanitize the walk-in freezer and topping chiller once a week.**
Deep cleaning removes buildup and mold that daily wiping misses.