STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Restaurant Inventory SOP

Document no.	SOP-RST-009
Revision	1.0
Owner	General Manager
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To track inventory accurately, order the right amount from vendors, and catch cost variance early through a consistent counting and review process.

2. Scope

Applies to scheduled inventory counts, vendor ordering, and variance review for food, beverage and bar stock. Daily delivery inspection is covered by the kitchen's receiving SOP.

Definitions

Par level	The target quantity of an item to keep on hand between orders.
Variance	The difference between what inventory theoretically should be, based on sales, and what is actually counted.
Cost of goods sold	The cost of food and beverage used to produce the items sold in a given period.

3. Responsibilities

Inventory Clerk	Counts stock on the scheduled frequency and enters counts into the inventory system.
Bartender	Counts liquor, beer and wine stock and flags items running low.
Shift Manager	Places vendor orders based on par levels and reviews counts for accuracy.
General Manager	Reviews variance reports, investigates significant gaps, and adjusts par levels.

RACI matrix

Activity	Inventory Clerk	Bartender	Shift Manager	General Manager
Count food and dry goods inventory	R/A	-	C	I
Count liquor, beer and wine inventory	C	R/A	C	I
Place vendor orders based on par levels	C	C	R/A	I
Calculate and review variance	C	C	R	A
Adjust par levels and investigate	I	I	C	R/A

Activity	Inventory Clerk	Bartender	Shift Manager	General Manager
gaps				

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Inventory count sheet or app
- Par level list by category
- Vendor order guide and contact list
- Cost of goods sold report from the POS
- Handheld scale for bulk items
- Clipboard or tablet for counting

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Set the inventory count schedule** The general manager sets how often each category is counted, such as weekly for food and monthly for dry goods, and posts the schedule for the team.	General Manager	☐
5.2	**Prepare the count sheets** Print or open the count sheet or app for the areas being counted that day, organized to match the physical layout of storage areas.	Inventory Clerk	☐
5.3	**Count food and dry goods stock** Count each item in walk-ins, freezers and dry storage, weighing partial cases or bulk containers rather than estimating by eye. **Checkpoint:** Every storage area on the schedule for the day is counted before the sheet is closed out.	Inventory Clerk	☐
5.4	**Count liquor, beer and wine stock** Count full and partial bottles, kegs and wine using the standard method for estimating partial bottle levels, and record counts by category.	Bartender	☐
5.5	**Enter counts into the inventory system** Enter all counted quantities into the inventory system or spreadsheet the same day they are counted, before memory of partial or unusual items fades.	Inventory Clerk	☐
5.6	**Compare counts to par levels** Compare the counted quantity of each item to its par level to identify what needs to be ordered before the next delivery window.	Shift Manager	☐
5.7	**Build and place vendor orders** Build the order for each vendor based on items below par, adjusting for known upcoming events or slow periods, and submit the order by the vendor's cutoff time.	Shift Manager	☐
5.8	**Confirm order quantities before submitting** Review the draft order once more for obvious errors, such as an unusually large quantity, before sending it to the vendor. **Checkpoint:** Order quantities are reviewed for errors before the order is submitted to the vendor.	Shift Manager	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.9	**Calculate theoretical usage from sales** Use the POS sales report and recipe costs to calculate what inventory should have been used for the counting period based on items sold.	Shift Manager	☐
5.10	**Calculate variance for each category** Compare theoretical usage to the actual drop in counted inventory to calculate variance by category, flagging any category outside the normal range. **Checkpoint:** Variance is calculated for every counted category and compared against the normal range.	General Manager	☐
5.11	**Investigate significant variance** For any category with variance beyond the normal range, review for causes such as waste, comps, over-pouring, theft or counting errors before drawing conclusions.	General Manager	☐
5.12	**Adjust par levels and reorder points** Update par levels for items that consistently run out early or build up excess stock, based on recent sales trends and lead times from vendors.	General Manager	☐

6. Quality checks

- Every scheduled area is counted and entered into the system the same day.
- Orders are submitted before each vendor's cutoff time.
- Variance is calculated for every category on the count schedule.
- Categories with significant variance have a documented investigation note.

7. Records

- Inventory count sheets
- Vendor order history
- Cost of goods sold and variance report
- Par level adjustment log

8. KPIs

- Cost of goods sold percentage by category
- Inventory variance percentage per counting period
- Stockout incidents per month
- Days of inventory on hand by category

9. Common mistakes

- Estimating partial bottles or bulk containers by eye instead of using a consistent method.
- Waiting several days to enter counts, losing accuracy on partial items.
- Ordering based on gut feeling instead of comparing counts to par levels.
- Never investigating variance, so theft or waste patterns go unnoticed.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Alexa Uskova

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

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