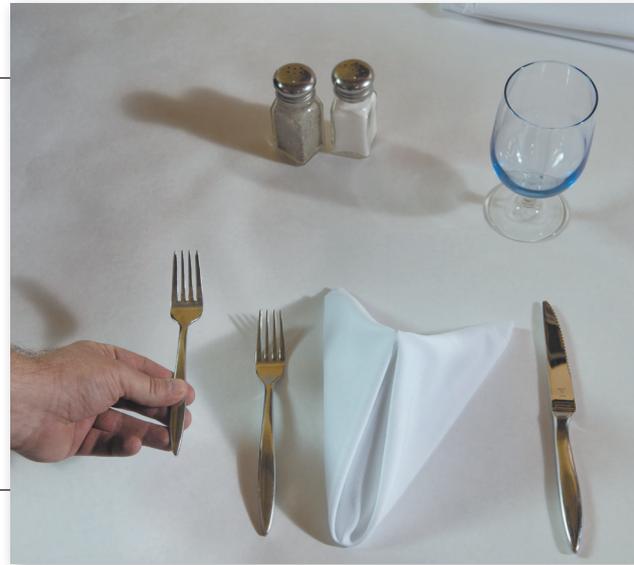


# 6

## Dining-Room Service

### INSIDE THIS CHAPTER

- Dining-Room *Mise en Place*
- Guest Orders
- Delivering the Guest's Food Order
- Ensuring Accurate and Responsible Beverage Service
- Take-Away Orders
- Clearing and Resetting Tables



### CHAPTER LEARNING OBJECTIVES

*After completing this chapter, you should be able to:*

- List the key areas to be addressed in dining-room table *mise en place*.
- State the key factors to address when taking guest orders in QSR and fast-casual, as well as in casual and fine-dining operations.
- Explain the importance of properly delivering guests' ordered menu items.
- Explain the importance of responsible alcoholic beverage service, and the major steps managers take to ensure responsible service of alcohol.
- Identify the two factors most affecting the proper delivery of take-away food orders.
- Describe the process required for resetting dining-room tables.

## KEY TERMS

action plan, p. 148

beer, p. 137

blood alcohol content (BAC), p. 142

cellar temperature, p. 139

certification, p. 146

cleaning, p. 150

crystal, p. 127

dishware, p. 126

flatware, p. 125

food contact surface, p. 125

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incident report, p. 144

interface, p. 133

intoxication, p. 141

linen, p. 124

*mise en place*, p. 124

place setting, p. 126

sanitizing, p. 150

ServSafe Alcohol, p. 146

spirit, p. 137

tableware, p. 125

third-party liability, p. 141

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## CASE STUDY

“My last table tipped me only \$1,” said Cindy, a server at the York’s Old Mill restaurant. Cindy is on a 15-minute break with Amber, her coworker, who is also on the restaurant’s waitstaff.

“Why? What happened?” asked Amber.

“Well, it was a couple,” said Cindy. “The woman ordered a diet cola and the man ordered a regular cola. When I delivered the drinks I got mixed up.”

“You gave the diet cola to the guy and the regular to the woman?” asked Amber.

“Right,” said Cindy. “You know they look the same. The colas I mean. And I got mixed up. He was really upset when he took a big drink of the diet soda,” said Cindy.

“And you think that’s why your tip was so small?” asked Amber.

“Well that’s probably part of it,” said Cindy. “I don’t think it helped when I forgot to tell the kitchen that the guest wanted dressing for his chef’s salad served on the side.”

“So you served his salad to him with the dressing already on it?” asked Amber.

“Right,” said Cindy. “I guess today just wasn’t my day.”

“Doesn’t sound like it was a very good day for your customers either,” said Amber.

1. How important is accurate order taking and menu item delivery to ensuring guest satisfaction in restaurant and foodservice establishments?
2. Who at the Old Mill restaurant is responsible for teaching Cindy how to accurately take and deliver guest orders? What will likely happen if that is not done?

## DINING-ROOM MISE EN PLACE

If guests are to enjoy a positive experience, dining areas must be kept clean and inviting. In addition, the dining tables in an operation must be properly prepared for the arrival of guests.

*Mise en place* is a French term that means “everything in its proper place.” The term is traditionally thought of as a back-of-the-house culinary term, in which it means having all ingredients prepared and ready to combine and cook. However, *mise en place* is also applicable to the operation of a professional dining room. Chapter 5 indicated that preparing tables requires the proper placement of condiments and the availability of menus. In most operations those employees responsible for *mise en place* related to dining tables address additional key areas:

- Linens and napkins
- Flatware
- Dishware
- Glassware

### Linens and Napkins

In the restaurant and foodservice industry, **linen** is the term used to refer to tablecloths. Today’s tablecloths may be made from the flax plant that was the original source of “linens.” However, they are more likely to be made of cotton or of synthetic fabrics such as polyester. In many cases, the tablecloths and napkins will be a blend of natural and synthetic fibers. This blend allows for ease of cleaning. The laundering of cloth linens and napkins is not typically done on premise in most operations. Yet clean and soiled items must be carefully handled to minimize cleaning costs. Operations also seek to avoid any laundry vendor charges made as a result of damage to rented linens and napkins.

Napkins can be made of cloth or paper. Cloth napkins are usually set on the table folded in half, in quarters, or in a manager-approved shape or fold. Paper napkins may be placed on tabletops or in dispensers. Both cloth and paper napkins may also be used for decorative purposes or for holding eating utensils (see *Exhibit 6.1*).

When preparing dining areas for guests, linens are carefully and evenly placed on tables. A silence cloth or second tablecloth is often used to help reduce noise and clatter from plates and glasses being placed on guest tables. When setting tables, great care must be taken to ensure all linens and napkins are clean and wrinkle-free. If they are not, they will not aid in making the most positive impression possible.

Exhibit 6.1



Tablecloths should be changed when they become soiled, but during service periods in fine-dining restaurants bare tabletops should never be visible to guests. Some operations use a second tablecloth or paper underliner on tables to ensure bare tabletops are not shown when tablecloths are changed.

When preparing a dining room for service, managers must ensure that tablecloths and napkins are properly used:

- All linen and cloth napkins are clean and wrinkle-free.
- Tablecloths are not ripped, frayed, or snagged.
- Tablecloths are centered or placed properly on tables.
- Chairs are pulled slightly away from tables so tablecloths drape naturally.
- At least one napkin is in place for each guest to be seated.

## Flatware

**Tableware** is the industry term used to collectively describe three categories of tabletop items: flatware, dishware, and glassware. **Flatware** consists of the eating utensils used by guests and is sometimes referred to as cutlery or silverware. While silver-plated flatware is used in some very upscale operations, the flatware used in most operations is made of stainless steel and is sold in three quality-related levels:

**Medium weight:** This is the lightest flatware typically sold for use in commercial restaurant or foodservice operations. It is also called economy flatware because of its low cost. This type of flatware is somewhat fragile because, while it will not readily break, it can be easily bent by the user.

**Heavy weight:** This flatware is very durable, not easily bent, and makes for a nice presentation. It is used in a large number of casual and fine-dining establishments.

**Extra heavy weight:** Extra heavy weight flatware is used in finer establishments that seek to offer guests the highest levels of flatware quality. This type is very durable and sturdy and is difficult to bend.

The actual weight of a dozen knives, forks, or spoons will vary based on the shape and size of the individual flatware pieces purchased. A variety of flatware pieces are available to fit the needs of operations. Some of the most common are shown in *Exhibit 6.2*.

The specific pieces of flatware used in an operation will vary based on the menu items served and the manager's service standards. When pre-setting tables, or bringing flatware to guests, all servers must ensure they hold it only by the handle. Servers should not touch the flatware's food contact surfaces (*Exhibit 6.3*). **Food contact surfaces** are those areas of an item that will come into direct contact with food.

Exhibit 6.2

### COMMON FLATWARE

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| Spoons | Bullion<br>Demitasse<br>Dessert<br>Iced tea<br>Soup<br>Tablespoon<br>Teaspoon |
| Forks  | Cocktail<br>Dinner<br>Fish<br>Oyster<br>Salad                                 |
| Knives | Butter spreader<br>Dinner knife<br>Steak knife                                |

Exhibit 6.3



## THINK ABOUT IT . . .

Were you ever given dirty flatware at an establishment? How did that make you feel about that operation's concern for detail and high-quality customer service? Would other guests feel the same?

All flatware should be clean and spot-free when used. If a table is pre-set with tableware, servers may wrap or roll the flatware used in each place setting in a napkin. A **place setting** refers to all of the flatware, dishware, and glassware pre-set for use by one guest. If extra place settings are on a table when guests are escorted to it, the extra settings are typically removed when guests are seated. If extra wrapped or unwrapped place settings are left on tables after guests have been seated, all of these pieces must be removed and washed properly after guests have left the table.

## Dishware

**Dishware** in a restaurant or foodservice operation refers to the reusable plates, cups, and bowls used to serve menu items. Some managers use the term *china* when referring to dishware and some very upscale operations do in fact purchase this high-quality form of porcelain for their dishware. In most operations, however, dishware will be made from less expensive materials. Dishware used in the restaurant and foodservice industry is commonly made from a variety of materials:

- Plastic
- Metal
- Ceramic:
  - Bone china
  - Clay
  - Porcelain
  - Stoneware
- Glass

In some operations, coffee cups and saucers or other dishware items are pre-set on tables prior to guest arrival. If dishware is pre-set on tables, care must be taken that servers do not touch their food contact surfaces. Any pre-set, but unused, dishware items should be removed and washed properly after guests have left the table.

## Glassware

**Glassware** is the restaurant and foodservice term for individual beverage containers. In many cases, glassware in an operation may be made from nonglass materials including paper, Styrofoam, plastic, and metal. Glass is such a popular material for making drinking vessels, yet the term *glass* is often used to refer to most of the drink containers in an operation. However, the term *glassware* is best applied only to reusable glasses.



### KEEPING IT SAFE

To help prevent the outbreak of foodborne illnesses, servers should be taught to handle all flatware, dishware, and glassware properly. The food contact area of plates, glasses, or cups should not be touched. Hold dishes by the bottom or the edge. Hold cups by their handles. Glassware should be held by the middle, bottom, or stem. Glassware and dishes should not be stacked because the rim or surface of one item can be contaminated by the one above it. Flatware and any serving utensils used should be held at the handle and stored in a way that will cause servers to grasp the handles, not food contact surfaces, when they are removed for use.

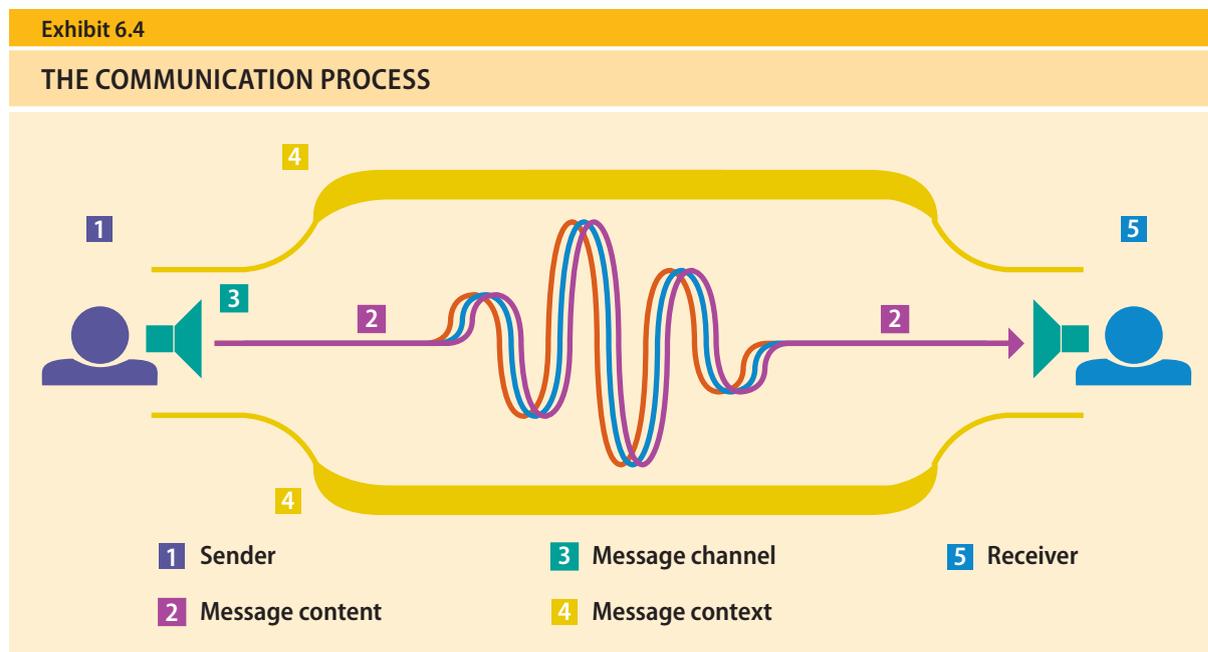
Glass is made by fusing, or heating, sand (silica) in combination with soda and lime. Additions of metals such as lead can change the properties of glass. **Crystal** is glass that contains high levels of lead and has been hand or machine cut with facets to create a “sparkle” in the glass. Crystal is of high quality, fragile, and expensive. Some restaurant and foodservice managers refer to the glassware used in their operations as “crystal,” but most managers find that lower-cost, more durable types of glassware are best for their operations.

Distinctive glassware can enhance the image of any restaurant or foodservice operation. Regardless of the materials from which they are made, or the styles and shapes used in an operation, glassware must be handled carefully because it is breakable. If glassware is delivered to guests or pre-set on tables, the glasses should be free from chips and cracks. They must also be clean and spot-free.

## GUEST ORDERS

After guests have been properly greeted in quick-service restaurant (QSR) or fast-casual operations, or greeted and seated in casual or fine-dining operations, service staff take their menu orders. Taking orders properly requires servers to use excellent communication skills. In a restaurant or foodservice operation, communication mistakes can lead to errors in customer service, from misunderstanding a request to delivering the wrong menu item to the wrong guest.

Communication is an extremely complex process. The sender–receiver model (see *Exhibit 6.4*) shows the communication process.





### KEEPING IT SAFE

Managers must ensure that all menu items are served safely. Managers training and supervising staff should instruct them in safe foodhandling procedures used in the dining room:

- Wash hands after smoking, eating, drinking, and using the restroom.
- Do not wipe dirty hands on aprons or clothes.
- Never touch food, such as butter, bread, or ice, with bare hands.
- Avoid touching food contact surfaces on flatware, dishware, and glassware.
- Do not use tableware of any type that has fallen on the floor until it has been properly cleaned.
- Do not serve food or beverages in chipped, cracked, or soiled dishware or glassware.
- Do not use soiled service cloths or towels to clean food contact surfaces.

The sender is the person who has a message to communicate, whereas the receiver is the person who gets the sender's message. The sender needs to send the message and get feedback that it was received accurately. Here are some examples of miscommunication in a restaurant or foodservice operation:

- A guest asks a server who is unfamiliar with American slang, "What's hot on your menu tonight?" The server responds by listing the menu items that are served at a hot temperature, while the guest wanted to know what items were popular.
- A server recognizes a guest from past visits and assumes that the guest knows the menu items. Therefore, the server does not highlight items that the establishment wants to promote. As a result, the customer does not consider these items when ordering.
- A server states, "What will *we* be having tonight?" and thus offends a guest who finds the server's comment offensive because of its too casual familiarity.

Clear communication is the solution for these situations. Managers should familiarize employees with common guest questions. In addition, servers should be trained to avoid making any assumptions about a guest, even if the guest is a frequent visitor.

In chapter 4, pre-shift meetings were cited as an example of a method managers use to improve internal communication. The following example shows how one fine-dining restaurant uses pre-shift staff meetings as a way to address and communicate important information:

- The maître d'hôtel and the chef require every scheduled staff person to attend a meeting before opening the dining room. The meeting agenda is fairly consistent each day.
- The maître d'hôtel reviews any positive and negative service issues from the previous night, such as communication, proper language, and etiquette.
- The maître d'hôtel reviews the guests' reservations for the evening. If there are any special guests on the reservation list, everyone is made aware of the guest's name, the reservation time, where he or she will be seated, the number in the party, and any special requests. If the special guest is returning, his or her prior experiences are reviewed.
- The chef reviews and explains the evening menu, including ingredients and items to promote.
- Everyone is encouraged to ask questions and discuss expectations throughout the staff meeting.

This type of pre-shift meeting can significantly help identify and eliminate many internal communication problems.

Communicating clearly means listening carefully. The best servers have good listening skills because sending a message is only half of the communication model. Listening, or receiving, is the other half. Good listening skills are critical to good service.

To listen effectively, a person must be interested in what is communicated and pay attention to the sender. The receiver should not interrupt and should let the sender complete the message. In general, servers follow the principles for effective listening shown in *Exhibit 6.5*.

### Taking the Guest Order

The professional and accurate taking of guest orders is essential to high-quality service in every restaurant and foodservice segment and in every food and beverage operation. All guests expect their orders to be taken by qualified servers.

They also expect those taking their orders will be knowledgeable:

- Servers should know what is on the menu, including basic item ingredients and preparation methods.
- Servers should know descriptive words used to explain the menu items offered.
- Servers should know the time required to prepare menu items.
- Servers should know what accompaniments are served with each menu item.
- Servers should know which menu items complement each other. For example, lighter wines with milder food and more robust wines with more intensely flavored food.
- Servers should know the prices charged for each menu item offered.

While all customers expect order takers to be well-trained, knowledgeable, and professional, the most critical factors related to taking guest orders varies by industry segment. The requirements for QSR and fast-casual tend to be different than those for the casual and fine-dining segments.

#### QSR AND FAST CASUAL

Like those in all segments of the industry, staff taking guest orders in the QSR and fast-casual segments of the industry must be good communicators. In addition, they must emphasize the two traits most important to high-quality order taking in their specific segments: friendliness and accuracy.

**FRIENDLINESS** Some managers believe high-quality customer service is dependent only on timing, efficiency, and the specific steps needed to record and accurately deliver guests' menu item selections. These are important factors. However, a vending machine can deliver a sandwich efficiently, but only friendly people can provide hospitality.

#### Exhibit 6.5

#### PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- Prepare to listen.
- Stop talking.
- Pay attention.
- Do not interrupt.
- Practice listening.

Understanding the importance of hospitality to high-quality service delivery requires managers to focus on people as well as procedures. Unfriendly order takers may be able to perform their order-taking tasks efficiently. These servers cannot, however, make a positive impact on a guest's feelings about an operation. Connecting with others can take many forms. In the hospitality industry it begins with servers who are genuinely caring and friendly.

**ACCURACY** Because of their very nature, the processing of guests in the QSR and fast-casual segments of the industry moves quickly. In many cases, it is speed of service that draws guests to these operations. As a result, guest orders are most often taken and filled quite rapidly. Accuracy and attention to detail are of critical importance when order taking.

To illustrate why accuracy is especially important in the QSR and fast-casual segments, consider the server in a casual dining table-service operation who forgets if one of his guests ordered extra onions for her chef salad, or if she did not want any onions on the salad. In this case, the server can quickly return to the guest's table to clarify the order. On the other hand, if a guest placed a takeout pizza order by telephone, the staff member actually making the pizza will be completely dependent on the ability of the order taker to have accurately recorded whether the guest preferred extra onion, or no onion, on the ordered pizza. Rapid guest processing and the difficulty of clarifying orders with drive-through and some customer types illustrate the need for accuracy of order taking in QSR and fast-casual operations.

### CASUAL AND FINE DINING

In casual and fine-dining operations, professional order taking also addresses two key issues:

- Exhibiting an appropriate demeanor
- Optimizing the dining experience

**EXHIBITING AN APPROPRIATE DEMEANOR** Chapter 3 defined ambience as special atmosphere or mood created by a particular environment. Server demeanor is the way a server behaves when doing his or her work. In casual and fine-dining operations the demeanor of servers must be consistent with the ambience created in the operation's dining area. The demeanor of servers consists of several behavioral characteristics:

- Appearance
- Attitude
- Mannerisms
- Image

In casual-dining operations, server demeanor should reflect the casual service approach likely offered in that operation. In fine-dining operations, server demeanor must reflect and reinforce the ambience offered in those unique operations. Guests do not like pretentious service or snobbish servers. It is essential that servers behave in ways that guests feel are consistent with the overall physical environment they have chosen for their dining experience.

**OPTIMIZING THE DINING EXPERIENCE** Friendliness and accuracy are key factors in providing excellent guest service in QSR and fast-casual restaurants. Servers in casual and fine-dining operations seek to provide their guests with a truly memorable dining experience, and in many cases that includes friendly service and accuracy in order taking and food delivery. But in most cases it requires even more.

A memorable meal includes good food, but it is also most often the result of servers striving to optimize their guests' dining experiences. The best servers do this using a variety of techniques:

- Presenting a professional appearance
- Knowing their menu offerings well
- Responding properly to guest questions about menu items and menu item preparation
- Using appropriate suggestive selling techniques
- Taking and delivering menu orders efficiently and accurately
- Anticipating guests' needs and providing attentive, but not intrusive, service
- Presenting a demeanor in keeping with the operation's overall ambience

When servers use these techniques and exhibit these characteristics they have an excellent likelihood of optimizing each guest's dining experience. Doing so helps the operation reach its customer service goals, increases guest satisfaction, and assists the operation in achieving its profit goals.

## Recording and Placing the Guest Order

The manner in which service staff members takes guest orders varies by industry segment. For example, in QSRs large numbers of guests order at drive-through windows while others place their orders with counter personnel. In fast-casual operations, guests give their orders to designated service staff or production staff members who may take orders and prepare requested menu items.

In casual and fine-dining operations, guests make their selections in dining areas. Trained waitstaff take the orders and give them to production staff. In all of these cases, and in all segments, it is essential that servers complete two critical tasks well: recording the order and placing the order.



### REAL MANAGER

**PEOPLE WILL PAY MORE FOR AN EXPERIENCE THAN THEY WILL FOR JUST FOOD.**

Because I was making my hot dog cart more about my personality than the hot dogs, people felt compelled to leave me a little something extra. I never put out a tip jar, but there was usually a bit of spare change sitting on the cart when customers walked away. As far as I knew, I was the only person in the park earning tips, and I was going home each night with enough change stuffed in my pockets to equal my hourly wages for the day. I had *doubled* my income!

### THINK ABOUT IT . . .

Have you ever had a meal delivered to your table that you did not order? How do you think that happened? How did you feel about the level of service you received in that operation?

Recording guest orders means accurately communicating with guests to precisely determine their menu selections. The types of questions commonly asked by servers when properly recording orders vary based on the menu items offered. There are many examples of order details that servers must record properly:

- **Doneness:** for steaks and burgers
- **Cooking method:** for eggs
- **Size:** for items such as beverages and pizzas
- **Condiments:** for sandwiches
- **Dressings:** for salads
- **Toppings:** for ice-cream dishes
- **Side dishes/accompaniments:** to identify guest choices of menu item alternatives included in an entrée or meal's selling price

After determining what guests want to order, service staff must properly place, or enter, the orders into the operation's production system so item preparation can begin. The methods used to record and place guest orders vary somewhat, but managers typically use one of four methods:

- Checklist
- Guest check
- Notepad-POS system
- Interfaced POS system

#### CHECKLIST

When using the checklist method, the server checks or circles ordered items from a preprinted list of menu options. The checklist is submitted to production personnel for order preparation. In this system the completed checklist serves as both the record of guest orders and the manner in which orders are placed into the operation's production system.

The checklist is filled out by the guest or a server and is manually delivered to production staff for order preparation. This method is best used when the number of menu options offered to guests is limited and, as a result, the ordering process is uncomplicated.

#### GUEST CHECK

When using the guest check method the server writes down guest orders on a guest check. The guest check is then manually delivered to the operation's production personnel. In this system the guest check serves as the record of guest orders and the document used to place the order into production.

When managers use guest checks with multiple copies, one copy of the guest check may be given to production staff and another copy retained by the server for eventual use in preparing the guest's final bill. This system is commonly used in smaller operations where servers and production staff are in close proximity and can communicate easily.

### NOTEPAD-POS SYSTEM

When using the notepad-point-of-sale (POS) system method, the server writes down guest orders on a notepad. This typically occurs in the dining area, after guests have been seated and reviewed the menu. The server then uses an order entry terminal in the dining area or kitchen to place the guest's order into the operation's POS system. In this method, the facility's production staff members will monitor their operation's POS display terminals or order printers located in the production areas to receive incoming orders. These orders tell the production staff what menu items must be produced (see *Exhibit 6.6*).

In most cases the display terminals or order printers used by production staff also display the name of the server placing the order. This information is especially helpful if production staff members have questions about the order or how the order should be prepared. The notepad-POS system method is the one most commonly used in casual and fine-dining operations where guest orders are taken, or recorded, at the guest's table.

### INTERFACED POS SYSTEM

The newest order recording and placement approach is the interfaced POS system method. To **interface** means to electronically connect two systems. In this case the two interconnected systems are guest order *recording* and guest order *placement*.

To illustrate the method, assume that in a QSR a customer orders a beverage. The counter staff person records the order by entering it directly in the POS system. Display terminals or printers in production areas immediately display the guest's order and preparation of the beverage can begin.

The interfaced POS system method was originally used only in QSR and fast-casual operations, where guests place orders with counter or window personnel. Today, wireless handheld order entry devices allow servers at guests' tables to take orders and automatically enter them in an operation's POS system. As a result, the notepad-POS system method traditionally used in casual and fine-dining operations is, in many operations, giving way to this more technologically advanced method of guest order recording and placement. Some handheld order systems can even recognize a server's handwriting, read it, and then place the server's orders directly into the operation's POS system.

Exhibit 6.6



### RESTAURANT TECHNOLOGY

The taking of guest orders is an important moment of truth. In most cases, guest orders are taken after guests arrive in an operation. Increasingly, however, guests can use technology to place their orders *prior* to arriving at an operation.

Guests can place orders via computer if the operation has designed their Web site or email accounts to accept them in this manner. Other operations allow guests to use smartphones to text message orders. Some even allow users to use social media programs to place orders.

In all of these cases, an electronic record of guest orders is obtained, but in most cases these orders must still be manually placed into the operation's POS or manually delivered to production staff to ensure the orders are recorded and then prepared properly. When they are, this moment of truth can be handled well even before guests arrive.

## DELIVERING THE GUEST'S FOOD ORDER

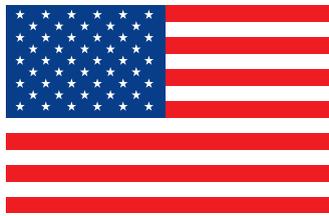
Accurately recording and submitting guest orders to production personnel are the first steps toward ensuring guests actually received what they have ordered. Delivering those items to the correct guest is the second step. This is especially important when the items are delivered to individual guests at their tables. Servers who take guest orders must be extremely careful to record which guest ordered which item. Doing so avoids the very poor service received by guests when a server arrives at a table, holds a plate in the air, and loudly pronounces, "Who's the chicken sandwich?"

### Types of Meal Service

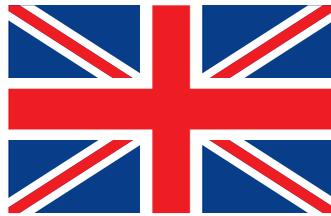
In the restaurant and foodservice industry, there are several different styles of table service that date back for generations (see *Exhibit 6.7*). These different meal service styles typically are found only in casual and fine-dining establishments. Each style demands different preparation and presentation procedures. The more labor intensive the style of service, the more costly it is for the establishment owner to provide.

Exhibit 6.7

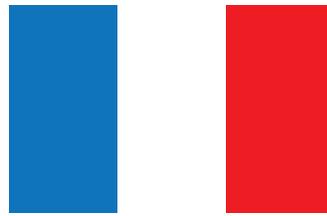
#### STYLES OF TABLE SERVICE



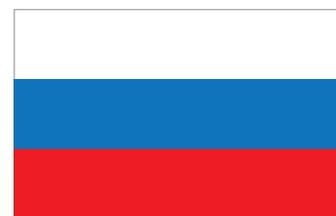
**American-style service:** The food is placed onto a plate for each diner and then brought out to the customer. The plates are distributed to the proper diners. This is the most common form of table service in the United States.



**English-style service:** Also known as family style dining, this type of service is the simplest and least expensive. The food is brought to the tables on platters and serving bowls. The host of the table then serves the meal on the plates for the other diners, or the dishes are passed around the table so diners can serve themselves.



**French-style service:** While this is the most elegant of the styles of service, it is also the most expensive. The food is placed into serving dishes and then brought out on a cart. It is then served onto the diners' plates at the table. The food is kept hot by a warming unit in each cart. This type of service is expensive to implement because of the expensive carts and the additional skills required of the servers.



**Russian-style service:** Each diner's hot food is placed onto hot plates and cold food onto cold plates. All the diners' plates are brought to the table on a cart where they are distributed to the diners. A small investment is required by the restaurant owner for the expense of the carts.

The types and extent of products and services provided affect the delivery of guest orders. Several factors must be taken into account when managers make critical decisions about the table-service method they use:

- Target market chosen and how well an operation can meet its demands
- Size, décor, and cost of the facility, its equipment, and its furnishings
- Number and types of employees, the skills they must have, and the amount of compensation they require
- Types and costs of the food and nonfood supplies
- Extent and nature of the operation's marketing, advertising, and promotion efforts

Basically, the more service provided, the more investment required and the more ongoing expenses incurred. As a result, more must be charged for the meals because in nearly all operations, meals are the primary source of revenue. The primary goal of every table-service method used is the same: to deliver and properly place the correctly ordered menu items in front of the appropriate guests.

### Special Cases of Meal Service

*Exhibit 6.7* shows traditional methods used to serve guests, but two additional methods of meal service are also common: self-service and tableside preparation.

#### SELF-SERVICE

When guests are allowed to select some, or all, of their menu items in self-service food and beverage operations, the role of the server must be somewhat modified. In many cafeterias and in buffet settings (*Exhibit 6.8*), guests may be allowed to select and carry to their own tables a variety of products such as beverages, appetizers, salads, entrées, side dishes, and desserts.

In some operations, such as all-you-care-to-eat buffets, guest may be allowed to return to all self-serve areas, or food bars, multiple times. In cafeteria settings, guests may be charged for the items they select each time they go through the serving line. In still other settings, guests may be allowed refills on some items such as beverages while other items such as entrées are not unlimited. In all cases, however, when guests serve themselves, the role of the food





### KEEPING IT SAFE

Here are some additional rules for keeping food bars safe:

- Maintain proper food temperatures.
- Keep raw meat, seafood, and poultry areas separate from ready-to-eat food in self-service areas.
- Protect food with approved sneeze guards or food shields.
- Identify all food items.
- Do not let customers refill soiled plates or use soiled utensils at the food bar.
- Never use the ice provided to keep food or beverages cold as an ingredient.

server is expanded to include promptly removing soiled dishware from the guests' table. This is important for several reasons:

- To minimize crowding on the guest's table
- To keep the guests' tables clean and attractive looking
- To minimize the risk of contamination that would result from guests returning to food display areas to refill previously used plates and glassware

In self-serve operations, managers may assign staff to replenish food bar items and dishware and even to hand out fresh plates for return visits. Managers can also post polite tips about food bar etiquette. These actions can go a long way toward keeping self-service areas more sanitary.

### TABLESIDE PREPARATION

The tableside preparation of menu items is a special style of table service that is used in many fine-dining operations. When using this unique and showy preparation method, selected food or beverage items are prepared in the dining room and at the guest's table.

Menu ingredients are arranged on trays or dishes and placed on a special wheeled cart called a *gueridon*. The cart will also be loaded with the tools required to prepare and serve the dish as well as with a *rechaud*—a portable heating unit used for tableside cooking. The cart is then wheeled to the guest's tableside for item preparation.

Some tableside items, such as Caesar salads, are made without flambéing, or flaming, the item at the table. Many other dishes are flambéed tableside. The showmanship exhibited in professionally executed tableside cookery can make truly remarkable and memorable dining experiences for guests ordering flambéed items and for other diners observing these menu items' tableside preparation.

Popular tableside cookery items include entrées such as steak Diane and veal scallopini Marsala. Popular desserts include items such as cherries jubilee, crepes Suzette, and bananas Foster. Popular flambé beverages include Irish coffee and café diablo.

When considering the addition of tableside prepared items to their menus, managers must consider the ability to move carts easily through dining areas, the time required for at-the-table item production, product costs, required staff training, safety, and the challenges of ensuring product consistency.



### KEEPING IT SAFE

Managers contemplating the addition of flambéed items to their menus must consider many things. The single most important factor to consider, however, is the safety of guests and employees. Employees assigned to tableside cooking work with highly flammable alcohol-based ingredients. If they are not well trained and extremely careful, servers creating the fires needed to cook food and create the show associated with flambéed items can easily injure themselves or guests.

Regardless of the dishes to be offered, or how they are to be prepared, the addition of tableside cookery to an operation's product offerings should be undertaken only after meticulous attention has been paid to the ability of the operation's staff to prepare the dishes safely—every time.

## ENSURING ACCURATE AND RESPONSIBLE BEVERAGE SERVICE

Few activities are more enjoyable and relaxing than enjoying beverages with, or without, meals. Nearly 100 percent of guests who purchase food in a restaurant or foodservice operation will drink a beverage as an accompaniment to the food. In some operations, such as coffee shops and bars, guests may be more likely to visit an operation for its beverages than for its food. Professional managers know that the vast majority of beverages served in the restaurant and foodservice industry *do not* contain alcohol:

- Coffee
- Tea
- Milk
- Juice
- Soft drinks
- Bottled water—still or carbonated
- Tap water

Servers taking and delivering guest's non-alcoholic beverage orders know it is important that these tasks be done properly. Those who serve alcoholic beverages know that these popular beverages require special management attention:

- Alcoholic beverages
- Wine service
- Guest intervention
- Responsible alcohol service

### Alcoholic Beverages

There is no doubt that many diners enjoy alcoholic beverages with their meals. In other cases, guests enjoy alcoholic beverages without meals. In both cases, the service of alcoholic beverages requires special information and care. The alcoholic beverages served in a restaurant or foodservice operation are of three basic types:

**Beer:** An alcoholic beverage fermented from cereals and malts, and made with yeast and hops, which is a flower added to flavor the beverage

**Wine:** An alcoholic beverage produced from grapes or other fruit

**Spirit:** An alcoholic beverage produced by distilling, or removing water from, a liquid that contains alcohol



Exhibit 6.9

In moderation, alcohol has a tranquilizing effect. It relaxes and stimulates the appetite. In large quantities, it can become an addictive and even a deadly toxin. Because of alcohol’s physiological effects, the service of alcoholic beverages is tightly regulated. The responsible sale of such beverages is critically important to managers. As a result, managers must ensure that all alcoholic beverages are sold in keeping with all local and state laws related to their sale.

### Wine Service

For many guests, elegant wine service heightens a dining experience. Those operations with high-volume wine sales may employ a wine steward or a sommelier. These staff members advise customers about wine selection, take wine orders, and present and serve the wines that are selected. Most operations, however, do not have this specialized assistance available. In

establishments without wine stewards or sommeliers, a trained food or beverage server is responsible for offering guests information about the wines available on the wine list. Often, they are also responsible for serving wines (*Exhibit 6.9*).

An important first step in selling wine is to make product knowledge about the wines available. Servers should also know how to properly pronounce the name of each wine offered. In some establishments, tables are set with wineglasses, perhaps a glass appropriate for white wine and a separate glass appropriate for red wine. In this instance, if a wine is not ordered, both glasses should be removed from the table. If one type of wine is requested, the glass that is not needed is removed. In other establishments, wineglasses are not set on the table before the customers arrive and, instead, they are brought to the table only if wine is ordered.

In all cases, wines should be served professionally. *Exhibit 6.10* outlines 10 key steps in professional bottled wine service.

## Manager’s Memo

Wines are sold in many establishments by the glass, carafe, or bottle. Wine bottles come in various sizes that are regulated by the government and are based on the metric system of liquid measurement.

| Bottle Size | Name             | Description              |
|-------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 0.100 liter | Miniature (mini) | A single-serving bottle  |
| 0.187 liter | Split            | 1/4 of a standard bottle |
| 0.375 liter | Half-bottle      | 1/2 of a standard bottle |
| 0.750 liter | Bottle           | Standard wine bottle     |
| 1.5 liters  | Magnum           | Two bottles in one       |
| 3.0 liters  | Double magnum    | Four bottles in one      |

Note: 1 liter = 33.8 ounces.

### Step 1: Present the Wine List

Wine lists, like food menus, represent the operation’s brand. They should be clean and neat because they are significant selling tools. They should be brought to the table for presentation to the customer with a comment such as, “I am proud to present our wine list.” This can be followed with the suggestion, “If you have any questions about our wines, I will be happy to answer them. Otherwise, please take a few moments to look over the list.” In some establishments, wine lists are placed on the table when it is set for service. In this case the server should point out the wine list on the table.

**Step 2: Assist Customers with Wine Selection**

Some customers are likely to be very knowledgeable about wine and will not desire or appreciate assistance. Others may have questions about the type of wine to select relative to the food being ordered or the quantity to order. It is important to note that there are approximately five servings (5 ounces each) per bottle; a full bottle holds 25.6 ounces. A full bottle will likely be sufficient for two to three people depending on portion size.

**Step 3: Take the Wine Order**

The wine order should be taken and repeated to ensure there is no communication problem.

**Step 4: Collect the Wineglasses and Obtain the Necessary Wine**

Some establishments use the same wineglass regardless of the wine type selected; others use specific glasses for specific types. Establishments use various systems for servers to obtain the wine ordered. White wines are typically served chilled. Many wine experts agree that wines are best served at **cellar temperature**, generally considered to be between 65°F and 70°F (18°C and 21°C). The best temperatures for long-term storage of five or more years for red wines is lower, usually between 55°F and 60°F (13°C and 16°C). Depending on the operation and its storage facilities, different wines may be stored in different locations within an operation until they are issued to service staff.

**Step 5: Bring the Glasses and Wine to the Table**

If wineglasses are not pre-set, they should be brought to the table on a small serving tray and handled by their stems, not by their bowls or rims. They should be placed to the customer's right. Red wines can be brought to the table on a tray or in a wine basket. Chilled white and sparkling wines should be brought to the table on a small serving tray or in a wine cooler or wine bucket. In some establishments, wine coolers are placed on the table; in others, a cooler stand is placed on the floor to the guest's right to provide more table room.

**Step 6: Present the Wine to the Guest**

In most cases, the individual who ordered the wine should be presented with the wine bottle; however, the decision of who at the table will taste the wine is the guest's, not the servers. The host should be allowed to read the wine bottle's label while the server pronounces the wine's name. The guest should agree that this is the correct wine that was ordered.

**Exhibit 6.10****10 KEY STEPS IN BOTTLED WINE SERVICE**

- Step 1: Present the wine list.
- Step 2: Assist customers with wine selection.
- Step 3: Take the wine order.
- Step 4: Collect the wineglasses and obtain the necessary wine.
- Step 5: Bring the glasses and wine to the table.
- Step 6: Present the wine to the guest.
- Step 7: Open the wine after guest approval.
- Step 8: Allow the guest to taste.
- Step 9: Pour the wine after guest approval.
- Step 10: Refill the wineglasses.

### **Step 7: Open the Wine after Guest Approval**

The server should use the knife blade attachment on a corkscrew to remove the foil, which is then placed in the server's pocket or apron. The corkscrew is inserted into the center of the cork and is screwed in as far as it will go. The lever is placed on the bottle's lip, and the cork is levered up until it can be removed. Once removed or unscrewed from the corkscrew, the cork can be presented to the guest, who may wish to examine it.

### **Step 8: Allow the Guest to Taste**

A small sample of the wine is poured into the guest's glass for sampling. When the wine is poured, the wine bottle's label should be facing the customer, and when pouring is complete, the bottle should be twisted at the same time it is tipped up to reduce drips. Glasses are not removed from the table as wine is poured unless, for example, the customer is seated against a wall or in a booth, or there is another reason that pouring with the glass in place is impractical.

If the host does not approve the wine, the server should retrieve a second bottle. Improper processing, transporting, or storing conditions sometimes yield an unsatisfactory bottle of wine. Sometimes, however, the customer may just be unsatisfied with the wine's taste. Care should be taken that this is not caused by an improper description on the wine list or by the server. Alternatively, the server may suggest a different wine or request that the manager or other staff member with more extensive wine knowledge assist the customer. When a new bottle of wine is brought to the table, steps 6 through 8 should be repeated.

### **Step 9: Pour the Wine after Guest Approval**

Begin with the woman nearest the host's right; serve all other women, then male guests, and finally the host. The manager should establish the portion size to be poured in wineglasses, and this decision will be based in part on the shape and size of wineglass. As a general rule, wineglasses should never be filled more than halfway full.

### **Step 10: Refill the Wineglasses**

Servers should know when to refill glasses. When a guest's wineglass is almost empty, the server can inquire, "Would you care for more wine?"

There is a great deal of tradition and showmanship in professional wine service. Proper use of these procedures is appreciated by many customers and is an important part of their enjoyment of wine and of the meal it accompanies.

## Professional Guest Intervention Procedures

Managers know that they must please their guests. They also know that they and their employees must follow the law. In most cases it is easy to do both, but not always. This can be the case, for example, when a guest who appears to be intoxicated wishes to purchase additional alcohol. It is illegal to serve alcohol to intoxicated guests. If the guest is refused service, it is very likely he or she will not be happy. While that is unfortunate, experienced managers know that in such situations guest safety and following the law is more important than short-term guest happiness.

In cases where intoxicated individuals cause damage or injury to themselves or others, society has deemed it appropriate to place a portion of the responsibility on those who sold or served the alcohol. The laws that address liability for serving alcohol illegally are complex. Managers must understand that there are at least three parties involved when an accident results from the illegal sale of alcohol:

- **First party:** the individual consuming the alcohol
- **Second party:** the operation serving the alcohol
- **Third party:** the injured person(s) not involved in this instance of selling or consuming the alcohol

To illustrate the third-party perspective of improper alcohol service, assume that Randy, a guest (the first party), is served an excessive amount of alcohol by Monica, the bartender at an establishment (the second party). As a result, Randy drives a car and causes an accident that severely injures Bob (the third party).

In such a situation, this establishment and, in some states, even Monica the bartender, may be held liable for Bob's injuries. This legal concept, known as **third-party liability**, forms the basis for what is referred to as dram shop legislation. This legislation has the intent to penalize those who serve alcohol improperly and to compensate innocent victims.

To avoid potential liability, it is essential that both managers and employees know and perform their respective roles in serving alcohol safely. Doing so ensures that all guests will be provided a safe environment and the operation will fulfill its duty of using reasonable care in the service of alcohol.

### INTERVENTION BY BARTENDERS AND SERVERS

It is illegal in all states to serve alcohol to an intoxicated guest. **Intoxication** is the physiological state that occurs when a person has a high level of alcohol in his or her blood. As a result, all bartenders and servers should be trained to identify the signs that indicate a guest has had too much to drink. Effective intervention by bartenders and servers begins the moment a guest enters the operation. Keeping guests from becoming intoxicated is just as critical as stopping service to them after they have become intoxicated.

Exhibit 6.11



Bartenders and servers should evaluate customers when they order their first drinks (*Exhibit 6.11*). This is done simply by greeting the guest, initiating a brief conversation with them, and noting key guest characteristics:

- Does the guest appear tired, stressed, or depressed?
- Does the guest speak clearly, not slurring his or her words?
- Is the guest already intoxicated?
- Does the guest make comments, either seriously or in jest, indicating his or her desire to “get drunk”?
- Will the guest be ordering food?

If the bartender or server has any indication that the guest has already consumed some alcohol or is consuming alcohol at a rate likely to elevate the guest’s blood alcohol content (BAC) dramatically, they may encourage the guest to eat; to switch to non-alcoholic drinks, such as coffee or water, or lower-alcohol drinks; or to “slow down” their consumption.

**Blood alcohol content (BAC)** is the amount of alcohol that has been absorbed into the bloodstream of a drinker. A BAC of 0.10 means there is about 1 drop of alcohol for every 1,000 drops of blood in the bloodstream.

While the effect of alcohol varies widely by individual, the impact of different BAC levels has been well studied and generalizations about their effect can be stated:

**0.02–0.03 BAC:** No loss of coordination, slight euphoria and loss of shyness. Depressant effects are not apparent.

**0.04–0.06 BAC:** Feeling of well-being, relaxation, lower inhibitions, sensation of warmth. Some minor impairment of reasoning and memory will occur.

**0.07–0.09 BAC:** Slight impairment of balance, speech, vision, reaction time, and hearing. Judgment and self-control are reduced, and caution, reason, and memory are impaired. A BAC of 0.08 means the drinker is legally impaired; it is illegal in all states to operate a motor vehicle at this level.

**0.10–0.125 BAC:** Significant impairment of motor coordination and loss of good judgment. Speech may be slurred; balance, vision, reaction time, and hearing will be impaired.

**0.13–0.19 BAC:** Gross motor impairment and lack of physical control. Blurred vision. Judgment and perception are severely impaired.

**0.20–0.25 BAC:** Feeling dazed, confused, or otherwise disoriented. May need help to stand or walk. Blackouts are likely, so drinkers may not remember what has happened. All mental, physical, and sensory functions are severely impaired.

**0.30 BAC and above:** Drinkers may pass out suddenly and be difficult to awaken. Coma and even death is possible due to respiratory failure.

In some operations, beverage servers who are concerned about a guest's BAC will slow service to the guest, but the manager must approve this approach. In many operations, it is a policy that managers be alerted any time a server is concerned about a guest's BAC. Doing so ensures that the manager is aware of the possibility of their future involvement in addressing such a guest's continued alcohol consumption.

Bartenders and servers must be trained to look for indications that they must stop serving guests additional alcohol:

- If the guest shows physical or behavioral signs of intoxication
- If the bartender or server is concerned about the impact of the number of drinks the guest has consumed on the guest's BAC

Some operations allow bartenders and servers to stop service in such situations but require them to notify the manager. Other operations require managers to stop the service. In all cases, bartenders and servers should be fully trained in responsible alcohol service and follow their own operation's guest intervention policies.

### INTERVENTION BY MANAGERS

In many operations, it will be the manager's job to intervene when a guest is refused service of additional alcohol. In such cases, it is essential that the operation's preestablished policies be followed and that the incident is documented in an incident report. In addition to stopping service to a guest, managers may face other intervention challenges, including guests who arrive intoxicated and intoxicated guests who seek to drive away from the operation.

Sometimes guests who are already intoxicated arrive at an operation that serves alcohol. In this situation, managers have a legal obligation *not* to serve such a guest. Many managers feel they also have a professional obligation to help the guest depart safely. Managers can take specific steps if guests arrive intoxicated:

- Try to refuse entry.
- Ensure guests are not served alcohol if they insist on entering.
- Call local law enforcement personnel to have the guest removed if he or she causes a disturbance.

Sometimes guests who arrive intoxicated or who appear to become intoxicated while in the operation may decide to drive away when they are refused service. In such a case, managers should take specific actions:

- Determine if the guest is the only available driver or if a safe driver is available to drive him or her.
- If the guest is the only driver, ask for his or her keys.
- If the guest agrees not to drive, arrange for alternative transportation.
- If the guest refuses to surrender his or her keys and insists on driving, notify local law enforcement.



### KEEPING IT SAFE

In some cases, guests who are refused alcohol service may become threatening or even violent. In such cases employee safety, as well as the safety of other guests in the operation, must always take first priority. Employees serving alcohol must avoid any physical confrontations with guests and summon their managers for assistance if needed.

Employees should also be carefully taught about the circumstances in which local law enforcement officials should be summoned to deal with unruly guests. But in no case should employees ever be instructed to place their own personal safety at risk when dealing with unruly guests.

Managers are responsible for following the law related to the service of alcoholic beverages, but these laws may change. As a result, it is essential that managers stay abreast of legal changes regarding beverage alcohol service.

### Responsible Alcohol Service

Managers whose operations serve alcohol must ensure they have the right policies and procedures in place to protect themselves, their guests, and their operations. Managers must take a number of important steps to help ensure the safe service of alcohol in their operations and to demonstrate to others, if the need arises, that they have done so:

1. Developing an incident report form
2. Providing training and certification
3. Monitoring licensing and certificates
4. Monitoring alcoholic beverage service
5. Resolving beverage service problems and concerns
6. Reviewing resolutions of service-related problems and concerns and taking corrective action if alcohol service-related problem patterns emerge

#### DEVELOPING AN INCIDENT REPORT FORM

Managers must be prepared if a critical incident related to alcoholic beverage service occurs. If it does, a record must be made about the event. An **incident report** is the form used to document what happened and what was done in response. There are a variety of situations in which managers may decide to mandate the completion of an incident report:

- If alcohol service has been stopped to a guest
- If alternative transportation has been arranged for an intoxicated guest
- If an illegal activity has been observed
- If a fight or altercation occurs
- If a guest becomes ill and requires medical treatment

If a significant event such as those listed occurs, it can be stressful and emotions can run high. A manager must take control of the situation immediately for two reasons:

- To ensure the safety of the guests
- To protect the operation legally

Managers can accomplish these goals if employees are trained to respond properly in an emergency situation. Part of that training involves promptly completing and filing an incident report. Employees such as bartenders or servers who witness or who are involved in an incident should be taught to



If an incident related to beverage service should occur, managers must ensure the appropriate staff members are familiar with the incident report and know how to fill it out properly. Keeping a record of beverage service issues as they occur helps managers prevent future issues, modify training if needed, and be prepared for potential legal action against the operation. In addition, how managers respond to and document an incident may affect their operation's insurance coverage.

### PROVIDING TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Managers whose operations serve alcohol must ensure that they or their staff members do not serve intoxicated persons and others not permitted to drink. One way to ensure that relevant employees are qualified is by requiring or encouraging certification.

**Certification** refers to the confirmation that a person possesses certain skills, knowledge, or characteristics. In most cases, some form of external review, education, or assessment supplies this confirmation. One of the most common types of certification is professional certification. In most cases, the certified person has demonstrated an ability to competently complete a job or task. Typically he or she does so by passing a formal examination.

Increasingly states require that managers and, in most cases, bartenders and other beverage servers complete an alcohol service training course. They must complete such a course to become officially certified in the safe service of alcohol and as a condition of keeping an operation's liquor license. In many cases, those companies that provide insurance to beverage-serving operations make the same requirement.

Managers can receive help in this task because training and certification in the safe service of alcohol is provided by several organizations, including the National Restaurant Association. **ServSafe Alcohol** is the name of the responsible alcohol server program developed by the National Restaurant Association.

Whether managers are required to be certified by their employer, by the state issuing their liquor license, by their insurance companies, or simply because they wish to improve their professional skills, training in the safe service of alcohol is important for them, their entire beverage service staff, and their customers.

### MONITORING LICENSING AND CERTIFICATES

Every state requires sellers of alcoholic beverages to be licensed. Applying for and maintaining a liquor license is a complex process. To maintain a liquor license, most states require managers to comply with, and document their compliance with, a variety of policies or laws. Managers must be very familiar with these licensing and certifying requirements. They must also ensure that they stay abreast of any changes in laws related to alcohol service so that they and their operations are in compliance at all times.

### MONITORING ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE SERVICE

Personally monitoring alcoholic beverage service is one of a manager's most important steps (*Exhibit 6.13*). Managers should observe servers and bartenders as they follow policies and procedures designed to ensure they serve alcohol safely.

### RESOLVING BEVERAGE SERVICE PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

Another of a manager's most important tasks is to help resolve beverage service problems and concerns as they develop. Despite excellent staff training, certain incidents will likely occur and will require the manager's intervention:

- Refusing entrance to guests who appear intoxicated
- Refusing all alcoholic beverage service to underage drinkers
- Stopping alcohol service to drinkers who appear intoxicated

### REVIEWING RESOLUTIONS OF SERVICE-RELATED PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS AND TAKING ACTION IF PROBLEM PATTERNS EMERGE

Sometimes managers will find that the same beverage service-related issues occur frequently. When this happens, managers can use a formal problem-solving process to address and correct the recurring issue:

- Defining the problem
- Determining the cause of the problem
- Assessing alternative solutions
- Selecting the best course of action
- Documenting the action

**DEFINING THE PROBLEM** The best way to define a problem is to think about who or what is affected, and a questioning process can be used for this purpose. Depending on the problem, different groups including employees, managers, owners, or even customers could be asked to help explain why the problem exists.

**DETERMINING THE CAUSE OF THE PROBLEM** Problems affecting policies and procedures are often blamed directly on affected employees. However, problems often can have other causes. Most beverage operations are made up of a series of complex systems including those for admitting guests, taking orders, serving guests, and collecting payment. Problems can occur when one or more of these systems breaks down or was not carefully developed in the first place. Managers must carefully review their systems to determine where their problems regularly reappear.

Exhibit 6.13



**ASSESSING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS** An alternative is simply a possible solution to a recurring problem. A beverage service–related problem likely has a number of possible solutions. After potential alternatives have been generated, they should be analyzed to determine which would best correct the problem. Key questions can be asked:

- What will happen if we use this alternative?
- Who will be affected and how will they be affected?
- Is the alternative better than any other alternative?
- Is it cost-effective? Will the solution cost more than the problem?
- Is it reasonable? Does the alternative have a good chance to succeed?

**SELECTING THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION** Wise managers choose solutions carefully. An incorrect solution will likely create the need to repeat the problem-solving process, and the negative impact of the problem will also continue. After a manager chooses the best solution, he or she develops an action plan. An **action plan** is a series of steps that can be taken to resolve the problem. Communicating the action plan is essential. Managers should also communicate the action plan’s expected outcomes to everyone involved so they know what must be done and how they will be impacted.

**DOCUMENTING THE ACTION** The purpose of documentation is to record information for future use. Changes in job procedures and activities used to implement the solution should be recorded so staff training can be modified as needed. The continual review and modification, if necessary, of all alcohol service activities, policies, and procedures are an essential part of every beverage manager’s job.

## TAKE-AWAY ORDERS

Increasingly, fast-casual, casual, and even some fine-dining operations receive “take-away” or “to-go” orders from guests. Guests placing these orders may be in a setting that prevents them from eating in the establishment, such as work. Or, they may simply prefer to eat the food in their own homes.

Historically, some food types such as Chinese, Thai, and other Asian cuisines have been popular takeout choices. Others popular takeout choices include deli sandwiches and pizzas. In fact, two of the three largest pizza franchise companies generate the majority of their revenue selling carryout or home delivery pizzas.

Whether they sell carryout items to guests who pick up their own orders, or they deliver the items to guests, managers responsible for ensuring high-quality service related to items sold for away from operation consumption focus on two key areas: order accuracy and proper packaging.

## Order Accuracy

Order accuracy is even more critical with take-away orders than with food eaten in an operation's dining room. In many cases, guests will not detect any errors until they have left the operation. Such errors cannot be readily corrected. For example, an office worker volunteers to pick up lunch for a group of co-workers from a local establishment. That guest is not likely to inspect each of the orders closely when he or she picks them up.

Rather, it is the responsibility of the operation to carefully ensure each take-away order has been properly filled. When errors in order accuracy do occur, it leads to inconvenience on the part of the guest and significant reductions in customer perceptions of the operation's service quality.

## Proper Packaging

Take-away food orders must be filled accurately. In many cases, it is equally important that the orders be packaged properly if they are to be well received by customers. In all segments of the restaurant and foodservice industry a variety of high-quality, affordable disposable packaging supplies is essential:

- Napkins
- Eating utensils
- Food containers or dishware
- Trays, boxes, or bags
- Wraps
- Condiments

Managers choosing take-away packaging seek to ensure food safety, maintain proper product temperatures, and present their menu items in the most attractive manner possible.

## CLEARING AND RESETTING TABLES

Every operation will have policies and procedures for clearing and resetting dining area tables. Responsibilities of servers, busers, and others must be made clear to all. Tables with dirty dishes are unsightly to guests entering or already in the dining room.

Managers must address who will clean and reset the tables, when it is to be done, and how it is to be done. In all cases, however, the basic procedure for clearing and resetting dining-room tables includes steps that must be followed in order:

- Clearing
- Cleaning
- Rinsing
- Sanitizing
- Resetting

### THINK ABOUT IT ...

Have you ever purchased take-away or home-delivered food from an operation only to find that when you inspected the order closely it had been improperly filled? What did you do?



### WHAT'S THE FOOTPRINT?

Many managers purchase only take-away food containers that are easy on the environment. These managers look for food and drink containers that are biodegradable. Additionally, the packaging products they select address one or more of the three Rs of environmentally friendly practices: reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Available packaging materials that are planet-friendly include those that are made from 100 percent natural sources, those made from recycled products, and those produced in ways that result in minimal negative impact on the environment.

## Clearing

The proper service of guests includes, of course, the removal of used items such as appetizer plates and wineglasses as guests are finished with them. Fully clearing tables involves the removal of dirty dishware, food containers, napkins, and if needed, tablecloths immediately upon guest departure. Areas around the tables, including floors, chairs, and booth seating, should also be cleaned. Servers should be sure to remove all crumbs, other food droppings, and spilled beverages.

The clearing of tabletop items can be done with bus tubs or trays. In addition, waitstaff can clear tables with only one or two items by hand, such as removing an empty cocktail glass. If bus tubs and trays are used to return items to back-of-the-house areas, they should not be overloaded.

Bus tubs and trays must be used carefully to avoid dishware or glassware breakage. Managers must also ensure employee safety when carrying soiled items. The most important factor in clearing dirty tables is that the process be performed quickly and quietly so as not to disturb other guests in the dining room.

## Cleaning, Rinsing, and Sanitizing

**Cleaning** means removing food and other types of soil from a surface such as a tabletop or counter. Cleaning always follows clearing in the table resetting process. To clean a dining table, all used items including garnishes, breads, and other edible items that could have been touched by guests must first be cleared from the table. Tablecloths should be removed. The table is then ready to be cleaned, rinsed, and sanitized. Seating areas should also be cleaned.

After table areas have been cleared, cleaned, and rinsed, the surface of the table should be sanitized. **Sanitizing** means reducing the number of harmful microorganisms on a clean surface to safe levels. While cleaning removes soil that can be seen, sanitizing removes harmful microorganisms that cannot be seen.

The sanitizing of a surface always takes place after the surface has been cleaned and rinsed. Eating areas such as tabletops and countertops, including those eating areas on high chairs, should be sanitized between uses. Generally, seating areas need to be cleaned only between uses.

There are key steps employees should take when cleaning, rinsing, and sanitizing dining-room areas:

**Step 1:** Set up separate washing, rinsing, and sanitizing buckets for the dining room, and place a wiping cloth in each. Fill the washing bucket halfway with hot water and add the recommended amount of washing solution. The rinsing bucket should be filled with clean water. Finally, fill the sanitizing bucket with water and add the recommended amount of sanitizing solution. Use a test strip to test the sanitizer solution to confirm that the sanitizer is the correct strength.

**Step 2:** Remove large, visible food particles from the eating area. Then use the washing solution and a cloth or scrub pad to clean the surfaces of the table, booths, and chairs seats, taking special care to thoroughly wash high chairs and booster seat surfaces. Clean tabletops and edges of the table toward the underside, as guests' soiled hands frequently make contact with these areas.

**Step 3:** Finish cleaning all table and chair surfaces and rinse them by wiping them down using the separate cloth from the rinse bucket.

**Step 4:** Using a fiber-free cloth from the sanitizing solution, wipe the table, high chairs, and booster seat surfaces, including all edges, with the sanitizer-soaked cloth. Allow the areas to air dry without wiping off the sanitizer. Note: *Steps 1 through 4 should be performed after every use of eating areas.*

**Step 5:** Do a thorough cleaning of tables and seating areas at the end of each operating day, cleaning the tabletop as well as the table underside of any food debris or gum that may be present. Wash table legs, chair legs, and any other seating areas such as booths or stools, but do not upend chairs onto the sanitized tables unless the chair seats have also been sanitized.

## Resetting

Items that should remain on tables, such as menus and condiments, and those items such as flatware and glassware that must be replaced when resetting tables will vary by operation. What is most important is that each service employee knows what these tabletop items are, and that each item is placed on the table in the proper number and in the proper location. When tables have been properly reset, they are ready for the seating of new guests (see *Exhibit 6.14*).



## SUMMARY

### 1. List the key areas to be addressed in dining-room table *mise en place*.

The four key areas related to dining-room table *mise en place* are linens and napkins, flatware, dishware, and glassware. Table linens refer to the tablecloths used to cover tables. These should be clean, wrinkle-free, and attractively placed on tabletops. Napkins may be cloth or paper, and each dining place setting should include at least one clean napkin. Flatware are the eating utensils used by guests. Whether they are pre-set on tables or delivered with the guest's meal, they should be clean and free from water spots. Dishware refers to the cups, bowls, and plates on which food is served. They may be made of a variety of materials.

If dishware is pre-set on tables, care must be taken that servers do not touch their food contact surfaces. Glassware means drinking vessels. Glassware is fragile and care must be taken in handling these items. The size and types of glassware used will vary by operation, but all should be clean and spot-free when presented to guests.

### 2. State the key factors to address when taking guest orders in QSR and fast-casual, as well as in casual and fine-dining operations.

The professional and accurate taking of guest orders is essential to high-quality service in every restaurant or foodservice segment because all guests expect their orders to be taken by qualified and knowledgeable servers. For servers in the QSR and fast-casual segments, professionalism dictates order taker friendliness and accuracy. Friendliness is essential because guest orders are processed quickly in these segments. An unfriendly server loses the opportunity to interact with guests on a personal level. Accuracy of order taking is especially important because speed of service is critical. Guests in these segments may not be on-premise for easy reclarification of orders.

For servers in the casual and fine-dining segments, professionalism means exhibiting the proper demeanor. A casual approach is appropriate in casual establishments, while a more formal demeanor is appropriate in most fine-dining operations. In both of the segments an emphasis on ensuring that guests enjoy the best possible dining experience is a key factor when taking guests' orders.

### 3. Explain the importance of properly delivering guests' ordered menu items.

The delivery of the correctly ordered item to the right guest is critical to ensure high levels of guest satisfaction. Establishments can choose from a variety of service methods. However, the primary goal of every table-service method used has the same goal: the delivery and proper placement of the right menu items to the right guest. The delivery of alcoholic beverages is a special case both in presentation, as in bottled wine service, and in the responsible service of these adult beverages. Managers must ensure that all service staff know how to serve alcoholic beverages as well as when they must not be served to guests.

**4. Explain the importance of responsible alcoholic beverage service, and the major steps managers take to ensure responsible service of alcohol.**

It is illegal in all states to serve alcohol to an intoxicated guest. As a result, managers and their service staff must be trained to identify the signs that indicate a guest has had too much to drink. Serving an intoxicated guest puts that guest's safety at risk. It also places risks on those whom that guest might harm because he or she is intoxicated. Finally, because of third-party (dram shop) liability laws, serving an intoxicated guest can put a business and even its employees who have served the alcohol at legal risk.

Managers responsible for the safe service of alcohol perform a number of critical tasks. These include developing an incident report form to document any problems their operations experience in the service of alcoholic beverages. They also provide comprehensive staff training at all employee levels. They monitor state licensing and certificate requirements as well as continually monitor alcoholic beverage service in their facilities. They stay up-to-date with any changes in laws regarding the service of alcohol. Finally, managers resolve beverage service problems and concerns as these occur and take appropriate correction action if alcohol service-related problem patterns emerge.

**5. Identify the two factors most affecting the proper delivery of take-away food orders.**

Those managers selling carryout items to guests or delivering products to guests must focus on order accuracy and proper packaging. Order accuracy is important because in many cases guests will not detect any errors in filling their orders until they have left the operation. As a result, the errors cannot be readily corrected. Packaging is also important. Managers packaging food products to be eaten away from their operations want to ensure the safety of the food products they sell. They also want to maintain proper product temperatures and present their menu items in the most attractive manner possible.

**6. Describe the process required for resetting dining-room tables.**

The most important factor in clearing dirty tables is that the process be performed quickly and quietly. First, set up separate pails and cloths for washing, rinsing, and sanitizing. The process used to reset dirty tables in dining areas begins with clearing: the removal of dirty dishware, food containers, napkins, and if required, tablecloths. The next step in the process involves cleaning: the removal of visible food and other types of soil from the tabletop or countertop and seating areas around the table. After table areas have been cleared and cleaned, rinse all of the cleaned surfaces. Tables may then be properly sanitized to reduce the number of harmful microorganisms on them to safe levels.

The sanitizing of a surface always takes place after the surface has been cleaned and rinsed. The sanitizer should be allowed to air dry. Finally, after the table has been cleaned, rinsed, and sanitized, front-of-the-house staff can set and replace tabletop items for new guests in the proper number and in the proper location on the table.

## APPLICATION EXERCISE



Consider an establishment in the casual or fine-dining segments that you would like to own or manage and then prepare two training sessions for service staff.

1. The first session should address how tables are to be set. Include a diagram for setting a four-top table properly. In addition to other issues you feel may be important, be sure your session includes information on the following:
  - Who is responsible for table setting?
  - How should tablecloths be placed on tables?
  - Will flatware be pre-set on tables? If so, which pieces will be pre-set and where will they be placed?
  - Will dishware be pre-set on tables? If so, which pieces will be pre-set and where will they be placed?
  - Will glassware be pre-set on tables? If so, which pieces will be pre-set and where will they be placed?
  - Will napkins be pre-set on tables? If so, how will they be folded and placed?
  - What condiments will be pre-set on tables and where will they be placed?
2. The second session should address how tables are to be cleared, cleaned, and sanitized. In addition to other issues you feel may be important, be sure your session includes information on the following:
  - What other items will be pre-set on tables and where will they be placed?
  - Who is responsible for table resetting?
  - How should soiled tablecloths be replaced during meal service?
  - Where will soiled tablecloths and napkins be stored?
  - Where and how will dishware be scraped, stacked, and removed?
  - How should glassware be removed (i.e., tray, bus tub, or by hand)?
  - How should flatware be removed?
  - How should empty wine bottles or chillers be removed?
  - How should table areas be cleaned and sanitized?
  - How should special seating for children be cleaned and sanitized?

## REVIEW YOUR LEARNING



Select the best answer for each question.

1. What should servers avoid touching when placing flatware directly on cleaned and sanitized dining-room tables?
  - A. The tabletop
  - B. The flatware's handles
  - C. The underside of the table
  - D. The flatware's food contact surfaces
2. For which event would an operation normally complete an incident report?
  - A. Manager is given a promotion.
  - B. Employee is continually late for work.
  - C. Guest is refused additional alcohol service.
  - D. Guest arrives late for a confirmed reservation.

3. Which is an example of a subjective slang statement that could confuse a guest?
  - A. All our steaks are USDA Choice.
  - B. All our house dressings are fat-free.
  - C. Our chicken strips sell like gangbusters.
  - D. Our dessert soufflé takes 30 minutes to prepare.
4. What is a sommelier's area of expertise?
  - A. Soups
  - B. Wines
  - C. Sauces
  - D. Pastries
5. What is the main advantage of using advanced technology, such as email or text messaging, for receiving guest orders?
  - A. Menu items can be produced at a lower cost.
  - B. Menu items can be more quickly entered in the POS.
  - C. Guests can order menu items prior to their arrival at an operation.
  - D. The operation can communicate menu changes more effectively.
6. What is the most important factor servers must consider when offering tableside preparation of menu items?
  - A. Cost
  - B. Taste
  - C. Style
  - D. Safety
7. At what blood alcohol content (BAC) will drinkers begin to experience minor impairment of reasoning and memory?
  - A. 0.02–0.03
  - B. 0.04–0.06
  - C. 0.07–0.09
  - D. 0.10–0.12
8. Lani is a bartender at an establishment owned by Dennis. One night Lani serves Steven five drinks. When driving away from the establishment Steven's car strikes Andrea's vehicle and Andrea is injured. If it is alleged a violation related to dram shop legislation occurred in this scenario, who is the third party?
  - A. Andrea
  - B. Dennis
  - C. Lani
  - D. Steven
9. What are the two most important factors affecting the preparation of take-away food orders for guest pickup or delivery?
  - A. Speed and lowest cost
  - B. Accuracy and lowest cost
  - C. Speed and proper packaging
  - D. Accuracy and proper packaging
10. In what order must waitstaff implement the steps used to reset dirty tables?
  - A. Clear, rinse, reset, clean, and sanitize
  - B. Clear, clean, rinse, sanitize, and reset
  - C. Sanitize, rinse, clear, clean, and reset
  - D. Rinse, clear, reset, clean, and sanitize