

SOP: Table Maintenance and Clearing Etiquette

This SOP details **table maintenance and clearing etiquette**, covering proper procedures for keeping tables clean, efficient clearing techniques, appropriate handling of dishes and utensils, maintaining hygiene standards, and ensuring a pleasant dining environment. The purpose is to promote a respectful and organized dining experience through consistent and courteous table maintenance practices.

1. Scope

This standard operating procedure applies to all staff responsible for table maintenance and clearing duties in dining areas.

2. Responsibilities

- Dining staff: Maintain cleanliness throughout service, clear tables efficiently, handle items appropriately, and follow hygiene protocols.
- Supervisors: Train staff, monitor adherence, and address any issues related to table maintenance and etiquette.

3. Procedure

Step	Details
3.1 Table Preparation	Before guests are seated, ensure tables are clean, dry, and properly set according to the establishment's standards.
3.2 Ongoing Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discreetly remove used items (empty plates, glasses, utensils) as guests finish with them.• Wipe crumbs or spills promptly using a clean cloth or crumb scraper.• Monitor table throughout the meal for any maintenance needs.
3.3 Clearing Tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wait until all guests are finished before clearing main plates unless otherwise requested.• Politely ask guests if they have finished before removing items.• Clear from the right side of the guest when possible.• Avoid stacking too many items at once to minimize noise and accidents.
3.4 Handling Dishes and Utensils	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold dishes and glassware by the base, not by the rim, to maintain hygiene.• Never place fingers inside glasses or cups.• Separate cutlery from plates carefully to avoid spills.
3.5 Maintaining Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use clean cloths and tools for each table.• Wash or sanitize hands before and after handling dishes.• Do not touch food directly with bare hands while clearing.
3.6 Final Table Reset	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After clearing, wipe table and chairs thoroughly.• Reset table according to standards for the next guest.

4. Etiquette Guidelines

- Always greet guests politely when approaching the table for maintenance or clearing.
- Work quietly and efficiently to avoid disrupting guests.
- Thank guests as you clear items and acknowledge any requests courteously.
- Respect dining pace; never rush guests to finish.

5. Hygiene & Safety Tips

- Wear clean uniforms and maintain good personal hygiene.
- Report and clean any spills immediately to prevent accidents.
- Dispose of waste in designated containers.

- Follow all local food safety and sanitation regulations.

6. Documentation & Training

All staff must undergo training in table maintenance and clearing standards. Supervisors should document staff training and conduct regular reviews to ensure SOP compliance.

7. Review

This SOP is to be reviewed annually or as needed to accommodate updated practices or regulations.