

RESTAURANT · OPERATING STANDARD 122

The Poolside Dining Standard

WHO

Pool, beach and lounge servers, checked by their supervisor

WHEN

Every guest at a lounge, beach bed or lounge table, opening to close

YOU NEED

Clean menus, lounge numbers, trays and covers, the heat forecast

TIME TO TRAIN

45 minutes, with one supervised hour on the deck

What this standard achieves

A guest on a lounge, a beach bed or a lounge sofa eats and drinks as well as at a restaurant table, without getting up, without waving twice and without waiting in the heat. The hotel sells more at the pool when the next drink arrives before the guest thinks of walking to the bar.

Measured by

01

Guest greeted within 1 minute at a table, 5 on a lounge

02

Water with every guest within 5 minutes of settling

03

Order taken within 3 minutes of the menu

04

A raised hand answered within 1 minute, the guest never standing

05

Drinks served within 10 minutes of the order

06

Food within 15 minutes at a table, 20 on a lounge

07

A refreshment offered unasked every 90 minutes in the heat

08

Every item on a tray, food covered until it reaches the guest

PHASE 1

Before service

STEPS 1–5

- 01 Check every menu and bill folder: clean, dry, today's prices, and allergens marked. Write what is off today on the briefing sheet, so no guest orders a dish that has run out.
- 02 Learn the numbers of the loungers, beach beds and lounge tables in your section. Every order is written against a number, never against "the lady in the blue hat".
- 03 Set your station: trays with mats, covers or cloches for every plate, napkin clips against the wind, ice in a covered bucket, and unbreakable glasses for the deck as the pool rules require.
- 04 Read the forecast. Above 28 °C, prepare the refreshment for the day (chilled towels, fruit skewers, sorbet or flavoured water) and agree with the pool attendant who carries each round. See The Pool Attendant Standard.
- 05 Agree the times with the kitchen before the first order: dishes in 15 minutes for a table, 20 for a lounge or the beach, and which dishes travel badly in the heat.

PHASE 2

Greet and settle

STEPS 6–10

- 06 Check yourself against The Presence Standard before the first guest arrives: uniform, name badge, hands, and the day's in-house VIPs in mind.
- 07 Greet a guest at a lounge or pool table within one minute, and a guest on a lounge or beach bed within 5 minutes of settling. Speak at eye level, never standing between the guest and the sun.
"Good afternoon, I'm Sara, and I'll be looking after you today. May I bring you the menu?"
- 08 Every guest has water within 5 minutes of settling. On the deck, the pool attendant brings it as The Pool Attendant Standard sets out; at the lounge, the beach and any table, you bring it.
- 09 Hand the menu with the greeting. Name the dish of the day and anything that has run out, and point out the lighter dishes and those for special diets.
"Today the chef has a grilled sea bream salad. The club sandwich is finished, but the chicken wrap is very close."
- 10 Take the name and the room number for in-house guests and check them against the in-house list. Write them with the lounge number on your section sheet.

PHASE 3

Take the order

STEPS 11-15

- 11 Come back to take the order within 3 minutes of handing over the menu, sooner if the guest closes it or looks up. The guest never has to come to you.

"Have you decided, Mr Novak, or would you like a suggestion?"

- 12 Ask once about allergies and dietary needs, write each one against the guest's name, and follow The Allergy Standard.

"Does anyone have an allergy or a dietary need I should tell the kitchen about?"

- 13 Write each item against the lounge or table number and the guest's position, then read the order back before you leave.

"So that's one sea bream salad, one chicken wrap without onion, and two fresh lemonades."

- 14 Tell the guest when it will arrive: drinks within 10 minutes, food within 15 at a table or 20 on a lounge. If the kitchen is slower today, say so now, with a time.

- 15 Enter the order in the POS within 2 minutes, with the lounge or table number and every change written in the guest's own words.

PHASE 4

Answer the signal

STEPS 16-19

- 16 Stand where you see your whole section, facing the guests, and look over every lounge at least every 2 minutes. Never stand with your back to the deck while you wait at the bar.

- 17 When a guest raises a hand, looks for you or lifts a lounge flag, acknowledge it at once with a nod or a raised hand, and be at their side within one minute. The guest never stands up to find you.

- 18 If you cannot leave, ask the nearest colleague to go, or tell the guest with a gesture and one sentence when you will be there, and keep that time.

"I'll be with you in two minutes, Ms Haddad."

- 19 Never call across the deck or the beach. Walk to the guest, lower your voice to the level of the conversation around them, and leave sleeping guests in peace.

PHASE 5

Bring the order

STEPS 20–24

- 20 Drinks reach the guest within 10 minutes of the order. Food reaches a table within 15 minutes and a lounge within 20; dessert within 10 at a table and 15 on a lounge.
- 21 Check each plate against the ticket at the pass. Carry everything on a tray, food covered with a lid or cloche until it reaches the guest, cold dishes on chilled plates.
- 22 Set a side table beside the lounge or a tray stand, clip the napkin against the wind, and place sauces and condiments in small covered bowls, each with its own spoon.
- 23 Name each dish and drink as you set it down, take the covers away in front of the guest, and say how to call you.
- "Your sea bream salad, Mrs Tanaka, and your lemonade. Just raise a hand if you need anything."*
- 24 If the guest is in the water when the order arrives, set the drinks down covered in the shade and keep hot food at the pass. Bring it within one minute of the guest returning to the lounge.

PHASE 6

Through the day

STEPS 25–28

- 25 On every pass, look at glasses and plates. Offer the next drink within 5 minutes of an empty glass, and clear finished plates within 5 minutes, asking first.
- "May I take this for you? And can I bring you another iced tea?"*
- 26 Above 28 °C, offer every guest a refreshment unasked at least every 90 minutes: a chilled towel, a fruit skewer, a sorbet or flavoured water. Log the time of each round on the section sheet.
- 27 Coordinate the round with the pool attendant so each guest receives one offer, not two. Whoever carries it writes the time on the same section sheet.
- 28 Thirty minutes before the pool kitchen closes, offer a last food order to each guest in person. Drinks continue until the deck closes.

PHASE 7

Bill and goodbye

STEPS 29–32

29 Check every line of the bill against the order before it goes in the folder. Present the folder closed, with a pen, and never say the total or the room number aloud. See The Bill Standard.

30 For a room charge, the guest writes the room number and signs, and you check the name against the in-house list before posting the charge.

31 When the guest leaves, thank them by name, clear the side table within 5 minutes and tell the pool attendant the lounge is free for resetting.

"Thank you, Mr Al-Harbi. Enjoy the rest of your afternoon."

32 Note in the guest profile the favourite drink, the lounge area and any allergy, so tomorrow the first offer is already the right one.

What to record

Section sheet

- ☐ Lounger or table number
- ☐ Guest name and room number
- ☐ Time settled and water served
- ☐ Allergies against each name

Order and times

- ☐ Time the order was taken
- ☐ Time drinks were served
- ☐ Time food was served
- ☐ Delay told to the guest, with new time

Heat rounds

- ☐ Temperature at 11:00 and 14:00
- ☐ Time of each refreshment round
- ☐ What was offered
- ☐ Carried by: server or pool attendant

When the situation changes

A guest falls asleep in full sun

Do not wake them for an order. Ask the pool attendant to move the parasol quietly, and check again on your next pass.

A guest asks for a restaurant dish

Ask the chef whether it can be served at the pool. If it can, give the time; if not, offer the closest dish on the pool menu by name.

Wasps or birds reach the food

Keep plates covered until set down, offer covers for the drinks, and take away finished plates at once. Replace any plate a bird or wasp has touched without being asked.

A sudden storm or strong wind

Offer to move each guest's food and drinks to the covered lounge, carry them there yourself, and keep the bill open on the same number.

A guest who is not staying orders

Serve as for any guest, and ask for payment as the house rule says before the first order or at the end. Never ask for a room number they do not have.

The kitchen will miss the time

Tell the guest before the time is up, with a new time and the reason in one sentence. If the wait passes 10 minutes, offer something to start with: fruit, bread or a cold drink.

Common mistakes

MISTAKE

Waiting at the bar with your back to the deck. A guest waves twice, gives up and walks to the bar in bare feet.

MISTAKE

Writing the order against a description instead of a lounge number. The salad goes to the wrong lady in a blue hat.

MISTAKE

Carrying a plate across the deck uncovered. By the time it arrives it is warm, windblown or visited by a wasp.

MISTAKE

Taking the order and then disappearing for half an hour. The guest who would have ordered a second drink has left for lunch elsewhere.

MISTAKE

Offering the cold towel twice because the attendant and the server both did the round. It looks like nobody talks to each other.

MISTAKE

Leaving finished plates on the side table in the sun. Every guest walking past sees the leftovers, and so do the wasps.

Check your team

After training (45 minutes, with one supervised hour on the deck), each person answers these without the sheet.

- 01 Within how many minutes is a guest greeted at a table, and on a lounge?
- 02 Who brings the first water on the deck, and who brings it at the lounge or beach?
- 03 How soon is the order taken, and what is written beside every item?
- 04 What do you do the moment a guest raises a hand?
- 05 What are the times for drinks, food and dessert, at a table and on a lounge?
- 06 When is a refreshment offered unasked, and how do you avoid offering it twice?
- 07 What do you do with an order that arrives while the guest is in the water?

The Poolside Clock

Every timed moment of poolside service, at a table and on a lounge.
Keep it at the pool bar, where every server sees it before going out.

Moment	At a table	On a lounge or bed
Greeting and menu	Within 1 minute	Within 5 minutes
Water	Within 5 minutes	Within 5 minutes
Order taken	3 minutes after the menu	3 minutes after the menu
A raised hand	Answered within 1 minute	Answered within 1 minute
Drinks	Within 10 minutes	Within 10 minutes
Food, then dessert	15 minutes, then 10	20 minutes, then 15
Refreshment above 28 °C	Every 90 minutes	Every 90 minutes

How to use this with your team

Read one row at each morning briefing this week. The outlet supervisor times three guests a day against the card and reads out the slowest moment at the next briefing, with what will change.

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