

In-Room Dining

The Tray Collection Standard

Five steps for getting used trays out of rooms and corridors. A tray left by a door is seen by every guest on the floor, and most of them never ordered.

Who	When	You need
In-room dining runners, housekeeping and the night team	Every collection call, and every scheduled corridor sweep	The collection log, a sweep route by floor, a covered trolley
Measured by Collected within 15 minutes of the call · Corridors swept hourly, 07:00–23:00 · No tray in any corridor at 07:00		

1 Log the call

Write every collection call in the log with the room and the time. Promise the 15 minutes AAA sets, and send the nearest free runner before the next order is taken, not after it.

"Of course, Mrs Haddad. Someone will be with you within 15 minutes."

Common mistake Holding the collection until the next delivery to that floor. The guest sits beside the remains of dinner.

2 Clear it all

Knock and announce as for a delivery. Take everything in one trip: tray, trolley, cups, glasses, napkins and the bill folder. Ask before you take anything still on the table, such as fruit or water.

"May I take everything, or would you like to keep the fruit and the water?"

Common mistake Clearing the trolley and leaving the coffee cup on the bedside table. Housekeeping finds it the next morning.

3 Sweep the corridors

Our target: walk every guest floor on a fixed route once an hour from 07:00 to 23:00, then at 01:00 and 06:00. Any tray found goes straight onto the trolley, and its room number goes into the log.

"06:00 sweep · floor 4 · trays at 408 and 415 · cleared 06:09"

Common mistake Sweeping only after a guest complains. By then the corridor tray has been in someone's photo of the floor.

4 Collect quietly

Between 23:00 and 07:00, knock for a collection only if the guest has called. Cover corridor trays before lifting them, carry them with both hands and keep the trolley away from bedroom doors.

"512 · corridor tray collected 01:40 · no knock"

Common mistake Knocking at midnight to ask whether the guest has finished. You wake them up to tidy up after the hotel.

5 Read the plates

In stewarding, look at what came back. A main course returned nearly full means something went wrong: tell the supervisor, who phones the guest before the end of the shift to ask, once.

"Mr Okafor, I saw the fillet came back almost untouched. Was it as you ordered it?"

Common mistake Scraping a full plate into the bin without a word. The guest who didn't complain is still deciding about the review.

Who Clears What, and When

A tray belongs to whoever sees it first until it reaches stewarding. This table settles the arguments between departments before they start.

Where the tray is	Who collects	By when
In the room, guest has called	In-room dining runner on duty	Within 15 minutes of the call
In the corridor, by day	Any staff member who sees it	At once, then a call to the runner
In the corridor, at night	Night in-room dining or night porter	On the 01:00 and 06:00 sweeps
In the room, guest out	Room attendant during service	Logged and sent to stewarding
Room after checkout	Room attendant	Before the room is inspected
Suite after a private dinner	The server who set the table	Same evening, if the guest agrees

How to use this with your team

Read it at a joint briefing with housekeeping and the night team in the first week. Then the duty manager walks one floor a day at 07:00 and names the row that was missed, if any.

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