Food delivery checks for a busy restaurant

Plan who receives food deliveries and where the checks happen so stock reaches the right storage promptly.

Practical staff guidance; adapt the suggested workflow to your venue and current procedures.

Prepare before the driver arrives

Assign a receiver and cover for busy periods. Make the relevant order, product specifications and receiving procedure available. Clear an appropriate checking area and ensure storage is ready. If the usual receiver is preparing food, another briefed colleague should know how to reach them and what can be accepted within their authority.

Check against your agreed requirements

Compare the delivered goods with the order and specification. Look at identity, packaging condition, date information and any storage instructions. Follow the venue's food-safety system for temperature checks, instruments and acceptance limits. Record actual observations and the resulting decision. Product-specific controls are more useful than a universal number copied into every delivery form.

Keep uncertainty visible

Where a delivery falls outside the agreed requirements, follow the local rejection or holding procedure and ask the authorised person to decide. Mark stock clearly so it cannot be mistaken for accepted goods. If a supplier substitutes a product, check recipe and allergen implications before it enters normal service. Retain the information needed to trace the decision.

Finish with storage and handover

Move accepted goods into the correct storage using the venue's rotation and separation arrangements. Communicate shortages and substitutions to the team planning service. Close the record with the action, decision-maker and time. A delivery log is most useful when it shows what happened to an exception as well as the original problem.

Worked example

Fictional completed entry, 08:40, delivery D17. Ordered: six cartons of the usual sauce. Received: five correct cartons and one substitute with a split seal. Decision: the receiver rejected the damaged substitute, recorded the short delivery and told the shift supervisor. The five correct cartons were accepted after the usual checks and put away. Handover, 09:05: the supervisor logged the supplier's credit reference against D17 and told the prep lead to plan for five cartons. Open the blank food delivery and exception log to record your own decision.

Your next steps

- Confirm the order and product.
- Inspect packaging and dates.
- Apply local temperature and acceptance checks.
- Escalate substitutions or defects.
- Store accepted goods and close the record.

Make acceptance decisions visible

The receiving sheet should distinguish checks made before acceptance from actions after a problem is found. Confirm supplier, product, quantity, condition, date information and the required storage conditions. Take the temperature checks specified in the business procedure using the correct method and suitable equipment. Store accepted food promptly. If a check fails, identify the affected delivery and keep it from normal use while the responsible person decides the next step.

Work through a partial delivery problem

Fictional example: most of a delivery is satisfactory, but two chilled items arrive with damaged packaging. The receiver records the affected items and lot or date information, contacts the supervisor and follows the rejection or isolation process. The rest of the delivery can be handled according to the checks and instructions that apply to it. Keep the supplier communication and decision together so another shift can understand what happened.

Should staff record a guessed temperature?

Record what was actually measured and the method used. A missing check should be identified honestly. A plausible-looking value hides the need to determine whether the food can safely be accepted.

Stock rotation exercise: the newest delivery has the earliest use-by date

A fresh delivery of chilled packs carries an earlier use-by date than the stock already on the shelf. The receiver is about to put every new pack at the back. What should they check?

Compare your decision

Read the dates and storage instructions on the actual packs. Check remaining shelf life against the delivery specification and intended use. If acceptable, arrange stock so the appropriate packs are used first. Refer any short-dated or unsuitable delivery to the person authorised to accept it.

Write a handover identifying the batch and when the kitchen plans to use it. Simply recording “delivery accepted” hides the decision the next shift needs.

Sources and editorial basis

- Food hygiene for businesses — Chilling and freezing

Guidance checked on 19 October 2026. Examples and worksheets are original suggested workflows; adapt them to your operation.

Use this on shift

Resource page and fillable working record · Read the online guide · Course details