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Essential Skills Profiles



Food and Beverage Servers NOC 6453

Introduction

Food and beverage servers take food and beverage orders and serve them to patrons.

Note: Each Essential Skills task is followed by a number in brackets, e.g. (2), which is the estimated complexity level for that task. Tasks are assigned levels, ranging from Level 1 (basic task) to Levels 4 or 5 (advanced task), and are listed in increasing order of complexity. The complexity levels may vary based on the requirements of the workplace.



Reading

- Read short notes from co-workers, e.g. read short notes from managers to learn about food and drink specials. (1)
- Read short text entries on a variety of forms, e.g. read information contained in reservation forms to learn about the size of parties and dietary requirements. (1)
- Read a variety of bulletins, glossaries, brochures and memos, e.g. read bulletins to learn about upcoming events and changes to policies and procedures. (2)
- May read letters and comment cards from customers to learn about suggestions for improving food service. (2)
- Read safety-related instructions and procedures, e.g. read instructions on Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) to learn how to safely handle sanitizers. (2)
- Read instructions, e.g. read instructions and digital instrument displays to learn how to complete credit card authorizations and use point-of-sale equipment to issue discounts. (2)
- Read policies and procedures, e.g. read policies to learn about dress codes, customer service guidelines and operating procedures. (2)
- May read equipment manuals, e.g. read instruction manuals to learn how to enter food orders and generate invoices using point-of-sale equipment. (3)
- May read training manuals, e.g. read training manuals to learn about serving alcohol, first aid procedures and occupational health and safety. (3)
- May read government regulations, e.g. read regulations governing the sale of alcoholic beverages to customers. (3)



Document Use

- Recognize symbols and icons, e.g. identify hazard symbols on Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) labels. (1)
- Scan labels, price lists and bills, e.g. scan labels on wine to determine vintages and scan price lists to determine the cost of meals and beverages. (1)
- Locate and enter information in a variety of lists and tables, e.g. locate menu items on lists and locate the dates and times of shifts on schedules. (2)
- May scan assembly drawings, e.g. scan assembly drawings to learn how to assemble blenders and complete minor repairs to point-of-sale equipment. (2)
- May scan floor plans, e.g. scan floor plans to determine the set-up for special events and the location of emergency exits. (2)
- May complete a variety of forms, e.g. enter dates, quantities and sales into daily sales forms. (2)



Writing

- May write food choices and prices on menu boards and other displays. (1)
- Write reminders and short notes to co-workers, e.g. write short notes to other servers about the availability of menu items. (1)
- May write incident reports, e.g. complete incident reports to describe events involving thefts and hostile customers. (2)
- May write instructions, e.g. write step-by-step instructions to explain set-up procedures to co-workers. (2)



Numeracy

- May receive cash, credit and debit card payments from customers and make change. (1)
- May measure distances using basic tools, e.g. measure the distance between tables using tape measures. (1)
- May take measurements using weigh scales and graduated containers, e.g. may use shot glasses to measure ingredients for drinks. (1)
- May review sales data to establish information, such as the popularity of menu items and the number of customers served. (1)
- Estimate customer wait times by considering room capacities, the number of customers currently being served and booked reservations. (1)
- May prepare customers' bills, e.g. total customers' food and beverage purchases and add discounts and taxes. (2)
- May calculate tip out amounts for co-workers, such as bus persons, bartenders and cooks. (2)



Numeracy

- May calculate ingredient quantities when modifying drink recipes, e.g. calculate ingredients for double and triple drink recipe yields. (2)
- May calculate average sales of products, such as alcohol, over a set period of time. (2)
- Estimate the length of time it will take to prepare and serve food orders. (2)
- Estimate the body weight of customers to determine the allowable number of alcoholic beverages to serve. (2)
- Estimate the amount of stock, such as lemons, limes, juices, cereals, teas and coffees, needed for shifts. (2)



Oral Communication

- Greet customers in person and respond to questions over the telephone. (1)
- Exchange information with helpers, co-workers, suppliers and supervisors, e.g. speak with helpers and other food and beverage servers to coordinate the delivery of large food orders to customers. (2)
- Talk with customers to discuss menu items and to take their orders, e.g. explain menu items and food and drink specials to customers. (2)
- May talk to dissatisfied customers to resolve conflicts, e.g. talk with dissatisfied customers to learn about and resolve complaints. (3)
- May provide detailed instructions to co-workers, e.g. describe and demonstrate proper guest service practices to new wait staff. (3)



Thinking

- Decide where to seat customers, based on the availability of tables and the number of customers already being served. (1)
- Evaluate the cleanliness of linens, plates and eating utensils. (1)
- Decide when to approach customers to take their orders. (1)
- Judge the quality and appearance of meals. (1)
- May deliver the wrong orders to customers. They check to see how much of the food and beverages have been consumed and then offer replacements, refunds and credits. (1)
- May encounter complaints from customers that their food was not prepared properly. They determine how to satisfy the customers and maintain goodwill. (2)
- May find that work backs up when restaurant is busy. They help speed up processes by co-ordinating the activities of their co-workers. (2)
- May experience equipment breakdowns and power outages. They continue with service and complete invoices manually. (2)
- Learn how to troubleshoot equipment faults by reading manuals and speaking with co-workers and repairers. (2)



Thinking

- Evaluate the sobriety of customers. They consider signs of drunkenness, such as slurred speech and the number of alcoholic beverages consumed. (2)
- Decide if customers have consumed too much alcohol and, if so, suspend service to those customers. (2)
- May encounter intoxicated customers. They refuse additional liquor service as politely as possible and offer food and coffee as an alternative. (2)
- May, in the absence of supervisors, decide the location and arrangement of tables. (2)
- Decide which customers to serve first when serving more than one at a time. (2)
- Evaluate the quality of their service. They consider the accuracy and speed of service and the satisfaction levels of customers. (2)
- Decide when to contact supervisors to deal with an angry customer who cannot be consoled. (2)
- Assess the authenticity of identification used to verify age of customers who wish to consume alcohol. (2)
- Learn about the ingredients of food and drinks by reading recipes and menus and by speaking with co-workers, such as cooks and supervisors. (2)
- Find out about events and the special needs of customers by reading reservation information and speaking with customers and supervisors. (2)



Digital Technology

- May operate point-of-sale equipment, such as electronic cash registers and touch-screens, to tally purchases and create customers' bills. (1)
- May use specialized restaurant management software to place food orders, tally purchases and generate customers' bills. (1)
- May use calculators and personal digital assistant (PDA) devices to complete numeracy-related tasks. (1)
- May use the Internet and search engines to access training courses and seminars offered by suppliers, employers and training organizations. (2)
- May use the Internet and search engines to source information about products, such as wines, and locate new drink recipes. (2)
- May use the Internet and search engines to access information on local events and attractions. (2)



Additional
Information

Other Essential Skills:

Working with Others

Food and beverage servers work independently, coordinating their activities with co-workers as needed. At times, they may work alone or with a partner or helper. Generally, they are part of a team with other servers, kitchen and bar staff, supervisors and managers.

Continuous Learning

Food and beverage servers learn on the job and through their participation in government-sponsored courses, such as Smart Serve, Serving it Right, Food Safe and Responsible Beverage Server. They also learn through certification programs for food and beverage servers. They take courses, such as the mandatory Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) course, and may also take first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and occupational health and safety courses. Many food and beverage servers attend wine tasting or wine appreciation seminars, as well as food tasting courses. Some food and beverage servers participate in cross training for bartender or banquet server positions in order to maximize their usefulness.

Impact of Digital Technology



All Essential Skills are affected by the introduction of technology in the workplace. Food and beverage servers' ability to adapt to new technologies is strongly related to their skill levels across the Essential Skills, including reading, writing, thinking and communication skills. Technologies are transforming the ways in which workers obtain, process and communicate information, and the types of skills needed to perform in their jobs. For example, electronic point-of-sale equipment and specialized restaurant management software systems are now commonplace in the hospitality industry (e.g. use of specialized restaurant management software to place food orders, tally purchases and generate customers' bills). Food and beverage servers need basic computer skills to operate this equipment and are required to maintain current knowledge of their use.

Technology in the workplace further affects the complexity of tasks related to the Essential Skills required for this occupation. For example, the use of electronic databases and keyword search functions makes it easier to locate information, such as prices and reservation information. Tasks previously done manually, like entering date and time information and calculating bills, are completed with speed and accuracy using calculators, touch-screens, personal digital assistant (PDA) devices and/or point-of-sale equipment. Digital technologies also provide food and beverage servers with tools, such as cellular telephones, that increase opportunities for verbal interaction (e.g. workers may call to confirm appointments and orders with customers and providers).



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