

The C.L.E.A.N. Starter Guide

THE CLEAN RESTAURANT BLUEPRINT | Free resource

Why a cleaning system matters

A clean restaurant is the result of clear standards, capable employees and consistent manager verification—not occasional reminders.

Use this guide to introduce a repeatable process to your team.

C — Clarify the standard

Write down what must be cleaned, how often, who owns the task, and how a manager will verify completion. Separate quick checklists from detailed training instructions.

L — Lead from the front

Managers demonstrate expectations, supply necessary tools and check work throughout the shift. Address missed tasks through coaching and follow-up.

E — Empower employee initiative

Train employees through explanation, demonstration and observed practice. Record training and invite employees to report obstacles or hazards.

A — Audit and hold accountable

Use timestamped opening, shift and closing reviews. Assign corrections to an owner and verify completion; do not treat a checked box as proof by itself.

N — Normalize continuous cleanliness

Make safe, appropriate cleaning part of everyday operations. Reinforce strong habits with recognition and consistent expectations.

Your first seven days

Day 1: Walk through the operation and list recurring cleaning tasks.

Days 2–3: Assign task ownership and define manager checks.

Days 4–5: Demonstrate key tasks and record training.

Days 6–7: Review the first checklists, correct gaps and refine the process.

Educational operational guidance only. Follow local food safety codes, manufacturer instructions and approved sanitation procedures.