



How to Conduct a Restaurant Bar Integrity Check

Why does a client order a bar integrity check?

A bartender has direct, and often unsupervised, exposure to the cash register(s) located behind the bar. The bartender is also directly involved in cash handling, as he/she is responsible for collecting payment for all the drinks served. With large amounts of cash passing between hands, it may be tempting for a bartender to steal from the company. The bartender also is in direct control of the businesses operating margin as they control how much alcohol is served. Over pouring and free drinks are often the biggest loss for a drinking establishment.

Internal theft can occur in many different ways, including serving drink(s) and collecting money but not recording the sale, voiding sales and removing the money from the register, under-ringing/recording drink sales, giving away free drinks to friends or for higher tips, over pouring mixed drinks, neat drinks or on the rocks, drinking on duty, etc. Therefore, clients hire “spotters” (who discreetly observe bartender activities) to gain insight into their bartender(s)’ integrity.

Bar & dinner shop combination.

When combined with a restaurant shop, we understand that the bar portion of your evaluation may not be as long, detailed and rigorous as a standalone bar shop. However, we ask that you read these guidelines to be the best inspector you can be, and to offer our client relevant and structured observations.

As a bar spotter, you must follow these guidelines:

Perform the inspection alone or with (1) guest. As a spotter, you may have the choice to perform the inspection alone or to bring along one other person with you. Refer to shop instructions for reimbursement amounts, most will cover the costs of the beverages (including 15-20% tip) for yourself and a maximum of (1) guest.

Be seated directly at the bar. When you enter the bar to begin the inspection, quickly and discreetly survey the bar and locate the whereabouts of the register(s). Ideally, select a seat that has a clear view of the register. If no seats are available at the bar, wait until seats do become available. Do not seat yourself at a lounge table. Sitting at a lounge table (unless specifically assigned to do so) will deem your inspection and report unacceptable.

Only order beverages. Do not order food. The moment a bar patron orders food, it forces the bartender to record the food order on the register and open a check to notify the kitchen to prepare the order. Do not order food (unless specifically assigned to do so) or your inspection and report will be unacceptable.

Order draft beer, glasses of wine, mixed drinks or neat/on-the-rocks. Order what is commonly served at the venue you are evaluating. Do not order bottled beverages. Because bottled beverages are inventoried by management, it is more difficult for the bartender to steal (because the losses will be more evident). On the other hand, draft beer, mixed drinks and glasses of wine are easier to steal because of spillage, waste, foam, etc.

When ordering, order generic drinks (e.g., “vodka tonic” not “Absolut tonic”).

The client wants to know if the bartender attempts to “upsell” a patron to a premium brand liquor. This is true for glasses of wine and all name brand liquor. Report whether or not the bartender makes recommendations/suggestions versus preparing your beverage with “well” liquor or “house” wine.

Note: Five-liquor drinks and shots are not to be ordered and will not be reimbursed. Be sure to order standard drinks as opposed to unique drinks that make you stand out.

Order two drinks per person per hour. The second beverage can be soda, juice, coffee, etc. as well, but alcoholic beverage is better. You do not have to finish the drink. The purpose of ordering a second drink order is as follows:

- Did the bartender offer another drink in a timely manner (or did you sit with an empty glass in front of you for a period of time)?
- Did the bartender remove the empty first beverage glass from the bar top?
- Did the bartender prepare the second beverage in a clean glass?
- Did the bartender charge you for the second drink and record the sale on the register?

Note: A standard bar inspection lasts one hour and you should only remain at the bar longer if you have specifically been instructed to do so when being given the assignment. Bar portions of dinner shops are generally not as long and usual involve the purchase of only one drink per person.

***Pay with CASH only.** While the bartender is in the process of preparing your beverage(s), place cash payment on the bar top. When the bartender returns to serve your drink(s), he/she will notice the cash and realize the opportunity to steal. Do not start a tab. If the bartender offers to start a tab, simply state that you're not sure how long you're going to stay at the bar and would rather just make payment.

Always pay with cash. Never pay with a credit/debit card. If you are issued a receipt, do NOT take the receipt or a copy of the receipt with you unless specifically instructed to do so. Paying with a credit card will deem your inspection and report unacceptable and you will not be paid or reimbursed.

If the bartender automatically issues a check, **discreetly obtain the following information and include in your report:**

- Check Number
- Check Total
- Item Charges

Failure to include your check number in the report will deem your inspection and report unacceptable and you will not be paid or reimbursed. **If the bartender does not automatically give you a receipt, do NOT ask for one.** If you ask for a receipt, you force the bartender to record the sale. Include in the report what amount was quoted/how much you paid – no receipt is required for reimbursement.

Note: If you are issued an incorrect check, do not address the mistake with the bartender. Just pay the bill. The only exception would be if the check is obviously incorrect (e.g., you only ordered four drinks and the check consisted of eight drinks, etc.) This example would most likely be an innocent error and not the server attempting to steal from the client.

Block In Sales. Ideally, include in your report, the beverage(s) that the bartender served and recorded on the register immediately before and after your beverage sale. The client will be reviewing the sales printout for the evening that you performed the inspection. Providing this information will allow the client to locate your sale more easily. You **MUST** include a description of a few other transactions in your report – what did other people order, how was it prepared, did the bartender immediately record the sale, was it cash or credit, etc. Also include the exact times of these transactions.

Be observant and report on other patrons' drink orders. Do not be tunnel-visioned. During your inspection, discreetly survey activities up and down the bar. Provide in your report information about the volume of business (# of patrons) and ideally report on other patrons' drink sales (e.g., At 10:33 PM, the

bartender served (2) margaritas to a couple seated to the investigator's right side, collected payment and immediately made a recording on the register).

What else are you watching for?

Review your survey for detailed requirements. In summary, here is a list of procedural and integrity issues that most clients are looking for in a bar shop:

- Did they approach you (and other patrons) promptly, politely and offer a beverage?
- Did they check the ID of patrons appearing 30 or under?
- Did they prepare and serve the beverages properly and promptly?
- Were poured drinks measured and not free poured or over poured?
- Did they quote the amount due and immediately record the sale on the register, generate a check and place it face down on the bar in front of the patron?
- Were all payments taken directly to the register? The cash drawer allowed to open automatically (not using a key), they placed the payment into the cash drawer, extracted change (if applicable), closed the cash drawer tightly and returned the change to the patron.
- All drinks (all patrons) are recorded properly (no free drinks)
- Were any bartenders drinking alcohol behind the bar?
- Were overly intoxicated patrons served alcohol?

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