

Specified Skilled Worker(i)
Study Materials for Skills Assessment
Test for Food Service Industry
“Customer Service”

Version 1 (April 15)

Provisional Translation (English)

Japan Foodservice Association

<Introduction to the translated version>

These "Study Materials for Skills Assessment Test For Food Service Industry" introduce the basic knowledge and skills required to work in the restaurant sector. under the requirements of Specified Skilled Worker(i). Furthermore, the Japanese vocabulary used in the original materials constitutes a basic requirement to be able to work in the restaurant sector in Japan

The skills assessment test required to obtain a status of residence for Specified Skilled Worker(i), consists of three subjects.

Hygiene Control Related Matters	“Hygiene Controls”
Matters Predominantly Related to Preparation Tasks	“Preparation of Food and Drink”
Matters Predominantly Related to Customer Service Operations	“Customer Service”

The Study Materials are similarly made up of these three subjects.

This material introduces “Customer Service” which is the matter predominantly related to the customer services deemed necessary to work in food service industry. This material introduces the basic knowledge etc., needed for the tasks; however, some content may differ from the rules etc., applicable in the actual place you work. This is because, while the basic concepts are the same, the way they are carried out may differ depending on the place you work. In this case, please observe the rules that apply in your workplace.

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I . Knowledge of Customer Services

1. Customer services

(1) Characteristics of customer service

(characteristics of customer service in Japan

- "*omotenashi-no-kokoro* (the spirit of hospitality)" and how it is expressed-)

The following are examples of some of the characteristics of customer service in Japan.

When foreign tourists come to Japan, what is it that they find most surprising.?

You often hear them say:

- People are always cleaning up wherever you go - everywhere is so clean and fresh.
- Japanese people are so pleasant, kind and polite

The Japanese have cultivated these characteristics in their culture, over a long history. And they are expressed in the Japanese term "*omotenashi*". *Omotenashi* means "hospitality." This *omotenashi*, so characteristic of customer service in Japan, was also used as one of the key words in the bid for the Tokyo Olympics.

The food service industry (restaurants etc..) is one type of hospitality business; like hotels, passenger ships, and theme parks etc. Consequently it is important to have *omotenashi-no-kokoro* in customer service in restaurants etc., as it allows us to provide *omotenashi*.

<Key factors in conveying *omotenashi-no-kokoro* >

It is important to adhere to an established pattern of behavior (called "form") when conveying *omotenashi-no-kokoro*. While there are many forms in which to convey *omotenashi-no-kokoro*, there is a basic form ("*kata*") that underlies them all, which you should remember. And make sure you practice so that you can properly express this *kata*.

(A) Remember the *kata* used to convey *omotenashi-no-kokoro*

(B) Practice so that you can properly express the *kata*

(2) Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction (CS) means making the customer happy.

It is important that we always bear customer service in mind while doing our jobs.

<Satisfaction & Dissatisfaction>

Whether customers are “satisfied” or “dissatisfied” with a restaurant will depend on any discrepancy between their expectations and the experience of the service they actually receive. A customer’s “expectation” is the level of goods and service they predict having in a certain restaurant. And these expectations are affected by the following:

- (A) The customer’s experiences
- (B) The customer’s information
- (C) The atmosphere in the restaurant
- (D) Prices etc..

With this in mind, we need to provide services that meet customer expectations with the aim of satisfying and impressing the customer.

<Repeat Customers>

“Repeat customers” are those who come back to the restaurant time and again. If a customer is satisfied with the service in a restaurant, they will want to use the restaurant again next time. This type of customer is important for a restaurant.

<Image of Customer Satisfaction>

- Expectation < Experience ... “Satisfaction” (Satisfaction grows to become “impression”)
- Expectation = Experience ... “Normal”
- Expectation > Experience ... “Dissatisfaction” (Dissatisfaction grows to become a “complaint”)

Satisfied customers will want to receive the same service again and will come back to the restaurant.



Customers who keep coming back to the restaurant = “repeat customers” (very important customers)

(3) Factors that determine customer satisfaction (QSCA)

Customer pay for the things the restaurant provides (i.e. "value"). Consequently if there is a mismatch between the "value" provided and the "price" paid, a customer will be dissatisfied. The "value" that the customer asks of the restaurant, consists predominantly of the following 4 elements. These 4 elements are known as QSCA - an abbreviation of the English terms Quality, Service, Cleanliness and Atmosphere.

(A) Quality of the cuisine (Q: Quality ... Taste of the cuisine)

The value a restaurant provides to its customers is the "taste of the cuisine." This "taste" is not just a matter of flavor of the dishes, but also incorporates other important elements like the freshness of the ingredients and the visual appeal of the dishes. And the main qualities of a dish are as follows:

- Uniformity of taste, quantity and serving arrangement (which should be the same every time)

- Serving at an appropriate temperature (hot food should be served hot; and cold food should be served cold)

- Speed of service (especially in fast food restaurants and at lunch time when it is busy)

(B) Service (S: Service ... Good customer service)

It is important to remember all aspects of the services you need to provide to customers, so that you can carry them out correctly. Normally there will be established rules and a handbook etc., on service methods in your restaurant - so make sure you study these properly.

<Smiling & Making Eye Contact>

This means putting a smile on your face and making eye contact with the customer. You should be aware of the need to always smile and make eye contact when dealing with customers. You should also use a friendly, up-beat tone of voice.

(C) Cleanliness (C: Cleanliness ... Cleanliness in the restaurant and the staff)

Cleanliness means being properly cleaned, tidy and well-organized. Note that the opposite of cleanliness is "dirty".

<Examples of a restaurant with a feeling of cleanliness>

- Inside the restaurant everything is properly cleaned.

- Inside the restaurant everything is tidy and well-organized.

- All staff are dressed well, with a neat physical appearance etc.

Cleanliness is very important in a restaurant. No matter how delicious the food in a restaurant, no customer is going to want to eat there if it is dirty or smells bad. Furthermore, a dirty restaurant may encourage the spread of bacteria etc. that is harmful to humans.

(D) Atmosphere (A: Atmosphere ... Good atmosphere inside the restaurant and from outside)

Customers will choose a restaurant depending on their purpose. The criteria they use to make this decision is called the “atmosphere”. The atmosphere is determined by both “hard aspects” such as the exterior appearance of the restaurant and its facilities, and “soft aspects” which include customer service etc. And the base component of atmosphere is “comfort”.

<Atmosphere>

- Hard aspects : The restaurant’s exterior appearance, facilities, and interior look etc.

- Soft aspects : The cuisine, customer service, staff attitude etc.

<Examples of things that impact on “comfort”>

- Temperature controls inside the restaurant

- Background music and lighting etc, in keeping with the time of day and the restaurant’s atmosphere etc.

2. Basic customer service operations

(1) Greetings

A greeting is the first communication between people. Be sure to give a bright, cheerful greeting - even if you are feeling bad or worried about something.

<Examples of good greetings>

- Looking kindly into the other person's eyes and giving a loud, heart-felt greeting. This is called "Smiling & Making Eye Contact".
- Being pro-active and the first to give a greeting.

(2) Smiling

Smiling is expressing joy and fun with a smile and a grin. It is a very important in establishing communication with someone. Customer service professionals make a conscious effort to smile when dealing with customers. If you smile when dealing with customers, it gives them a good impression and goes on to improve their level of satisfaction.

<3 points to bear in mind when forming a smile> (eyes, mouth and feeling)

- Smiling & Making Eye Contact

A bright smile and eye contact is about your gaze meeting that of the customer. And you can convey feeling with kind eyes.

- Turning up both sides of your mouth

If you turn up both sides of your mouth it conveys a sense of joy and fun.

- Lowering the corners of your eyes to show your own up-beat feeling of fun and kindness

If you lower the corner of your eyes, it conveys a sense of kindness better



Eyes



Mouth



Feeling

(3) Clothing and physical appearance

You should pay attention to the following, in terms of uniform and appropriate, clean physical appearance. The basics involve being clean, neat and modest.

	Key matters to note
Hair	Make sure your hair is arranged properly and watch out for dandruff. Hair that is longer than shoulder length should be tied back. Make sure that any long fringes do not obscure your face.
Face	Beards should be shaved every day. Teeth should be cleaned properly and watch out for bad breath. Make up should be applied sparingly. And avoid strong perfume.
Nails	Nails should be cut short Watch out for any dirt between your finger tips and your nails. Manicured nails risk contaminating food with foreign objects, so do not apply nail polish or false nails.
Jewelry	As a general rule, do not wear jewelry And avoid wearing expensive items and decorative watches.
Uniform	You should wear clean uniform. And watch out for soiled or wrinkled clothing. All buttons should be properly secured and done up properly.
Shoes	Do not tread down the backs of your shoes. Do not wear sandals.

(4) Posture and gait

The fundamentals involve having a straight back. Watch out for the following in your posture and gait.

- (A) Your back should be straight (Do not slouch against pillars or walls - stand up straight)
- (B) Always keep an eye on customers (but don't stare at them)
- (C) Always clasp your hands in front of you (Don't fold your arms or put your hands in your pockets)
- (D) Take your weight on your legs and stretch your knees
- (E) Put your heels together when making a bow etc.

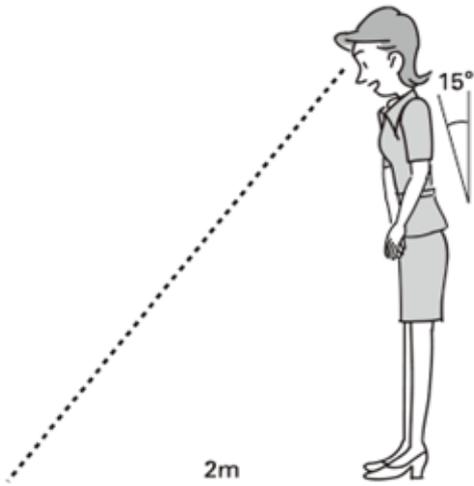
Note that if you meet a customer in the aisle, always allow him/her to go first. Even if you are in a hurry, it is a fundamental rule to allow the customer right of way. Take care not to bump into any customers if you are carrying a tray etc.

(5) Bowing

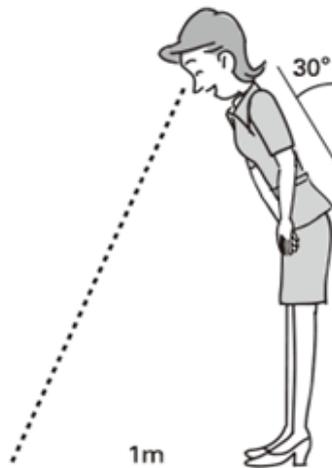
There are 3 types of bow, depending on your objective. Make sure you understand the respective objectives and bow in the correct order.

<Type of Bow>

Type	Angle of the bow	Method	Key objective(s)
A slight bow (<i>eshaku</i>)	Approx. 15 degrees	Straighten your back and look down 2m in front of yourself. And after taking a breath, gently raise your upper body back up.	Used when passing someone, or asking customers to wait
A polite bow (<i>keirei</i>) (a normal bow)	Approx. 30 degrees	Straighten your back and look down 1m in front of yourself. And after taking a breath, gently raise your upper body back up.	Used when greeting customers, or to thank them for paying their bill etc.
A respectful bow (<i>saikereii</i>)	Approx. 45 degrees	Straighten your back and look straight down. And after taking a breath, gently raise your upper body back up.	When saying goodbye to customers, or apologizing etc.

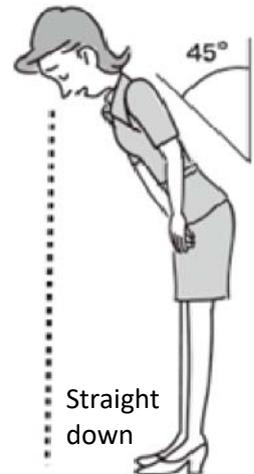


Slight bow



Polite bow

(Normal bow)



Respectful bow

* Source: Nikkei BP Company's "Hospitality Coaching" - authored by Hitoshi Shimizu.

<The bowing process>

Stand in front of the customer, with your back straight and your chin tucked in (your shoulders should be parallel to the floor). Then smile and make eye contact.

- Bend your upper body forward, keeping your neck and back straight.
- Lift your upper body back up slowly, then smile and make eye contact.

(6) Other

(A) How to carry trays

Support the center of the tray with the palm of your non-dominant hand. Spread your fingers out wide and bend your elbows at right-angles. Hold your arms tight to maintain a secure grasp. Also, watch out for the following:

<Points to note>

- When loading the tray with dishes, do it from the near-side. When unloading, do it from the far-side.
- Load up the near-side, starting with the heaviest items. Anything which is tall, or which is not well-balanced should not be loaded on the far-side.
- Take care not to hit any customer with the tray. As you approach the table, try to keep the hand with the tray away from the customer as much as possible.
- When walking with an empty tray, hold it in your non-dominant hand, under your armpit.

(B) How to carry glasses

Hold the lower half of the glass to avoid getting any fingerprints on the rim. Put the glass down gently on the table, so as not to make a noise.

(C) How to serve (how to dish up food)

Place your thumb on the edge of the plate and hold the bottom of the plate with your other fingers.

Turn your thumb outwards to prevent fingerprints from sticking to the plate. Check the placement of dishes to ensure that the food is pointing towards the customer.

3. Meal time etiquette

Each country and region has different eating habits; each with their own etiquette and manners. Etiquette refers to the correct method/way of eating a meal in a given region. You may also be serving food from various countries and regions, so you should gain a proper understanding of the different manners and etiquette.

(1) Etiquette for Japanese Food

(A) How to use chopsticks

If you are right-handed, hold the chopsticks in the middle with your left hand to pick them up. Then, bring your right hand up from underneath, to give a very elegant hold. The proper way to use chopsticks is to only move the upper one, while keeping the lower one still.

(B) *Ichijyusansai* (a meal consisting of one soup, rice and three side dishes)

Ichijyusansai is the basic component of a Japanese meal. It is made up of rice, soup, three side dishes and pickles.

Rice is placed on the left, the soup on the right and the pickles in the middle; furthermore, the main side dish sits on the right at the back, the supplementary side dish on the left at the back, and a vinegared dish or a vegetable with dressing on the center.



*Source: "Japanese Meals at Home" by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

(C) Basic serving order for formal banquet dishes (kaiseki-ryouri)

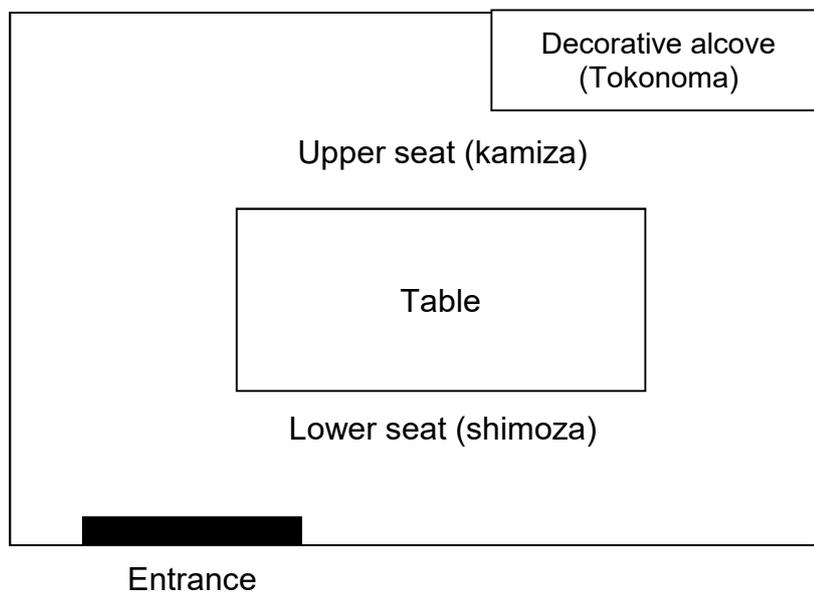
Appetizer → soup → plate of several kinds of sashimi → simmered dish/grilled dish → fried dish → vinegared dish → rice → fruit

(D) Seating order in the dining room

You need to be careful about the seating order when a Japanese meal is eaten in a Japanese style room. In Japanese customs, there is an upper seat (*kamiza*) and a lower seat (*shimoza*).

The upper seat is the safest, most comfortable spot in the place. This is where the most senior person, with the highest position in the group, sits. The lower seat is the opposite; it is where the side which greets guests, or the person of the lowest rank and position sits.

<An example of an upper seat & a lower seat>



* *Tokonoma*

This is a space that is decorated with a piece of art (in the format of a hanging scroll or a vase). In Japanese style rooms in restaurants etc., the tokonoma is often placed farthest from the entrance.

(E) How Japanese food is eaten

In Japan, you take the rice bowl, lacquered bowl or small plate in your hand to eat the contents. It is customary etiquette for dishes to be served on a large platter and then taken off and eaten from small plate.

(2) Etiquette for Western Food

(A) Use of a knife and fork

- When setting out knives and forks, the knife should be placed on the right, with the blade pointing inwards. The fork is set on the left.
- If the meal includes soup, then a soup spoon should be placed to the right of the knife.
- If there are several knives and forks used in a multi-course meal, they should be lined up from the outside towards the inside, in the order in which they are to be used.
- When a knife and fork are positioned like the hands of a clock at 8:20, it means the meal is on-going.
- When both the knife and fork are lined up and placed diagonally, it means the meal is finished.
- If a customer drops knife or fork during the meal, it should be immediately replaced. Don't let the customer pick it up.

(B) Names of tableware

- Silver : This refers to knives and forks.
- Caster set : This is the set of condiments placed on the table etc.
- Goblets : Glasses for water - mainly used in high-end restaurants

(C) How Western food is served and eaten

- Generally food is served from the left. And drinks are served from the right.
- In high-end restaurants, ladies are served first and then the elderly, before other customers.
- With the exception of some desserts, meals are eaten from the left. Any left-overs should be piled up at the front of the plate.

• Serviettes should be used with the crease to the front. If someone leaves the table during the meal, he/she will lightly fold the serviette and leave it on their chair. When the meal is over, the serviette will be folded lightly and then placed on the left side of the table.

*The person attending to the customers can tell the stage that the customers are at, by how the meal is progressing and where the serviettes are left.

(D) Basic serving order for French meals

Hors d'oeuvre → soup → fish dish → meat dish (entree) → dessert → demi-coffee

(3) Etiquette for Chinese food

(A) Seating order at round tables

- The further seat from the entrance/exit is the “upper seat.”
- The seat closest to the entrance/exit is the “lower seat.” And this is where the host’s side (the side providing the hospitality on the day) sits.

(B) How Chinese food is eaten

- The dishes from which the food is eaten should be changed for each separate dish, so that the flavors do not mix together.
- Customers are not supposed to stand up to take the food from the rotating table.
- Customers should only take as much as they want to eat from the large platters. Generally, they do not need to serve other people’s food.
- In general, the rotating table should turn clockwise (towards the right).
- Bowls and plates are not picked up, but rather left on the table while the food is eaten.
- People should not put their chopsticks or glasses on the rotating table.

(C) Other

Not all of the food should be taken - around 1/3 - 1/4 should be left in the middle of the large platter.

In Chinese meals, the food arranged on the large platters is shared and eaten by everyone in the group. And the Chinese try to create deep human relationships through their meals. As a result, customers can enjoy their meals in a peaceful atmosphere.

4. Dealing with customers who require help

If you have visiting customers who require the kind of help described below, it is important that you want to try and help them. However, you do not need to make assumptions as to how much help is needed, as this will vary from person to person.

(1) Customers with children

Children's behavior is often difficult to predict. Consequently, even if a child has not bad intent, he or she can still end up breaking things in the restaurant. Or disturbing other customers. Therefore it is important to support customers with children by seating them somewhere that will not disturb other customers etc.

(2) Elderly customers

Some elderly customers might forget things; suddenly become unwell; or misunderstand things etc. If an elderly person comes into the restaurant alone, make sure you check that he/she doesn't forget anything when it's time to go home. Also take steps such as counting out the money in a loud voice, when handing back change from the bill etc.

Elderly customers may also be unable to see small characters, so prepare a menu written in large letters etc.

(3) Wheel chair users

(A) Types of wheel chair

Wheel chairs include assisted (pushed) wheelchairs and self-powered wheel chairs. Assisted wheel chairs will be pushed by a carer, so there is no need for help from restaurant staff.

On the other hand, restaurant staff may have to help with self-powered wheel chairs if there are steps on the floor and the use of an elevator is not an option etc.

(B) Showing wheel chair users to their seats

When showing wheel chair users to their seats, the wheel chair can be pushed up to the table if there is no problem with the table height. Also, you should crouch down when talking to a wheel chair user so that you are on the same line of sight and can see each others expressions.

(4) Customers with assistance dogs

(A) What is an “assistance dog”?

“Assistance dog” is the collective name for blind dogs, service dogs and hearing dogs. Only dogs that have been properly trained and certified by corporations specified by the state can be “assistance dogs”. Furthermore, assistance dogs are kept clean and receive regular vaccinations against rabies etc.

(B) Obligation to accept assistance dogs

Under Japanese law, restaurants that are open to the general public are obliged to accept assistance dogs that accompany their owners.

(C) Identifying an assistance dog

Blind dogs wear a white or yellow harness, while service dogs or hearing dogs will have an ID number and a label describing the type of assistance dog on their harness. In addition, users must carry a permit with them.

You can ask the user to produce the permit if you need to check whether or not the dog is an assistance dog if, for example, the dog is not under proper control etc.

5. Appropriate waiting (serving)

(1) Prompt serving of food

It is important that once food has been prepared it is served to customers immediately for consumption. It is not just that food is at its most delicious as soon as it is ready, but if it is left at a temperature of 10°C-60°C (the “danger zone”) then it will end up growing bacteria that is harmful to humans.

As a rule of thumb, food should be eaten by customers within two hours of it being prepared.

(2) Taking left-overs home

Sometimes customers may want to take left-over food home with them to prevent food going to the trash and to avoid being “wasteful.” It is important not to waste food. On the other hand, if food is for a long time in the temperature “danger zone”, it can grow bacteria that is harmful to humans. And if it is then eaten, it can lead to food poisoning.

Therefore, restaurants will have definite policies and rules for dealing with customers who want to take home their leftovers. And you will need to ask customers to abide by these rules. It is important to tell them decisively that food cannot be taken home, if there are any hygiene issues.

(3) Take-Out

“Take-out” means food prepared in the restaurant that the customer takes away rather than eating in-house.

The important points about take-out are as follows:

(A) How should the temperature of the take-out dishes be controlled?

E.G. Kept at 10°C or less etc.

(B) When should the take-out dishes be eaten by?

E.G. Ask the customer to eat them within xx hours etc.

For take-out it is very important to give the customer accurate information and have them abide by the information. While take-out can boost a restaurant’s sales, it can also lead to customer food poisoning unless it is sold properly -, so it needs to be handled carefully.

6. Basic customer service terms and how to use them

(1) Basic customer service terms

Term	Meaning
<i>Irasshaimase</i> (welcome)	A greeting used when the customer comes into the restaurant.
<i>Arigato-gozaimasu</i> (thank you) (<i>Arigato-gozaimashita</i>)	A greeting used when the customer leaves the restaurant. This greeting is also used if a customer does something for a member of the restaurant's staff.
(<i>Taihen</i> - very) <i>Omatase-shimashita</i> (sorry for the wait)	A term you use if you have kept a customer waiting for a little while.
<i>Shitsurei-itashimasu</i> (excuse me)	Used when restaurant staff approach a customer's seat and when they move away.
<i>Kashikomarimashita</i> (understood)	Used when taking a customer's request or wish.
<i>Osoreirimasu</i> (sorry for the imposition)	A term of thanks, used if a customer does something for a member of the restaurant's staff. Also used to apologize to a customer.
<i>Moushiwake gozaimasen</i> (sorry)	Used to apologize to a customer.

(2) Expressions that are often said incorrectly

Incorrect Expression	Correct Expression
<i>Oryori wa ijoyō de yoroshikatta deshō ka</i>	<i>Oryori wa ijoyō de yoroshii deshō ka</i> (meaning "Will that be all?")
<i>Omizu no hō wa ikutsu omochi shimashō ka</i>	<i>Omizu wa ikutsu omochi shimashō ka</i> (meaning "How many glasses of water shall I bring?")
<i>Kochira ga reshīto ni narimasu</i>	<i>Kochira ga reshīto de gozaimasu</i> (meaning "Here is your receipt.")
<i>5,000 yen kara oazukari-shimasu</i>	<i>5,000 yen oazukari-shimasu</i> (meaning "That's 5,000 yen you've given me")

(3) Other phrases to beware of

<Basic phrases that are easy to use incorrectly in a customer service setting>

Phrases used in every day conversation	The correct phrase to use in customer service setting
okyaku-san, otoko no hito, on'na no hito, roujin	okyaku-sama, dansei no kata, josei no kata, go nentai no kata (meaning: "guest", "man", "woman", and an "elderly person")
kodomo-san, ojisan, obasan	oko-sama, go chūnen no kata (meaning "child/children", and a form of address used to a "middle aged person")
issho no hito, tsukai no hito, yō no aru hito	issho no kata, otsukai no kata, goyō no kata (meaning an "accompanying person", an "errand boy/girl", and a "person on business")
ohitori-san, okusan, dan'na-san ,	ohitori-sama, oku-sama, dan'na-sama (forms of address used for a "person on his/her own", to a "wife" and to a "husband")
boku, watashi, wareware	watakushi, watakushi-domo (meaning "I" and "we")
yōfuku, kutsu	omeshimono, owakimono (meaning "clothing" and "shoes")
Hai, sō desu.	Hai, sayō de gozaimasu (meaning "Yes that's right")
Hai, sō desu, soushimasu.	Hai, sou sasete itadakimasu (meaning "Yes, I'll do that.")
Hai, shittemasu	Hai, zonjiagete orimasu (meaning "Yes, I know")
Nan'nin desu ka	Nan meisama desu ka (meaning "How many of you are there?")
Sumimasen, man'in nan desu	Moushiwake gozaimasen, manseki to natte orimasu (meaning "I'm sorry we are full.")
Dono seki ga ii desu ka	Dono seki ni nasaimasu ka (meaning "Which seat would you like?")

Dore ga ii desu ka	Dochira ni nasaimasu ka (meaning "Which would you prefer?")
Kimarimashita?	Okimari de gozaimasu ka (meaning "Have you decided?")
Ikutsu ni shimasu ka	Oikutsu ni nasaimasu ka (meaning "How many would you like?")
Aiko (a term for iced coffee used in restaurants for orders) desu ne	Aisu kōhī de gozaimasu ne (meaning "So that's an iced coffee, right?")
Ima, nain desu	Moushiwake gozaimasen. Tadaima, kirasete orimasu. Kawari ni XX wa, ikaga desu ka (meaning "I'm very sorry but we are out of that today. How about XX, instead?")
Wakaranain desu	Wakarikanemasu ga (meaning "I'm not sure/I don't know")
Wakarimashita	Kashikomarimashita (meaning "I understood.")
Sumimasen, dare desu ka	Shitsurei desu ga, dochira-sama desu ka (meaning "Excuse me, but who is this?")
Tenchō wa inain desu ga	Ainiku tenchō wa fuzai desu ga (meaning "Unfortunately the restaurant manager is out")
Tenchou ni itte okimasu	Tenchou ni mōshi tsutaemasu (meaning "I will let the restaurant manager know.")
Kocchi kara denwa shimasu	Kochira kara denwa sasete itadakimasu (meaning "We will phone you")
Ima ikimasu	Tadaima, oukagai shimasu (meaning "I'll be with you right now.")
Mata kite kudasai	Mata okoshi kudasaimase. Mata otachiyori negaimasu (meaning "Please come again")

* Source: Nikkei BP Company's "Hospitality Coaching" - authored by Hitoshi Shimizu.

(4) Recommendation Service

Recommendation service means making new food or drink recommendations to customers. Recommendations can make customers order more, boosting restaurant sales. Moreover, if a customer likes something you have recommended, he/she will feel more satisfied with the restaurant.

In order to offer a successful recommendation service, you need to have a proper understanding of the restaurant's products. And it is important to pro-actively encourage customers.

<Examples of how to offer recommendations>

- Today our recommended dishes are XX.
- Today's recommended lunch dishes are XX.
- XX brand of Japanese sake goes really well with this dish. Would you like to try some?
- Our freshly baked bread is just done. Would you like to try some?
- Do you like XX? Today we can prepare some XX for you, which was freshly caught this morning - would you like to try some? etc..

(5) Telephone manner

In a telephone conversation, neither party can see the other's expression or demeanor. Therefore, you need to be more careful than when dealing with a customer face-to-face. In particular, the attitude of restaurant staff over the phone can affect how customers judge the restaurant - so always be polite.

<Examples of telephone manners>

Situation	Telephone manner
When you answer the phone	"This is XXX (restaurant name). Xxx (your own name) speaking." If telephone rang more than 3 times, then start by saying "Excuse me to have kept you waiting."
When listening to the caller's request	Listen, while making the appropriate interjections
When asking the other party a question	"I'm sorry, would you mind telling me xxxx?"
When passing the phone over to somebody else	"Can you please hold on a minute? I'm just passing you over to XX."

When putting the phone down	Wait for the other party to put the phone down first. Once the other party has hung up, quietly hand up at your end.
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If you are not able to deal with a customer's request (because you don't understand the details, or are not able to reply etc.) then tell the customer the reason, then take a note of the customer's contact details and the nature of their request. Then have the restaurant manager or a person in charge deal with the issue (call the customer back).

II . Knowledge of Foods

1. Food allergies

(1) What is a food allergy?

A food allergy is when a person suffers some kind of allergic reaction after eating a food containing allergens. Typical allergic reactions include breaking out in a rash, or a feeling of nausea etc. If symptoms are particularly severe the person can go into so-called "anaphylactic shock" and have difficulty breathing, a drop in blood pressure or loss of consciousness etc. If not treated promptly this can lead to death.

It is said the 1-2% of the population in Japan have food allergies. Looking at younger age groups, the percentage rises; with some 10% of infants seemingly having some kind of food allergy.

(2) Allergen labeling

There are no effective treatments for food allergies. So it is very important that sufferers do not eat foods containing allergens that produce allergic reactions. Therefore, the law states that it is mandatory to label all processed foods that contain allergens likely to cause an allergic reaction.

Allergens that are subject to this mandatory ruling are as follows:

<Mandatory labeling for processed foods>

Specified raw ingredients	7 items	Egg, milk, wheat, buck wheat, peanut, prawn, crab
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Note that there is no legal obligation to list the allergens contained in dishes served in restaurants. Yet the information is very important for customers who suffer from food allergies. Therefore, it is very important that you have an accurate understanding of the raw ingredients used in dishes and are able to respond to any questions from customers.

However, if you provide the wrong information it can have dire consequences for the customer - so if you are unable to respond to a question, you should have the restaurant manager, or someone similar, respond instead.

2. Handling alcohol

(1) Typical types of alcohol

(A) Brewed liquor

Alcohol produced through the fermentation of yeast

Main categories	Main types	Raw ingredients
Wine	Red/white wine Sparkling wine etc.	Grapes
Malted grain alcoholic beverage	Beer etc..	Wheat etc..
Fruit-based alcoholic beverage	Cider etc..	Apples, peaches etc.
Japanese sake	Refined sake, cloudy sake	Rice
Fermented Chinese alcoholic beverage	Shaoxing wine etc..	Rice etc..

(B) Distilled liquor

Brewed liquor that is distilled further, to give a relatively higher alcohol content.

Main categories	Main types	Raw ingredients
Brandy	Cognac etc.	Grapes
Whisky	Malt whisky Blended whisky etc.	Wheat etc..
Gin	Geneva, London Gin etc.	Wheat etc..
Shochu	Sweet potato shochu, wheat shochu etc.	Potatoes, wheat etc..

(II) Points to bear in mind when serving alcohol

(A) Prohibition on the serving of alcohol to anyone under the age of majority (under 20 years of age)

It is a legal offense to serve alcohol to anyone under the age of majority (under 20 years of age). If you are not sure whether a customer is under the age of majority, you need to check ID to verify his/her age.

(B) Prohibition on the serving of alcohol to anyone who is driving a vehicle etc.

It is a legal offense to serve alcohol to anyone you know will be driving a vehicle etc. (a car, bicycle etc.) If customers are in a group, check who is the designated driver. If this is difficult for you to handle, have the restaurant manager, or somebody similar, do it instead.

* Designated driver

A designated driver is someone who drives friends to a restaurant and stays sober.



The Japan Traffic Safety Association issues this kind of badge. Using this badge is one way of identifying a designated driver.

3. Nutrition

Some of the nutrients contained in food are essential to human life. There are three of them - “proteins, fats and carbohydrates” - which are called the 3 major nutrients. Together with two more, “vitamins and minerals” they are sometime called the 5 major nutrients.

To make a healthy body, it is important to have a balanced daily diet that contains the 5 major nutrients.

<The 5 major nutrients>

Nutrient name	Main job in the body	Foods that contain a lot of this nutrient
Protein	Builds body tissue	Meat, fish, eggs, soy products etc.
Fats	Convert to energy	Butter, margarine, vegetable oil, meat fat etc.
Carbohydrates	Convert to energy	Cooked rice, bread, noodles, potatoes etc.
Vitamins	Help the body to work properly	Green and yellow vegetables (particularly green vegetables), fruit, liver etc.
Minerals	Build strong bones and teeth etc., and help the body to work properly	Sea weed, cow’s milk, milk products etc.

4. Tastes

Taste is the flavor experienced by people when they eat things. The strength of the taste experienced will differ depending on the person. It also varies depending on the body’s condition. Therefore when serving food it is important to observe what sort of person the consumer is and what kind of condition he/she is in.

Type	Typical food
Sweet taste	Sugar, chocolate, cake, steamed buns etc.
Salty taste	Salt, soy sauce, soy paste etc.
Sour taste	Vinegar, pickled plum, lemon, grapefruit etc.
Bitter taste	Coffee, beer, parsley, bell peppers etc.
Umami	Dried kelp stock, dried bonito stock etc.

5. Food diversification

(1) Halal

Halal means “allowed” in the Islam and indicates foods that are allowed under the Islamic faith. Conversely, things that are not allowed are called “haram”.

The Islamic faith is one of the world’s 3 main religions and there are said to be some 1.6 billion Muslims throughout the world who believe in Islam. With an increase in the number of Muslims coming to Japan, you need to gain a proper understanding of their halal requirements.

(2) Vegetarians etc.

“Vegetarian” generally refers to someone who does not eat animal food products such as meat and fish. Then there are “vegans” who believe in eating 100% plant food (and who do not eat any animal food products such as eggs or dairy product at all). Vegetarians and vegans have varying food restrictions depending on their individual ideas, so it is important to identify the customer's requirements when serving them.

If this is difficult for you to handle, have the restaurant manager, or somebody similar, do it instead.

III. Knowledge of Restaurant Management

1. Preparing for the business day & end-of day tasks

(1) Preparing for the business day

In order to provide customers with a good service, it is important to prepare the restaurant for business. The following are examples of the preparations needed before the store opens. There are lots of things that need to be done, so coordinate operations efficiently with the “end-of-day tasks” listed in point (2) below.

<Examples of completed preparations for the business day>

- The parking lot, the area around the entrance, and the inside of the restaurant have all been cleaned.

- The toilets have been cleaned and supplies like the toilet paper etc., have been properly replenished.

- Enough tableware, fixtures, glasses and ice etc., have been prepared to deal with peak times. And they are neatly placed in the designated place.

- Caster sets (sets of various seasonings) have been properly replenished. And set out in the designated spots.

- Tables and chairs etc., have been set up and neatly line up in the correct place.

- If any reservations have been made, the food details have been checked with the chef and the tables laid.

- There is enough change in the cash register. And also the sales slips etc. used for taking notes have been properly replenished.

- The required staff are in place, and the role of each has been confirmed. etc..

(2) End-of-day tasks

All the end-of-day tasks take place after the restaurant has closed and all the customers have left. Be aware that if there are still customers in the restaurant after closing time, it will give them a bad impression of the restaurant if you carry out the end-of-day tasks in front of them, just because it is past closing time.

<Examples of end-of-day tasks >

- Cleaning up inside the restaurant

- Cleaning the toilets

- Washing and replenishing the caster sets

- Setting out the tables and chairs etc. in their correct places

- Counting up (totaling the cash registers etc.)
- Disposing of the waste etc.

2. Cleaning tasks (outside the kitchen)

(1) Things to bear in mind when cleaning

When cleaning a restaurant, the amount of dirt will vary greatly depending on the area. For example there are “clean areas” where food is handled and “dirty area” where contaminated items are handled. Consequently, it is important to use separate cleaning equipment for the different areas where it is being used (to prevent secondary contamination and cross-contamination).

You may also need to use strong detergents to remove really bad dirt. And you need to be careful how you handle this type of detergent.

(2) The basics of cleaning

(A) Cleaning should be done from the top down

Dust and dirt fall from the top down. Always start cleaning from the highest point and clean the floor last.

(B) Do not make dry dirt wet

Do not wipe dry dirt off at once with a wet cloth. It may take some time to remove the dirt.

(C) Soak things before washing

“Soaking things before washing” is a method of softening grime to make it easy to remove. The dirty item should be soaked in a container with detergent and water that has been heated to around 40°C.

If you soak rice bowls (rice plates) in the sink with warm water before cleaning them, it will make the stuck-on rice easier to remove.

(D) Do not clean with dirty implements

If you try to remove dirt with a soiled cloth, it will not be clean. And sometimes the dirt on the cloth will stick to the item being wiped (causing secondary contamination). And it is not just cloths - any cleaning implements that are dirty should be cleaned first, before being used.

(3) Key points about cleaning

(A) It should be done on an on-going basis and thoroughly

Don't neglect places that can't be seen. If you neglect somewhere once, it will be difficult to clean the next time. And this will lead to the cleaning being missed out on other occasions. It is a good idea to establish rules for a weekly cleaning schedule etc., to decide where should be cleaned, when and how frequently.

(B) Clean where customers are likely to look

When you are cleaning, try to think about the places you notice when you go to a restaurant yourself. And when you have finished cleaning, it is important to sit in various seats and check it.

And also make sure to have any frayed carpet or torn wall paper repaired immediately.

(C) On-going cleaning = cleanliness

In restaurants it is important to realize that "everything starts and ends with cleaning." Making sure that everything is always kept clean = cleanliness. This not only helps prevent food poisoning, but also allows customers to enjoy their meal in a comfortable environment. For example, cleaning the cooler filters regularly helps prevent bad odors and maintain an optimal temperature.

And don't just clean the areas used by customers - break rooms and lockers used by staff should also be cleaned regularly. As well as maintaining hygiene controls for the employees themselves, this also provides a working environment where staff can work cheerfully, with a sense of pride. And this becomes a driving force to provide customers with good service.

3. Knowledge of cash and cashless payments

In Japanese restaurants approximately 80% of bills are paid in cash (Japanese Yen). Other forms of payment (apart from cash) are called cashless, and these are still only used in around 20% of cases in Japan. However, the number of customers making cashless payments is growing year by year, and foreign visitors to Japan in particular like to make cashless payments.

So not only do you need to learn the denominations of Japanese Yen in circulation in the country, but you also need to be familiar with typical cashless payments.

(1) Cash (Japanese Yen)

<Paper Notes>

Type	Front	Back
10,000 Yen Note		
5,000 Yen Note		
2,000 Yen Note		
1,000 Yen Note		

* The notes shown here are specimen samples; consequently they are displayed with “Specimen” written in red and two diagonal red lines scored through them.

* You are unlikely to come across 2,000 Yen notes very much in restaurants, as this note is hardly used in Japan.

* Source: Bank of Japan website "Notes and Coins Currently Issued"

<Coins>

Type	Front	Back
500 Yen Coin		
100 Yen Coin		
50 Yen Coin		
10 Yen Coin		
5 Yen Coin		
1 Yen Coin		

* Source: Bank of Japan website "Notes and Coins Currently Issued"

(2) Typical methods of cashless payment

Cashless payments are convenient and easy to make, which is why they are growing in number each year. Cashless payments also help to make restaurants run more efficiently, as they save time spent exchanging cash, as well as time spent managing the cash proceeds from sales.

Typical methods of cashless payment are as follows:

Type	Main Brands	Characteristics
Credit Cards	VISA, Master Card etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Accepted in many stores▪ Deferred method of payment
Debit Cards	Individual banks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ When you use a debit card, the money is immediately taken from your own bank account.
Electronic Money	Suica, nanaco, WAON, Rakuten Edy etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Types include those meant for transport and those meant for commerce etc.▪ Pre-charged method of payment
QR Code Payment	LINE Pay, Rakuten Pay, Origami etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Customers display QR codes on their smartphones which are scanned by the store to take payment. Alternatively the store can issue a QR code which the customer scans with a smart phone to make payment.▪ This is an easy convenient method of payment

* Smart phones are a type of cell phone.

As shown, there are many types of cashless payments. And to be able to handle each respective method, the store needs to purchase a special terminal (scanner) and set up a contract with the card issuer. Make sure you check which cashless payments your own restaurant is equipped to handle.

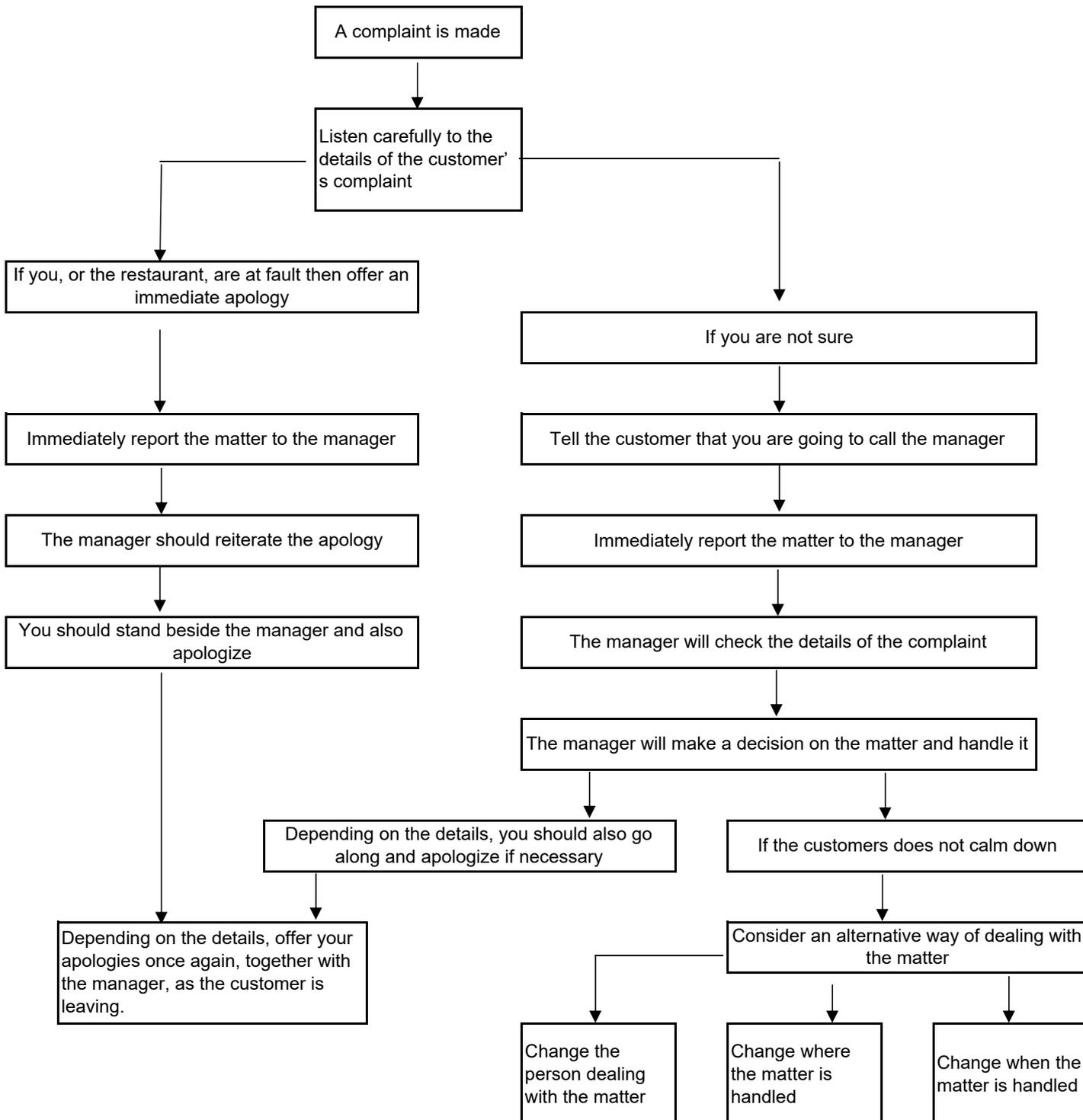
IV. Knowledge of Handling Complaints

1. Handling customer complaints

(1) Fundamental thoughts on complaints

Complaints happen when small feelings of dissatisfaction, grievance or discontent experience by a customer exceed his/her tolerance level. And when a complaint happens, there may have previously been a number of minor cases of dissatisfaction or grievances. Therefore it is important to gain an accurate understanding of what a customer finds dissatisfying and handle the matter.

(2) Typical procedures when handling a complaint



* Source: Nikkei BP Company's "Hospitality Coaching" - authored by Hitoshi Shimizu.

2. Handling situations involving foreign object contamination

(1) What is a “foreign object”?

A “foreign object” means something that should not be in the food. For example a hair, a bit of plastic, a stone, or an insect etc. Also, in recent times customers may consider some parts of food, such as meat and fish bones etc., to be foreign objects and complain about them.

If a customer eats a hard foreign object that is in the food, it may injure his/her mouth. Moreover, if an unsanitary object gets into a customer’s body, it may cause food poisoning.

<Types of Foreign Objects>

(A) Foreign objects of a solid nature

Hard foreign objects : bits of hard plastic, glass shards, pieces of metal, and stones etc.

(B) Foreign objects of a soft nature

Soft foreign objects : insects, hairs, bits of vinyl, scraps of paper etc.

(2) Handling situations involving foreign object contamination

<A specific example>

Halfway through a meal, a customer complains that they have found an insect in the food.

The staff check the object and, once they confirm that it is a foreign object, they apologize and remove the food, saying “We are so sorry, we will replace this immediately.”

The meal is then either replaced, or not, depending on the wishes of the customer. And the staff consult with the restaurant manager separately, to see if the meal should be paid for, or not.

A report should be made to the restaurant manager regarding the foreign object contamination, and then the staff should accompany the manager to apologize again.

The meal containing the foreign object should be taken to the kitchen and shown to the restaurant manager and the head chef, to try and estimate the cause of the contamination.

* Please note that this is just one example of how to handle the situation. If your restaurant has guidelines on how to act, you should follow them.

(3) Tips on how to prevent foreign object contamination (outside the kitchen)

(A) Don't leave doors open

(B) Pick up any rubbish that falls onto the floor straight away

(C) If you see any insects in the restaurant, catch them immediately and look for the reason they are there.

(D) Clean the air-conditioner filters regularly.

(E) Do not use clips, staplers or pencils near food.

(F) Make sure you are properly groomed etc.

V . Knowledge of Emergency Responses

1. Responding if somebody is ill

Sometimes customers suddenly fall ill during their meal - whether this is caused by the restaurant or not. Depending on the case, the customer's life may be at stake, so you need to keep calm and respond appropriately.

(1) Examples and main methods of response

Symptoms	Main response methods
A customer feels unwell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide some water, and show him/her somewhere quiet to rest, if you have anywhere • Show him/her to the toilet etc.
A customer vomits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide some water and offer a clean towel if the customer is dirty. • The vomit may contain a virus etc., so make sure you clean it up using gear specifically for the job (aprons, gloves, cloths etc.), then disinfect at the end etc. <p>* This does not apply if the customer vomits because he/she has been drinking alcohol</p>
A customer chokes on food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the customer is able to cough, have them cough it up • Deliver 4-5 strong, sharp blows to the customer's back, between the shoulder blades • If you are unable to dislodge the food and the customer loses consciousness, call an ambulance straight away etc.
A customer exhibits an allergic reaction (the skin turns red and hives develop etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide some water, and show him/her somewhere quiet to rest, if you have anywhere • For children in particular, do not leave them alone for a while. • If the customer exhibits a severe allergic reaction, such as difficulty breathing etc., then call an ambulance straight away.

2. Responding in the event of a natural disaster

Japan is a country that has a lot of natural disasters, such as earthquakes etc. Recently there have been many floods caused by heavy rains in events such as typhoons and cloudbursts etc. Moreover, restaurants use naked flames, so there is also a risk of fire.

In the event of a disaster, your first priority is to ensure your own safety, but having done so, next it is important to ensure the safety of your customers.

(1) In the event of a violent earthquake

(A) First ensure your own safety. Hide under a table to protect yourself from falling objects.

(B) Once you have ensured your own safety, check on your customers and shout at them to get under the tables.

(C) When the earthquake stops, check the situation around you and once you have ensured it is safe, evacuate the customers (the restaurant will already have a pre-determined location and method for evacuation).

(D) If the restaurant is at risk of suffering tsunami damage, then evacuate customers to high ground or similar (the restaurant will already have a pre-determined location and method for evacuation)

(2) In the event of a fire

(A) If you discover a fire, shout "FIRE" to alert customers (and sound the emergency alarm etc.)

(B) Deal with the fire in accordance with the pre-assigned roles determined by the restaurant (E.G. some staff will try to put out the fire, while others help to evacuate the customers etc.)

(C) Those trying to put out the fire, should use the fire extinguishers quickly. However, you should evacuate the premises immediately if the fire cannot be stopped (if it spreads to the ceiling etc.).

(D) Those responsible for evacuating customers should shout out instructions for the evacuation route and lead customers out, keeping as low as possible.

(E) Once you have escaped, you should never return to the source of the fire. And you should also warn the customers not to go back into the restaurant.

< Afterword >

Restaurant companies, restaurant associations and contributors with an academic background have all helped in creating this material on "Customer Service", which have been put together by the Japan Foodservice Association.

And once again we would like to offer our thanks to everyone who helped create the materials.

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Japan Foodservice Association

< Matters to Note >

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