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Cash Handling Procedure

Cash shortages are rarely theft. Usually it's change counted in a rush, a refund done without a receipt, or starting cash nobody checked. This procedure is for owners of cafés, shops, salons and food trucks who still take cash and want every person on the register to handle it the same way. It covers the start of a shift, taking payment, refunds and the closing count at the end.

What you'll need

- Starting cash in a counted bag
- Cash count sheet
- The register's end-of-day report
- Safe or locked cash box

Steps

01 **Count the starting cash at the beginning of your shift and sign for it.**

Count bills and coins separately and write the total on the cash count sheet. If it's wrong, tell the manager before you serve anyone.

02 **Log in to the register with your own login, never someone else's.**

Your login is how the register knows who took each payment.

03 **Say the amount out loud when the customer hands you cash.**

"Out of twenty." It prevents the "I gave you a fifty" argument.

04 **Keep the customer's cash on top of the drawer until you've counted back their change.**

Then put it away. If there's a dispute, the bills they gave you are still there to check.

05 **Count the change back into the customer's hand, coins first.**

Count up from the price to the amount they gave you.

06 **Check large bills before you accept them.**

Feel the paper, then check the watermark and security strip. If you're unsure, politely ask for a different bill.

> **Watch out:** Never break a large bill for someone who isn't buying anything.

07 **Close the drawer after every transaction.**

An open drawer is the easiest cash to lose.

08 **Only give refunds with a receipt and a manager's approval.**

Write the reason and the receipt number on the refund slip.

09 **Move extra cash to the safe when the drawer gets full.**

Agree on a limit with your manager, for example the starting cash plus a set amount. Do it out of sight of customers.

10 **Print the register's end-of-day report when your shift ends.**

This shows how much cash the register expects to be in the drawer.

11 **Count the drawer twice, ideally with a second person.**

Write the total on the cash count sheet, including any difference, even a small one.

> **Watch out:** Never top up or take from your own pocket to fix a difference. Record it.

12 **Set aside tomorrow's starting cash and record the day's cash sales.**

The starting cash goes back in its bag for the next shift.

13 **Seal the rest of the cash in a deposit bag and put it in the safe.**

Write the date, the amount and your initials on the bag.

How to adapt it

- Decide what size of difference you can live with, and look into anything bigger the same day.
- Keep one person per drawer per shift where you can. Shared drawers make shortages impossible to trace.
- Add your own refund and void rules to the refund step.
- Follow your bank's rules and local rules for depositing cash.