RETAIL OPERATIONS AUDIT TEMPLATE

Retail SOP Audit Checklist

Use this checklist to verify that approved standard operating procedures are current, accessible, followed in practice, supported by evidence, and converted into accountable corrective actions when deviations are found.

STORE / LOCATION	AUDIT DATE	AUDITOR	AUDIT SCOPE

1. Audit setup, scope, and SOP governance

1 Confirm the audit location, date, shift, auditor, and business areas included in scope. CRITICAL · AUDIT METADATA + GEO-LOCATION

LOCATION | Captured · DATE | Auto · SHIFT | Select

Execution tip: Use assigned locations, geo-fencing, and server timestamps so the audit can be traced to the correct store, shift, and auditor.

2 Verify the store is using the current approved SOP library and no obsolete versions remain in use. CRITICAL · DOCUMENT VERSION CHECK

Add live photo · Add comment · Create action

Execution tip: Record the SOP title, document owner, version number, effective date, and the location where employees access it.

3 Confirm every operational SOP has a named process owner and scheduled review date. OWNER + REVIEW DATE

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Capture ownership and the next review date. Escalate documents that have expired or have no accountable owner.

4 Check that store-specific SOP variations are formally approved and documented. CRITICAL · APPROVAL EVIDENCE

Add live photo · Add comment · Create action

Execution tip: Require approval evidence for local exceptions. Avoid informal changes communicated only through messages or verbal instructions.

5 Verify critical SOPs are accessible to employees during all operating hours. CRITICAL · ACCESSIBILITY CHECK

Compliant · Partially compliant · Non-compliant · N/A

Execution tip: Test access from the devices and locations employees actually use, including low-connectivity or restricted-access conditions.

6 Confirm previous SOP audit findings and overdue actions have been reviewed before starting this audit. PRIOR FINDING REVIEW

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Display open and repeat findings at the start so the auditor can verify whether corrective actions are sustained.

2. Opening, closing, and daily operating routines

7 Verify the opening checklist is completed within the approved time window before trading starts.

CRITICAL | TIME-BOUND CHECKLIST STATUS

ACTUAL | Enter value
TARGET | Set range
Create action

Execution tip: Schedule the checklist before opening, require timestamps, and escalate late or incomplete submissions to the store manager.

8 Confirm opening duties are assigned to named employees and verified by a supervisor.

ASSIGNMENT + SIGN-OFF

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Use role-based assignments, completion evidence, and supervisor sign-off instead of relying on shared responsibility.

9 Check that all critical opening blockers are resolved or formally escalated before customer entry.

CRITICAL | BLOCKER LOG + ACTION

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Require a severity, owner, resolution deadline, containment action, and escalation path for every opening blocker.

10 Verify routine shift checks are completed at the scheduled frequency throughout the day.

RECURRING SCHEDULE + TIMESTAMPS

ACTUAL | Enter value
TARGET | Set range
Create action

Execution tip: Create recurring checks for time-sensitive routines and flag submissions completed outside the approved window.

11 Confirm shift handover notes clearly record open issues, pending tasks, stock concerns, and customer commitments.

HANDOVER NOTES

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Use mandatory handover fields and named acknowledgement by the incoming supervisor to avoid verbal-only handovers.

12 Verify the closing checklist covers cash, stock, systems, housekeeping, security, and final lockup.

CRITICAL | CLOSING CHECKLIST REVIEW

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Review completion by section and prevent final sign-off while critical closing items remain unresolved.

3. Customer service and sales SOPs

13 Observe whether staff greet customers within the time and manner defined by the service SOP. TIMED OBSERVATION

ACTUAL | Enter value
TARGET | Set range
Create action

Execution tip: Use a timer and observation notes. Compare the actual greeting to the brand standard rather than a general impression.

14 Verify staff follow the approved needs-discovery process before recommending products or services. SCORED OBSERVATION

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Score each required discovery step and capture examples of questions asked, not only the final outcome.

15 Confirm product information, claims, warranties, and service commitments are communicated accurately. CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE CHECK + COMMENTS

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Sample common and high-risk customer questions. Record the response and the approved reference used to validate it.

16 Check that upselling and cross-selling practices follow approved scripts without misleading or pressuring customers. BEHAVIOUR OBSERVATION

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Assess both compliance and customer experience. Record specific language used when standards are not followed.

17 Verify queue management and customer handoff procedures are followed during busy periods. QUEUE TIME + OBSERVATION

ACTUAL | Enter value
TARGET | Set range
Create action

Execution tip: Capture queue length, wait time, ownership transfer, and any abandoned customer interaction.

18 Confirm complaints and service recovery cases follow the approved acknowledgement, ownership, resolution, and escalation process. CRITICAL CASE SAMPLE + SLA

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Sample recent cases and validate owner, response time, action taken, customer communication, and closure approval.

4. POS, cash, discount, refund, and transaction SOPs

19 Verify each POS user operates with an individual account and the correct role permissions.

CRITICAL | USER ACCESS REVIEW

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Compare active users and permissions with the approved roster. Escalate shared accounts, inactive users, and excessive access.

20 Observe whether cash opening, float verification, and till assignment follow the approved process.

CRITICAL | COUNT + SIGN-OFF

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Capture expected and actual float values, assigned cashier, verification time, and supervisor sign-off.

21 Confirm discounts, price overrides, voids, and cancellations require the correct authorization.

CRITICAL | TRANSACTION SAMPLE

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Sample transactions by exception type and record reason, operator, approver, value, and supporting evidence.

22 Verify return and refund transactions follow eligibility, proof-of-purchase, approval, and customer identity rules.

CRITICAL | REFUND SAMPLE GRID

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Review multiple refund types and validate policy eligibility, approval, tender method, inventory impact, and documentation.

23 Check that cash drops, safe transfers, and end-of-shift reconciliation follow dual-control requirements.

CRITICAL | CASH CONTROL LOG

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Require two named employees, timestamps, values, discrepancies, and evidence for every controlled transfer.

24 Confirm unresolved till variances are investigated, assigned, and escalated within the required SLA.

CRITICAL | VARIANCE ACTION WORKFLOW

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Record expected value, actual value, variance, suspected cause, owner, due time, and management decision.

5. Inventory, receiving, stock movement, and shrink SOPs

25 Verify deliveries are checked against purchase orders, quantities, condition, and receiving documentation.

CRITICAL | RECEIVING SAMPLE GRID

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Sample deliveries and capture supplier, document number, item, expected quantity, actual quantity, damage, and disposition.

26 Confirm damaged, expired, returned, or quarantined stock is identified and physically segregated.

CRITICAL | STATUS + LIVE PHOTO

Add live photo | Add comment | Create action

Execution tip: Require live photo evidence, quantity, reason, storage location, owner, and next action for controlled stock.

27 Check that stock transfers between locations or departments follow approval and system-recording rules.

TRANSFER SAMPLE

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Validate source, destination, quantity, authorization, dispatch, receipt, and system update for each sampled transfer.

28 Verify cycle counts and stock counts are completed according to the approved schedule and method.

CRITICAL | COUNT RESULT + VARIANCE

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Use blind counts where required and capture system quantity, physical quantity, variance, recount, and approval.

29 Confirm high-value, high-shrink, and controlled products receive the required additional safeguards.

CRITICAL | CONTROL CHECKLIST

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Assess storage, access, display quantity, tagging, counting frequency, and exception escalation by risk category.

30 Verify inventory adjustments and write-offs have valid reasons, evidence, and approval.

CRITICAL | ADJUSTMENT SAMPLE GRID

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Sample by value and reason. Record item, quantity, financial impact, operator, approver, and supporting evidence.

6. Visual merchandising, pricing, and promotion SOPs

31 Verify the current visual merchandising guide and campaign instructions are available to the store team.

REFERENCE DOCUMENT CHECK

Add live photo | Add comment | Create action

Execution tip: Record campaign name, version, launch date, end date, and approved reference assets.

32 Confirm product placement, zoning, adjacencies, and display sequence match the approved planogram or layout.

REFERENCE COMPARISON + PHOTOS

Add live photo | Add comment | Create action

Execution tip: Capture matching overview photos from specified angles and log every deviation by fixture, bay, or category.

33 Check that shelf labels and displayed prices match the product and POS selling price.

CRITICAL | PRICE SAMPLE + POS TEST

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Sample normal, promotional, and high-risk items. Capture shelf price, POS price, variance, and immediate correction.

34 Verify promotional signage, dates, mechanics, exclusions, and qualifying products are correct.

CRITICAL | PROMOTION COMPLIANCE CHECK

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Compare each element to the campaign brief and test the offer at POS before confirming compliance.

35 Confirm out-of-stock products, substitutions, and unavailable promotional items are handled according to SOP.

AVAILABILITY EXCEPTION

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Record SKU, shelf status, backroom stock, customer communication, replenishment action, and escalation.

36 Verify expired campaign materials and outdated price communication are removed promptly.

CRITICAL | TIMESTAMP + PHOTO EVIDENCE

Add live photo | Add comment | Create action

Execution tip: Schedule checks at campaign end and require removal evidence before the store closes or the new campaign launches.

7. Safety, security, emergency, and incident SOPs

37 Verify emergency exits, escape routes, fire equipment, and safety signage are accessible and compliant.

CRITICAL | SAFETY INSPECTION + PHOTOS

Add live photo | Add comment | Create action

Execution tip: Require live photos for critical safety controls and immediate escalation when access or equipment is compromised.

38 Confirm opening, closing, key, alarm, and access control procedures follow dual-control requirements where applicable.

CRITICAL | ACCESS LOG REVIEW

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Validate named users, key custody, alarm events, access times, exceptions, and management follow-up.

39 Check that employees can explain emergency response, evacuation, and incident notification procedures.

CRITICAL | STAFF KNOWLEDGE SAMPLE

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Sample employees across roles and shifts. Record responses by topic and assign refresher training where gaps exist.

40 Verify hazards are contained immediately and recorded with location, severity, evidence, and owner.

CRITICAL | HAZARD LOG + ACTION

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Create corrective actions from failed checks and require containment proof before the audit can continue.

41 Confirm workplace incidents, customer injuries, theft, and security events are documented and escalated correctly.

CRITICAL | INCIDENT RECORD SAMPLE

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Review timing, facts, evidence, notifications, legal or insurer reporting, and closure status.

42 Verify CCTV, panic alarms, EAS, and other security systems are tested at the defined frequency.

CRITICAL | SYSTEM TEST + TIMESTAMP

ACTUAL | Enter value

TARGET | Set range

Create action

Execution tip: Record device, test method, result, failure details, owner, service request, and retest evidence.

8. Facilities, maintenance, housekeeping, and equipment SOPs

43 Verify cleaning routines are completed for customer, staff, sales floor, stockroom, and service areas. AREA CHECKLIST + TIMESTAMPS

ACTUAL | Enter value — TARGET | Set range — Create action

Execution tip: Schedule cleaning checks by area and shift. Require comments and photos for missed or high-risk conditions.

44 Confirm equipment start-up, operation, cleaning, and shutdown procedures are followed. CRITICAL EQUIPMENT OBSERVATION

Compliant — Partially compliant — Non-compliant — N/A

Execution tip: Sample critical equipment and compare the actual sequence, safety checks, readings, and sign-off with the approved SOP.

45 Check preventive maintenance tasks are completed within schedule and evidence is retained. CRITICAL MAINTENANCE RECORD REVIEW

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Capture asset, task, due date, completion date, service provider, evidence, and overdue escalation.

46 Verify defects and repair requests are logged with priority, owner, SLA, and business impact. CRITICAL ISSUE TICKET WORKFLOW

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Link the finding to a ticket and preserve photos, category, downtime, temporary control, owner, and escalation path.

47 Confirm utilities, temperature, lighting, ventilation, and other operating conditions remain within approved limits. CRITICAL READING + VALIDATION

ACTUAL | Enter value — TARGET | Set range — Create action

Execution tip: Use numeric validation and automatic alerts when readings fall outside the approved range.

48 Verify contractor work, permits, isolation, and handover follow approved control procedures. CRITICAL PERMIT + CLOSURE EVIDENCE

Add live photo — Add comment — Create action

Execution tip: Review authorization, risk controls, work area protection, completion evidence, and operational handover.

9. People, training, attendance, grooming, and handover SOPs

49 Verify scheduled employees are present, clocked in correctly, and assigned to required roles.

ROSTER + ATTENDANCE COMPARISON

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Compare roster, actual attendance, role coverage, late arrivals, absences, and approved replacements.

50 Confirm employees have completed mandatory SOP training and required assessments.

CRITICAL | TRAINING COMPLETION REPORT

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Track completion, assessment score, expiry, refresher requirement, and manager follow-up by named user.

51 Observe whether staff grooming, uniform, name badge, and protective equipment meet role standards.

ROLE-BASED OBSERVATION

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Apply the correct standard by role and record specific exceptions. Use privacy-aware evidence rules.

52 Verify supervisors conduct pre-shift briefings covering targets, risks, promotions, service priorities, and assignments.

BRIEFING RECORD + ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Capture the agenda, attendees, key messages, open risks, and employee acknowledgement.

53 Confirm employees know where to find SOPs and how to report uncertainty, hazards, or process failures.

KNOWLEDGE SAMPLE

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Ask employees to locate a relevant SOP and explain the escalation path instead of accepting a verbal yes.

54 Verify shift handover includes pending work, open incidents, customer commitments, equipment issues, and accountability.

CRITICAL | HANDOVER CHECKLIST + SIGN-OFF

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Require structured fields and acceptance by the incoming supervisor before the outgoing shift is released.

10. Findings, corrective actions, review, and approval

55 Classify every SOP deviation by process, severity, customer impact, financial impact, and recurrence. CRITICAL · FINDING CLASSIFICATION

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Use standardized severity rules so similar deviations receive consistent priority across all stores.

56 Assign each corrective action to a named owner with a due date, required evidence, and escalation path. CRITICAL · CORRECTIVE ACTION WORKFLOW

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Avoid generic ownership. Assign a named person, closure criteria, SLA, reviewer, and automatic escalation.

57 Confirm critical deviations receive immediate containment and management notification. CRITICAL · CRITICAL ACTION CONFIRMATION

Compliant | Partially compliant | Non-compliant | N/A

Execution tip: Require containment evidence, notification time, responsible manager, business decision, and follow-up deadline.

58 Verify completed actions address the root cause and include sufficient closure evidence. CRITICAL · CLOSURE REVIEW + EVIDENCE

Add live photo | Add comment | Create action

Execution tip: Require reviewer approval, not only owner completion. Reopen incomplete, temporary, or unsupported fixes.

59 Review repeat deviations, overdue actions, low-performing stores, and systemic SOP gaps. TREND REVIEW + DASHBOARD

Item	Status	Owner	Due	Evidence

Execution tip: Compare current results with prior audits and create broader actions when the same issue appears across stores or periods.

60 Record the final SOP compliance status, residual risks, approver decision, signature, and next audit date. CRITICAL · APPROVAL DECISION + SIGNATURE

Approved | Approved with actions | Not approved | SIGNATURE | Sign

Execution tip: Prevent approval while unresolved critical deviations remain and preserve the full audit trail.