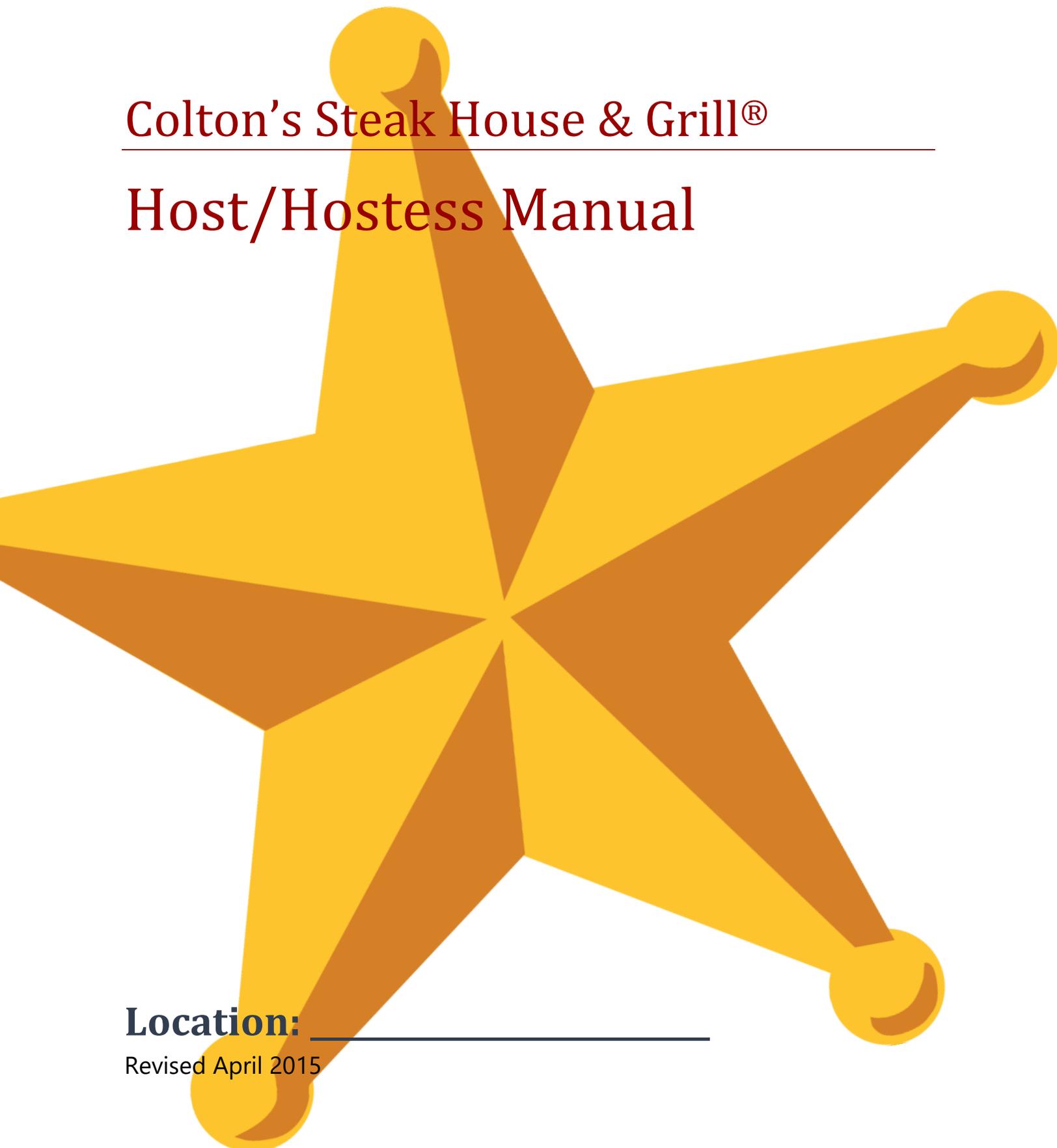


Colton's Steak House & Grill®

Host/Hostess Manual

Location: _____

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Your Role as Hostess¹

The Hostess is responsible for coordinating the teamwork between the Servers, the production team (Broiler Cook, Fry Cook, and Expeditor), and the Manager on duty to provide outstanding personal and enthusiastic service to all Guests. In addition to providing hospitality, the Hostess maximizes seating through planning ahead and knowing the stations, table numbers, and Servers' abilities.

First Impressions

It is crucial to keep in mind that you are the first representative of Colton's the Guest will have contact with. You will set the tone for the Guests' dining experience. Your professionalism, courtesy, efficiency, and availability will set the stage for great service and quality food. On the other hand, if they are disappointed by their first impression of Colton's, they may wish they were dining somewhere else.

¹ In this manual, "Hostess" will be used to refer to both male Hosts and female Hostesses.

Qualities of an Excellent Hostess

Your main job is to make Guests feel as if they are guests in your own home. As the first representative of Colton's Guests come in contact you need several qualities:

Professional: Presents a neat, clean appearance, excellent personal hygiene, confident, composed attitude, and soft tone of voice with slang-free language.

Friendly: Wears a genuine smile and is courteous, thoughtful, and consistently cheerful and outgoing.

Visible: Stays near the hostess station in view of the entrance whenever not interacting with Guests and anticipating their needs.

Aware: Constantly observes Guests and other team members to learn where Guests can be seated next and which Guests or team members need assistance and attends to a need *before* it becomes a problem.



Fig. 1. Smiling Hostess in proper uniform

Your Responsibilities

Your responsibilities include the following:

- Greet each party in a warm friendly manner.
- Seat each party according to their preferences, with station rotation in mind.
- Tell Guests their Server's name, the soup of the day, and any specials or promotions.
- Anticipate Guests' special needs.
- Say farewell to all Guests.
- Bus tables when extra help is needed.

When there are no Guests to be seated, you may be asked to do the following:

- Make coffee and tea.
- Serve beverages.
- Check restrooms.
- Roll silverware.
- Deliver food.

Before You Begin

- Tour the dining room, paying special attention to the path of the Guest.

- Identify and locate the following:

vestibule

hostess area

menus

floor plan with station divisions

table numbers

kids' menus and crayons

kids' cups

beverage towers

coffee maker

tea maker

coolers

ice machine

tray stands

restroom

checklist

highchairs

booster seats

pay phone



Fig. 2. Tea and coffee makers

Greeting Your Guests

- 1) **Smile!**
- 2) Look the Guest in the eye.
- 3) Move toward the Guest.

- 4) Greet them and ask them how many are in the party. Never greet a Guest by saying, "1?" "2?" or "3?" or "May/Can I help you?" *Never* greet a party of one by saying something like, "Just one?"
- 5) Ask whether they have a favorite table or area and whether they prefer a booth or table if either is available.
- 6) Know which table you'll be seating the party at *before* you leave the hostess stand and walk *with* the group toward it.

Set this up with an intro to bullet points to be consistent with how you are providing information throughout the document.

- * Know our products, hours of operation, Managers, and staff.
- * Be ready with helpful suggestions and directions to the telephone and restrooms.
- * Remember—never turn your back to the door.

Handling a Wait

When our restaurant goes on a wait, the manner in which the Guests are treated when they first come through our doors not only determines their first impression of us, but also whether they will be willing to wait.

Go that extra mile to make them feel comfortable until their table is ready. Avoid making Guests feel they are "on their own" until their table is ready. Avoid making Guests feel they

are "on their own" until their table is ready. Always reassure them that you will call them as soon as their table is ready. Writing down names on the Wait Sheet and calling parties should not distract you from the most important part of your job—to make a positive first impression. Use your tone of voice as an important asset in making a Guest's visit more comfortable. Point out the waiting area where they will be out of the traffic flow. When a Guest cannot wait, thank them for coming to Colton's and encourage them to come back. Go that extra mile to make them feel comfortable until their table is ready. Point out the waiting area where they will be out of the traffic flow.

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Filling out the Wait Sheet

- 1) Fill in the last name of the party, the number of Guests in the party, and the time they arrived. If the last name is a common one or you already have someone on the list with the same name, get a first initial and let them know there is another party on the list with the same name.

Incomplete Parties: Tell incomplete parties they must let you know when they are ready to be seated. When all members of the party arrive, make a note next to the name and seat them at the next available table. If a latecomer arrives after a party has been seated, take them to their table—don't let a Guest wander through the restaurant alone in search of their party.

Parties of One: Circle parties of one so they are easier to locate on the list if a two-top table becomes available. Parties of one may be seated early, provided you remain consistent with your wait times. Use your discretion. This policy allows us to maximize our four-top tables to accommodate larger parties, plus it benefits the single Guest in eliminating a long wait.

- 2) Write any special requests next to the party's name.
- 3) Note on the sheet if they need a highchair, booster seat, or swing and if they have a preference for a table or booth. Make note if they prefer a specific table or server.
- 4) Quote the party a wait time. Quoting times to Guests is critical—not only do you need to be accurate, but you must make the Guest feel comfortable and confident in your ability. Speak confidently and make eye contact with every Guest.
- 5) After you call a party's name, cross through the number of the party to acknowledge that they have been called.

If a party does not answer, write the time you called them and "NS" (No Show) next to their name.

- 6) Write down the time the Guest is seated, then shade in the number of the party so you do not call them again.

The time you greet the Guest, the quote time for the wait, and the time the Guest is seated must be filled in *every* time. (See the sample Wait Sheet on the following page.)

Sample Wait Sheet

Seating the Guests

- **Smile!**
- Take a bucket of peanuts, silverware for each member of the party, and the appropriate number of menus. Don't forget the crayons and kids' menus if there are children.
- Set a lively pace when seating a party, but if something slows the party down, don't get too far ahead and lose them.
- **Never carry Guests' children or place them in highchairs or booster seats.**
- Double-check the table and seats before letting the Guests sit down. *Never seat Guests at a dirty table under any circumstances.*
- Pull out chairs for women.
- Get highchairs/booster seats/swings for children and place them out of main walkways.
- Thank the Guests for waiting (if they had to) and tell them their Server's name. Do not wait for the Guests to sit down before leaving the table. Return to the front quickly to seat the next party.

Distributing Guests

When seating Guests, proper distribution throughout the restaurant is key, especially at the beginning and end of a shift. Begin seating properly before the rush so you don't run out of tables. Seat two Guests at a two-top table, three or four Guests at a four-top, and larger parties at larger tables or four-top tables pushed together.

When on a wait, parties of four or fewer can be seated at available large tables if it is convenient and comfortable for them. Parties of five may be seated at four-tops if no large tables will be available within the waiting time quoted. Ask the Guests if they are comfortable with this option.

Try evenly distributing Guests throughout the dining room. Fill tables near windows or walls first. Give each Server the same number of parties when not on a wait. Remember to distribute large parties evenly. When possible, avoid seating consecutive parties in the same station, and never seat more than two parties in a station at one time. When a station is double- or triple-seated, the Server cannot give the Guest the same quality service as we would like, and the Guest feels neglected.

If seating sections must be closed and not seated, try to close sections that are out of sight of waiting Guests. Do not make Guests wait to be seated when they can clearly see empty tables. If seating people becomes a problem during a shift, notify your Manager immediately.

Never hesitate to grant a Guest's request to sit in a particular area. No station is ever closed.

Between the lunch and dinner rush, the restaurant is placed on "zone coverage." This means that about half of the Servers go off-duty while the other half cover the entire restaurant.

Alert Servers when their zone has been seated to ensure a 30-second greeting time. Guests' anxiety grows quickly when they have been seated and left unattended.

Always take the most direct and clear route when walking through the restaurant with Guests. Seat elderly and disabled Guests near the front of the restaurant so they don't have to walk too far. •When walking around the restaurant, watch for peanut shells that may have collected and could be a hazard.

It is not appropriate for Servers to instruct you how to seat Guests. Get a Manager if you have a question or problem.

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- When the party requires an extra chair, highchair, or booster seat, have it at the table before seating them.

After Seating Guests

- Tell the Server he or she has Guests.
- Check which tables are currently available for seating.
- Help keep the dining room clean.

- Talk to your Guests.
- Help team members and Managers as needed.
- Say good-bye and thank you to Guests and invite them back.
- Smile! Remember: You are the first and last impression Guests will have of our restaurant.

Guests with Special Needs

If you have a Guest who is physically impaired, your first priority is to help them feel at ease and offer assistance in a positive, cheerful way. Ask the Guest how you can best help them.

When an elderly or disabled Guest comes in while we are on a wait, inform them that we are able to seat them at the next available table if they would like. Be careful though, Guests may be sensitive to their age or disability. Offer to get them a chair if they have to wait. (See the Troubleshooting Guide on page _____.)

The Telephone

An important part of your job is answering the phone. Often a Guest's first impression of Colton's will be over the phone. Always remain positive and as helpful as possible. Following are some guidelines:

- Never let the phone ring more than twice.
- Answer the phone saying, "Colton's, this is ____." Do not add unnecessary statements, such as "Good morning," "May I help you," or "Thank you for calling." Let the polite, positive tone of your voice say these things for you.
- Speak slowly and clearly in a polite, business-like manner.
- If you must put someone on hold, say, "Hold please, Sir/Ma'am" and do not wait for a response. If you know the person's name, say, "Hold please, ____."

- If more than one line is ringing at the same time, it is never appropriate to answer the phone with "Colton's. Hold please," while you answer another call. Always listen to the caller's request before asking if you may put him/her on hold.
- Never leave someone on hold more than 30 seconds without telling them, "He [or she] will be right with you." **Do not forget about someone who has been put on hold.**
- If you see a flashing button, and no one knows who is on the line, pick up the phone and ask, "Who are you holding for, please?," then follow up on the call.

Calls for a Manager

- Never ask the caller for their name unless told to do so by a Manager; each call is important to Management.
- Locate the Manager and inform him or her of the call.
- Tell the caller, "A Manager will be with you shortly" (if necessary).
- The call is *your* responsibility until you are sure the Manager has picked up the phone. Never assume a Manager is too busy to take a call.
- Be ready to ask if a Manager can return a phone call when directed to do so.

Calls for an Employee

- Take a message and give it to the employee as soon as possible.

- If the caller tells you it is an emergency, inform the Manager and get the employee.

Calls for a Guest

- Page the Guest by saying, "Mr./Mrs./Ms. ____, you have a message at the Hostess stand, please."
- If there is another convenient extension close by, direct them to it. This allows you to continue to handle other phone calls.

Things to Know When You Answer the Phone:

- Hours of operation
- Menu items and price range
- Soups of the day and any specials or promotions
- General directions to the restaurant
- Reservation policy (handled by Management)
- Large party accommodations (handled by Management)
- Average wait time for lunch and dinner
- Credit cards accepted
- Check policy
- "To go" order policy and procedure

- Interviewing hours
- Managers' names
- Lost and found calls are handled by a manager only. (Never tell a Guest we have found the items they have lost.)
- Employee phone numbers are never given out to anyone other than other Colton's employees.

When someone calls and you don't know the answer to a question, never say, "I don't know," no matter how busy you are. Explain to the caller that you must check on the answer.

Server Assistance

During times you are not seating Guests, you will help the Servers and Server Assistants doing such things as make coffee and tea and prepare beverages for Guests. Coffee and tea only have a short time they may be served after being made, called a "hold time." It's important that you know not only these products' hold times but also how to make each correctly. Following are the procedures and hold times for coffee and tea as well as guidelines for preparing beverages.

Making Iced Tea (hold time 4 hours)

- 1) Make sure tea maker spray head is in place and clean.

- 2) Place one 4-oz. tea bag in the tea maker (no filter needed).
- 3) Serve at 72°.

Making Coffee (hold time 1 hour)

- 1) Make sure coffee maker spray head is in place and clean.
- 2) Place one coffee filter in basket and pour contents of one bag of coffee into filter.
- 3) Slide basket all the way into coffee maker.
- 4) Push start button *once*.
- 5) Serve at 185°. Minimum brewing temperature is 195° - 205°.

Preparing Beverages for Guests

- 1) Using an ice scoop, fill glasses for soft drinks $\frac{2}{3}$ full of ice and glasses for iced tea *completely* full of ice (tea is warm and will melt the ice). (See Figure 3.)



- 2) Fill hot beverages to within one inch of the top of the cup to avoid spilling.
- 3) Use your store's method for distinguishing diet drinks from others.
- 4) Do not handle the rims of the glasses and cups but hold by the base or the handle.

Fig. 3. Soda (left) and tea (right) glasses filled with ice

- 5) Deliver drinks, straws, and coasters or beverage napkins (if not already on the table), and place drinks to the Guest's *right*.

Quality Problems

As much as we want everything to go well, sometimes they don't. If you become aware of a problem, apologize to the Guests and tell the Server and Manager right away. See the Troubleshooting Guide on page 17 for handling specific problems.

Teamwork

Teamwork is a critical part of your job. It begins with the communication between you and the Manager. The Manager will show you how the dining room is divided into stations so you can be fair about giving each Server the same number of parties. You'll also need to know which Server is assigned to each station so you can tell your Guests their Server's name.

Also, you'll work closely with the Servers and Server Assistants. By communicating with each other about which tables are available and which tables have just been seated, Guests can be seated and served efficiently.

Alternate the stations in which the parties are seated (called "rotation seating") so the Servers can spend more time with one party before tending to another one. If, for instance, you repeatedly seat the same section, the server can't take the time necessary with each

Guest to make them feel special. The Guests won't be happy, the Server will make less in tips, and the other Servers will feel you're playing favorites. It's critical that you rotate the seating and tell the Servers when you seat a party in their station.

Cleanliness

Keep the hostess station and the area around it clean at all times. Keep the windows clean, the floors free from trash, and the outside area swept and free of debris.

You're also responsible for helping keep the dining room and restrooms clean and organized. Although bussing tables is not one of your primary responsibilities, at times you may be able to get a table started.

- 1) Move glasses to the front of the table
- 2) Put silverware into glasses
- 3) Wipe down chairs

Generally, you should not take anything from the table because too much time is lost, and you need to be available to Guests who walk in. However, if it is necessary, your Manager can show you the procedure.



The following tasks are to be done when there are no more Guests to seat:

- Help set tables.
- Stock service and hostess stations.
- Clean highchairs and booster seats.
- Make coffee and iced tea.
- Provide drink refills and offer complimentary coffee.
- Pick up debris from floors, especially around tables, and sweep peanut shells.
- Help bus and clean tables as needed.

Fig. 3. An attractively arranged hostess station

Miscellaneous Hostess Points

Personal Beverages: These are not allowed at the hostess stand.

Stocking: Keep the hostess station well stocked with menus and silverware while on a wait.

Medicines: We do not give aspirin, Tylenol, or other medicines to Guests. There is a first aid kit in the office area for the convenience and safety of our employees. **Tips:** Hostesses are not permitted to accept tips to move a Guest's name up on the list.

Solicitors: We do not allow outsiders to come in our restaurant selling, promoting or giving away items such as flowers, pamphlets, etc. Do not try to handle these situations; notify the manager immediately.

Guest Beverages: Guests may not bring outside beverages into our restaurant. **Job**

Applicants: Applications are kept at the hostess station for potential employees. Check with

a manager about days and times. When a person comes in seeking employment, give them an application and have them wait for a manager. Never discuss any conditions of employment, whether we have openings or any other part of our screening or selection process with a potential applicant. **Weather:** In situations where there is heavy rain or other types of inclement weather, have some clean napkins on the hostess stand for Guests to dry off with. Keep aware of wet floors that may need to be dried. **Lost & Found:** All lost and found items should be given directly to a Manager as soon as they are found.

Hazardous Materials

Material Safety Data Sheets contain information on potentially hazardous chemicals you may use in your job. They are located in the kitchen by the employee bulletin board. If you use chemicals (such as the ones used to clean tables) you should read about their use and handling beforehand.

On-The-Job Training

Now you're ready to practice some of the hostess procedures with the help of your trainer. To help you prepare, review the questions and the Troubleshooting Guide that follow.

Hostess Troubleshooting Guide

Refer to this chart when a problem arises.

Do whatever it takes to keep the Guests satisfied. If in doubt, ask the Manager.	
Problem	Action
Guest attempts to save table.	Let Manager know of situation. Explain to Guest that it's unnecessary and assure them you will get a table for them.
Guest is in a wheelchair.	Offer assistance and seat in open space out of Guests' pathways.
Guest is hearing impaired.	Speak directly facing Guest or write down communication if necessary. Try to seat in a quiet area.
Guest is visually impaired.	Offer assistance verbally. Explain table layout and help in any way possible.
No highchairs are available.	Apologize and explain situation to Guest. Tell them you will provide one as soon as one is available.

Drink or food spills.	Put out wet floor sign. Ask kitchen workers to help.
Party is unhappy with table location.	Apologize and move at first opportunity.
There are too many plates for one tray without stacking them.	<i>Do not stack.</i> Use two trays and ask for assistance in carrying and serving.
Many parties leaving at the same time, and all tables must be bussed within three minutes.	Quickly ask team members and Manager for assistance.
Guest has complaint.	Apologize and inform Manager immediately.
Child drops meal or drink on floor.	Replace immediately.
Someone is choking.	Remain calm and inform Manager immediately.
Complaint of soft drink tasting flat or bad.	Apologize, inform Manager, and replace drink from another drink station.
Coffee too strong or tastes bad.	Apologize to Guest and make a fresh pot immediately.

Hostess Training Overview

[Waiting for answers to some questions]