

# What Is the Typical Shift Schedule for Coffee Shop Baristas? - Complete Hospitality Training

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## Details:

Cafe hours are early, short and front-loaded, which makes barista work structurally different from most hospitality, where the pressure lands at night. Clock times vary too much between venues for anyone to publish a standard roster honestly, so this page describes the shape of the day, what each phase actually requires, and which of those duties are legal rather than optional.

### ## The four phases of a cafe day

| Phase | What it is | What it requires of you | | --- | --- | --- | | Open | Before trade. Machine on and brought to temperature, grinder dialled in, milk and food out, station set | Mise en place, equipment start-up, temperature checks on refrigerated stock | | Morning peak | The bulk of the day's volume, usually compressed into a few hours | Sequencing several drinks at once, holding quality at speed, keeping the station clean | | Mid-shift | Steadier trade | Restocking, re-dialling the grinder as conditions shift, cleaning as you go | | Close | Breakdown | Backflushing, group head and grinder cleaning, steam wand purging, reconciliation |

Many cafes close in the afternoon, so a cafe day is often shorter than the long evenings of restaurant or bar work. The trade-off is the start: opening a cafe means being there before anyone wants coffee, which suits some people permanently and others not at all. It is worth being honest with yourself before committing.

### ## How the training package counts shifts

Since this page is about rosters, it is worth knowing that the accredited system counts shifts too, and it counts them very differently from unit to unit. A service period is the training package's own unit of rostering, and if you are planning training around work, this table is the scheduling constraint:

| Unit | Service periods required | | --- | --- | | SITHFAB025 Prepare and serve espresso coffee | None. Volume is counted in beverages and occasions instead | | SITHFAB024 Prepare and serve non-alcoholic beverages | 3 , including at least one peak | | SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails | 3 | | SITHFAB027 Serve food and beverage | 5 , including at least one peak | | SITHFAB038 Plan and monitor espresso coffee service | 6 | | SITHFAB034 Provide table service of food and beverage | 12 , with full menu advice in every one | | SITXCCS016 Develop and manage quality customer service practices | 4 |

Two things follow from it. First, the espresso unit is the exception : SITHFAB025 sets no service-period requirement at all. If a provider tells you the coffee unit needs a set number of shifts or a peak service, that is their delivery model rather than a training package rule, and it is worth knowing the difference before you rearrange your roster around it.

Second, everything that involves running a service rather than making a product is counted in shifts, because consistency is only observable across a shift. That is why the table climbs from three to twelve as the job widens, and it is a reasonable proxy for how much rostered exposure each step in a hospitality career actually takes.

### ## Why the peak is the whole job

The accredited unit for espresso work puts this in writing. SITHFAB025 Prepare and serve espresso coffee requires you to prepare ten named espresso beverages, each on three separate occasions , within commercial timeframes , adjusting and correcting extraction when it drifts.

| Beverage | Beverage | | --- | --- | | Caffe latte | Piccolo latte | | Cappuccino | Mocha | | Espresso (short black) | Ristretto | | Flat white | Short macchiato | | Long black | Long macchiato |

Ten beverages on three occasions each is a minimum of thirty preparations , and seven of the ten take textured milk — only espresso, long black and ristretto do not — so 21 of those 30 pass through a jug. On a busy morning that ratio is why the milk station, not the group head, is where a queue actually backs up.

The phrase within commercial timeframes is the morning peak described in assessment language. It is not enough to make a correct cappuccino. You have to make it at the pace a paying venue needs, repeatedly, while a queue watches. This is why the unit counts occasions instead of drinks, and why a course can teach you technique but only a busy shift builds speed. See barista training: how long , milk texturing 101 and how long does it take to become a good barista .

### ## What the open shift actually involves

Opening is not just unlocking the door. The unit's knowledge evidence explicitly includes mise en place requirements for preparing coffee beverages and the essential features and functions of espresso machines and grinders , and both land in the first half hour.

Dialling in is the technical part. The unit names ambient humidity among the factors relevant to the quality of espresso coffee, alongside crema, espresso flow, steam pressure and taste. That is the formal reason yesterday's grind setting is not today's: the coffee and the air have both moved. CHT teaches the diagnostic this way:

| What you see | What it usually means | | --- | --- | | Pale stream early | Grind too coarse, or the basket is underfilled | | Slow drips, or the shot stalls | Grind too fine, or the dose is too high | | Uneven flow | The puck was not level, or the water has channelled | | Fast, thin, sour shot | Under-extracted | | Slow, harsh, bitter shot | Over-extracted |

The unit requires you to know which lever to reach for: dose, grind, tamping technique, water flow or water pressure .

### ## What the close shift actually involves

The unit's knowledge evidence includes basic maintenance and cleaning methods for espresso equipment , which is the polite phrasing for the least glamorous part of the shift. Backflushing, group head cleaning, grinder hygiene and purging and wiping the steam wand are inside the unit, not adjacent to it. Rancid oils taste exactly like bad coffee, and most "the machine is broken" problems are maintenance problems.

The reconciliation at the end of the shift is a separate accredited competency again. SITXFIN007 Process financial transactions is one of the four units in the espresso skill set, which is the training package's way of acknowledging that a barista shift ends at the till rather than at the machine.

### ## Who owns the parts of the shift that are not making coffee

A reasonable question once you have worked a few of them: opening, dialling in, monitoring quality across the morning, deciding when the machine needs a service call, and dealing with the roaster are none of them in SITHFAB025 . They belong to a separate, more senior unit.

SITHFAB038 Plan and monitor espresso coffee service is current on our scope as RTO 3722 at extent "Deliver and assess" to 30 June 2032 , and it is effectively the job description for whoever runs the bench rather than works it:

| Element | What it covers on a shift | | --- | --- | | 1. Plan coffee beverage service | Develop coffee beverage menus, select suppliers and roasters , liaise with suppliers so quality standards hold | | 2. Provide specialist advice on espresso coffee beverages | Keep your own knowledge current, answer customer questions, give accurate information to staff , promote coffee appreciation | | 3. Monitor quality of coffee beverages | Identify the characteristics of superior espresso , evaluate bean freshness , monitor grind and dose consistency across the service | | 4. Monitor and maintain equipment | Monitor machines for efficiency, monitor temperature and water pressure , develop environmentally sound practices, schedule service calls |

Its performance evidence requires the candidate to coordinate the operational aspects of espresso coffee preparation for an outlet across at least six service periods , to maintain commercial grade espresso machines and grinders throughout each of those six , and to monitor the consistency and quality of eight named characteristics through service: appearance including opacity or transparency, aroma, colour, flavour, freshness, presentation, taste and volume .

Read elements 3 and 4 against the open and close phases at the top of this page and they are the same list. The difference is that SITHFAB025 asks whether your cups are right, and SITHFAB038 asks whether every cup was right for six services running. That is the promotion, and it is the reason the senior unit is measured in shifts.

One structural point worth knowing if you have been opening a cafe for years: SITHFAB038 has no prerequisite units at all — not SITXFSA005 , and not SITHFAB025 . The entry-level espresso unit is gated and the senior one is not, so an experienced opener can be assessed in it directly.

## The duties on your shift that are legal, not optional

This is the part of a barista shift that most rosters never mention.

A cafe that makes and serves unpackaged food that is both potentially hazardous and ready to eat is a category one business under Standard 3.2.2A , in force since 8 December 2023 . Category one carries all three of the Standard's food safety management tools, including the one that falls on your shift: substantiation records .

Those records cover, among other things:

Receipt of food at the correct temperature — 5 °C or below , or 60 °C or above

Storage under temperature control

Process steps that achieve pathogen reduction

Minimising the time food spends at growth-permitting temperatures

Cooling and reheating within specified timeframes

Display under temperature control

Transport under temperature control

Cleaning and sanitising of food-contact surfaces and equipment

They must be kept for three months after being made and be accessible at the premises . A business can demonstrate compliance by other means, in which case an authorised officer may then require records. If your open shift includes a fridge temperature check or your close shift includes a sanitising log, that is the Standard, not your manager's preference. See understanding Standard 3.2.2A and how

long do I need to keep records for .

Worth separating two sets of temperatures that appear on the same shift and mean different things. The 5 °C and 60 °C figures above are regulatory temperature-control points for receiving and holding food. The milk window a barista works to is a flavour and structure target from our own teaching, not a legal figure, and monitoring machine temperature under SITHFAB038 element 4 is a third thing again. Do not let a log sheet and a steam jug share a mental category.

Food handler training is the Standard's other duty that reaches you personally. It must be completed, or you must possess skills and knowledge commensurate with the activity , before you carry out a prescribed activity. It does not have to be nationally accredited, mandates no refresher period , and the business is not required to keep records of it. The accredited unit, SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety , buys portability and proof rather than permission — and it happens to be the prerequisite for SITHFAB025, so it does double duty. It requires correct hand-washing, appropriate use of uniform and personal protective equipment, effective personal health and hygiene practices, and hygienic food service, each demonstrated on at least three occasions . See food handling and virtual food handling SITXFSA005 .

Within the food and beverage stream SITXFSA005 is in fact the prerequisite for nine units — SITHFAB022 , SITHFAB023 , SITHFAB024 , SITHFAB025 , SITHFAB026 , SITHFAB027 , SITHFAB030 , SITHFAB034 and SITHFAB035 — so it is the one to clear first if you intend to move beyond the coffee machine. Keep that figure attached to the stream: across the wider SIT package the same unit also stands in front of cookery, patisserie and kitchen units, which is a different set and a different number. RSA reaches just as far inside the stream — SITHFAB021 is a prerequisite to nine units of its own, SITHFAB023 , SITHFAB029 , SITHFAB030 , SITHFAB031 , SITHFAB032 , SITHFAB033 , SITHFAB034 , SITHFAB037 and SITHFAB039 — so the two gate the same number of units and are the sensible pair to hold early. Four units in the stream carry two or more prerequisites: SITHFAB023 Operate a bar and SITHFAB034 Provide table service of food and beverage carry two each, food safety and RSA, while SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails carries three by adding SITHFAB023 , and SITHFAB039 Manage the sale or service of wine carries three of its own in SITHFAB021 , SITHFAB032 and SITHFAB033 . Those last two are chains rather than single gates, so they need planning across terms rather than around a single roster. SITHFAB038 has none.

A Food Safety Supervisor must be appointed before the business engages in a prescribed activity and must remain reasonably available — on site or easily contactable. In Victoria, Class 1, Class 2 and Class 3A premises must have one; a cafe is ordinarily Class 2 . The FSS certificate must have been issued within the preceding five years , and that five-year clock belongs to the FSS role only, not to food handler training. See food safety supervisor .

On allergens and plant milks specifically, this page states no duty, because none appears in the material behind it and inventing one would be worse than the gap. Separate jugs and proper cleaning where a dairy allergy rather than an intolerance is involved is sound practice; the legal requirement is a question for your state or territory food regulator or local council.

## Weekends are the busiest

Saturday and Sunday are peak trading for most cafes, so weekend work is the norm rather than the exception. Weekend and public holiday work attracts penalty rates under the applicable award.

That also has a training consequence worth planning around. Where a unit requires a peak service period — SITHFAB024 and SITHFAB027 both do — a weekend shift is usually the easiest way to evidence it, while the espresso unit, which requires no service periods at all, can be evidenced on any day the machine is busy enough to impose commercial timeframes.

## Which award covers you

This determines your minimum pay, and it is decided by the premises, not your job title . Two baristas doing identical work can sit under different awards purely because of where the counter is.

Four awards divide the field, and each covers its industry to the exclusion of the others, so exactly one applies to your employer:

| Where you work | Award | Level 4 floor for a Cert III? | | --- | --- | --- | | A standalone cafe or restaurant | MA000119 Restaurant Industry Award | Yes | | A night club | MA000119 — a night club is commercial, not a registered club | Yes | | A cafe or bar inside a hotel, pub, tavern, motel, resort or casino | MA000009 Hospitality Industry (General) Award | Yes | | A contract caterer | MA000009 | Yes | | A not-for-profit registered club — RSL, bowls, golf, sporting | MA000058 Registered and Licensed Clubs Award | Yes | | A food-court outlet or takeaway counter | MA000003 Fast Food Industry Award | No |

Two lines in that table are the ones people get wrong.

Clubs are not covered by the hospitality award. Clause 4.4(d)(i) of MA000009 expressly excludes clubs registered or recognised under State or Territory legislation — clubs are the one industry the hospitality award carves out by name. A club falls under MA000058 only if it is both registered under a liquor, gaming, associations or corporations statute and established and operating on a not-for-profit basis for the benefit of members and the community. A commercially owned venue that calls itself a club is not a club for award purposes.

Night clubs are not covered by the clubs award. A night club is a commercial venue, so it sits in MA000119 with restaurants and cafes.

For coffee work specifically, the boundary between MA000119 and MA000003 turns on sit-down service, not the menu . A food-court coffee outlet is fast food; the cafe along the corridor with tables is the restaurant award.

### What your qualification does to your pay, and where it does nothing

Under MA000009 , MA000119 and MA000058 , a relevant AQF Certificate III or higher, used at work, sets a minimum classification of Level 4 . Under MA000003 , the fast food award, there is no equivalent provision .

For a barista those two facts combine into the most useful thing on this page. Hold SITHFAB025 inside SIT30622 or SIT30722, work in a sit-down cafe , and you have a Level 4 floor. Do identical work at a food-court counter , and you do not. The award follows the premises, so the cash value of your certificate follows the premises too.

The floor is not automatic on completion. MA000009 and MA000119 both require that you make use of the skills and knowledge derived from those Certificate III competencies in the work you actually do. MA000058 words it as Certificate III qualifications relevant to the classification you are employed in, without "or higher", and allows the Fair Work Commission to require you to demonstrate that you use the relevant skills. If it is disputed, the route is clause 40 under MA000009, clause 34 under MA000119, or referral to the Fair Work Commission under MA000058.

The most common cause of underpayment in hospitality is being classified too low , not a wrong hourly rate. Check your classification against your payslip, and take current pay rates from the Fair Work Ombudsman's Pay and Conditions Tool rather than from any provider's summary, including this one. See superannuation, tax and payslips and working hours, rosters and public holidays .

## If you are on a student visa

Two separate rule sets apply at once. Your visa work limit caps how much you may work while your course is in session; the award governs what you must be paid. Neither excuses the other. Check your grant letter for the current limit, because it has changed more than once in recent years.

Cafe hours suit student schedules well, because the shift is often finished before afternoon classes. See how to balance education, work and life and how to apply for a tax file number .

### ## The physical reality

Standing for the whole shift, repetitive movements in tamping and jug work, and sustained concentration through the peak. The morning rush is genuinely intense: a good barista is producing continuously while tracking multiple orders and still greeting people properly.

Against that, the day ends early, the work is sociable, and the hardest part is over by mid-morning.

### ## What you need before the first shift

Food handler training — required before carrying out a prescribed activity. See food handling

RSA , if the venue is licensed and you will serve alcohol. One unit, SITHFAB021 , with different rules in each of the eight jurisdictions — see /rsa

Barista skills , ideally with a nationally recognised unit behind them — see barista coffee course

No licence is required to make coffee. The SITSS00080 Espresso Machine Operation skill set — SITHFAB025 , SITXCCS014 Provide service to customers, SITXFIN007 Process financial transactions and SITXFSA005 — records that no occupational licensing, certification or legislative requirement applies to it . Those four units are a fair description of a whole shift: make the coffee, serve the customer, take the money, handle food hygienically.

### ## About us

We are Complete Hospitality Training , RTO 3722, CRICOS 04242E. Level 3, 28 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne VIC 3000, and 410 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills NSW 2010. Contact melbourne@cht.edu.au or +61 3 9654 1554 . The legal entity is COMPLETE HOSPITALITY TRAINING (VIC.) PTY. LTD. , ABN 27 006 947 262 , ACN 006 947 262 , which also holds the registered business names THE COFFEE SCHOOL , Coffee School by CHT and Melbourne Barista among its seven current business names on the Australian Business Register.

We link to the relevant course and regulatory sources in this guide. Check those sources for current requirements, and confirm course availability, delivery, fees and entry requirements with us before enrolling.

### ## Source records and further guidance

We link the unit records and regulator guidance relevant to this page below. Check the current source before making an enrolment, licensing or employment decision.

SITHFAB025 Prepare and serve espresso coffee

SITHFAB038 Plan and monitor espresso coffee service

SITHFAB030 Prepare and serve cocktails

SITHFAB034 Provide table service of food and beverage

SITXFSA005 Use hygienic practices for food safety

Food Standards Code — Standards 3.2.2 and 3.2.2A (food safety practices and food safety management tools)

Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2020 (MA000009)

Restaurant Industry Award 2020 (MA000119)

### How early do barista shifts start?

Before trade, which in most cafes means well before the first customer. Actual start times vary by venue and we do not publish a standard figure — ask the employer.

### Why is the morning peak so much harder than the rest of the day?

Because the day's volume is compressed into it. This is what the espresso unit means by requiring beverages prepared "within commercial timeframes".

### What is the accredited standard a barista is held to?

SITHFAB025: ten named espresso beverages, each on three separate occasions, at service speed, with extraction adjusted and corrected as needed — a minimum of thirty preparations.

### How many shifts does the espresso unit require?

None. SITHFAB025 sets no service-period requirement at all. SITHFAB024 requires three including one peak, SITHFAB030 three, SITHFAB027 five including one peak, SITHFAB038 six, and SITHFAB034 twelve.

### Which units need a peak service period specifically?

SITHFAB024 and SITHFAB027. That usually means a weekend or a morning rush, which is worth knowing when you are negotiating a training roster.

### Which unit covers opening, dialling in and monitoring the machine across a service?

SITHFAB038 Plan and monitor espresso coffee service. Its fourth element covers monitoring machines for efficiency, monitoring temperature and water pressure, and scheduling service calls; its third covers monitoring grind and dose consistency and evaluating bean freshness. It is assessed across at least six service periods.

### Do I need SITHFAB025 before SITHFAB038?

No. SITHFAB038 has no prerequisite units at all, so someone who has been opening a cafe for years can be assessed in it directly.

### Why does the grinder need re-dialling during a shift?

Because conditions move. The unit names ambient humidity among the factors relevant to espresso quality, alongside crema, espresso flow, steam pressure and taste.

### Is the till part of the job, formally?

Yes. SITXFIN007 Process financial transactions is one of the four units in the SITSS00080 skill set, alongside the espresso unit, customer service and food hygiene.

### Do I get penalty rates?

Yes, for weekends, public holidays and other applicable times, under whichever award covers the premises.

### Which award applies to me?

Standalone cafe, restaurant or night club: MA000119. Cafe or bar inside a hotel, pub, motel, resort or casino, or a contract caterer: MA000009. Not-for-profit registered club: MA000058. Food court or takeaway counter: MA000003. It is decided by the premises, not the job title.

### I work in a club — is that the hospitality award?

No. MA000009 clause 4.4(d)(i) expressly excludes clubs registered or recognised under State or Territory legislation. A registered not-for-profit club sits under MA000058.

### Is a night club covered by the clubs award?

No. A night club is commercial rather than not-for-profit, so it sits under MA000119.

### Is a food-court coffee counter a cafe for award purposes?

Not usually. The test is sit-down service rather than the menu, so a food-court outlet is generally MA000003 while a cafe with tables is MA000119.

### Does holding a certificate change my pay?

Under MA000009, MA000119 and MA000058, a relevant AQF Certificate III or higher used at work sets a minimum classification of Level 4. Under MA000003, the fast food award, there is no equivalent provision.

### So my certificate is worth more in a cafe than a food court?

Through this route, yes. A sit-down cafe is MA000119 and carries the Level 4 floor; a food-court counter is generally MA000003 and does not. Identical work, different award, different floor.

### Do I get Level 4 automatically when I finish the qualification?

No. MA000009 and MA000119 require you to make use of the skills and knowledge derived from the Certificate III competencies in the work you do, and MA000058 allows the Fair Work Commission to require you to demonstrate that you use the relevant skills.

### Is barista work full time?

Many cafe roles are casual or part time, which is part of why the work suits students.

### Do I have to fill in temperature logs?

If the venue is a category one business under Standard 3.2.2A, substantiation records are one of its three required food safety management tools. They are kept for three months and must be accessible at the premises.

### Are the food temperatures and the milk temperature the same kind of rule?

No. The 5 °C and 60 °C figures are regulatory receipt and holding temperatures. The milk window is a flavour and structure target from our teaching, and monitoring machine temperature is an assessed duty in SITHFAB038. Three different things.

### How long does a food handler certificate last?

Standard 3.2.2A mandates no refresher period for food handler training. The five-year cycle applies to the separate Food Safety Supervisor certificate.

### Does someone have to be on site as Food Safety Supervisor on my shift?

The FSS must be appointed before the business engages in a prescribed activity and must remain reasonably available, which means on site or easily contacted, for example by phone.

### Do I need a licence to work as a barista?

No. The SITSS00080 skill set records that no occupational licensing, certification or legislative requirement applies to it.

### Do I need RSA for a cafe job?

Only if the venue is licensed and you will serve alcohol. Confirm the position for your state, because acceptance and expiry differ markedly between jurisdictions.

### Can cafe work lead somewhere?

Yes. SITHFAB025 is an elective in SIT30622 and SIT30722, SITHFAB038 is the senior espresso unit, and from there SIT40422 Certificate IV in Hospitality is the supervision qualification — three of its nine core units are human resources units. If the plan is to widen sideways rather than upwards, the food safety unit is the key: within the food and beverage stream it stands in front of nine units — SITHFAB022, SITHFAB023, SITHFAB024, SITHFAB025, SITHFAB026, SITHFAB027, SITHFAB030, SITHFAB034 and SITHFAB035 — and RSA SITHFAB021 gates nine of its own, with four units carrying two or more prerequisites: SITHFAB023 and SITHFAB034 two each, SITHFAB030 and SITHFAB039 three each. See SIT30622 ([/workplace-training/sit30622-certificate-iii-in-hospitality/](#)) and Certificate IV in Hospitality ([/courses/certificate-iv-in-hospitality/](#)).