

Shift swap and cover policy

[Business name] · Effective from [date] · Reviewed by [manager name]

1. Purpose

This policy explains how team members can swap shifts, ask for cover or release a shift, so every shift stays covered by someone with the right skills and the roster stays accurate.

2. Who it applies to

All team members on the roster at [locations]. Managers follow the same approval steps for their own shifts.

3. The golden rule

You stay responsible for your shift until a manager approves the change. Agreeing a swap with a colleague, in person or in a group chat, does not change the roster on its own.

4. How to ask

- a) Make every request through [rostering app / written request form]. Requests by text, social media or group chat are not accepted.
- b) Choose one of:
 - Swap or cover: name the colleague who has agreed to take the shift.
 - Release: ask for the shift to be released so a manager can fill it.
- c) Ask at least [48 hours] before the shift starts. For shorter notice, call [manager phone] as well.

5. Who can cover a shift

The person covering must:

- hold the skills or certificates the shift needs (for example [keyholder / RSA / food safety / first aid]);
- not already be working, on leave or unavailable at that time;
- stay within their agreed hours and the rest-break rules in their award or agreement, including at least [12] hours between shifts.

6. Approval

- a) A manager approves or declines every request, normally within [24 hours].
- b) Managers may decline a request that leaves the shift without the right skills, creates overtime or penalty costs that were not planned, or breaks rest-break or fatigue rules.
- c) Both people are told the decision. Until it is approved, the original roster stands.

7. Released shifts

When a release is approved, the shift becomes an open shift. Team members with the right skills may claim it, or a manager will assign someone. If nobody can be found, the manager will decide how to cover it; the original person is not penalised for a request made with proper notice.

8. Pay and hours

Whoever works the shift is paid for it at the rate that applies to them. Swaps must not be used to avoid overtime, penalty rates or other entitlements.

9. Emergencies and sickness

If you are sick or have an emergency, contact [manager / phone] as soon as you can, and follow the [sick leave procedure]. Do not arrange cover informally instead of telling a manager.

10. Limits

Each team member may make up to [4] swap or release requests per [month]. Managers may make exceptions.

11. Questions

Ask [manager name] or email [address].

Acknowledged by: _____ Date: _____