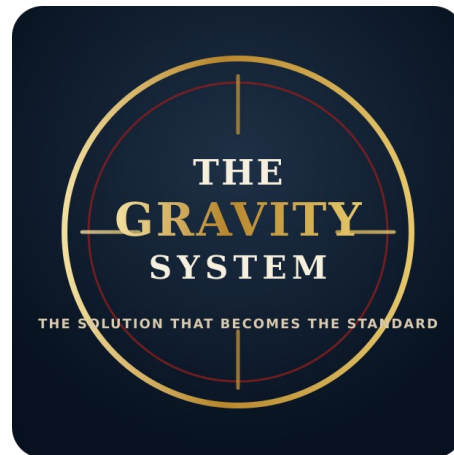


THE GRAVITY RESTAURANT LEADERSHIP SYSTEM



The Gravity Manager Development System

A practical operating system for role clarity, judgment, communication, coaching, accountability, team leadership, and bench strength.

OPERATING MANUAL

Published by Thomas Monroe Books
Author: Thomas Butler

Publishing and Use Notice

Copyright 2026 Thomas Monroe Books. All rights reserved. The Gravity Manager Development System is a component of The Gravity Restaurant Leadership System.

This product is an operational education and management resource. It is not legal, human-resources, labor-relations, employment, medical, mental-health, safety, accessibility, tax, accounting, insurance, or licensing advice. It does not make hiring, promotion, discipline, termination, wage, classification, accommodation, leave, investigation, or other protected employment decisions. Obtain qualified review and adapt the system to approved policies, collective-bargaining duties, jurisdiction, role authority, and actual operating conditions.

DEVELOPMENT DEFINITION Manager development is a controlled cycle of clear expectations, observed practice, useful feedback, supported correction, verified application, and renewed responsibility.

Inside This Guide

Part I	Purpose, boundaries, architecture, decision rights, evidence, and data restraint
Part II	Readiness, self-management, judgment, communication, listening, and conflict
Part III	Coaching, accountability, recognition, delegation, meetings, and team climate
Part IV	Bench strength, scorecards, experiments, installation, tool directory, and official sources

The Management Problem This System Solves

Restaurants often promote dependable employees into management and then assume authority will teach them how to lead. The new manager inherits pressure, confidential information, conflict, performance decisions, and team expectations without a controlled development path. Good intentions become inconsistent direction, avoidable harm, weak accountability, and a leadership bench that cannot be trusted to carry the operation.

CENTRAL STANDARD No manager is considered developed because of a title, tenure, confidence, popularity, or one strong shift. Readiness must be defined, practiced, observed, supported, and verified.

The operating loop

1. Define the role, decision rights, standards, evidence, and qualified-review boundaries.
2. Assess current readiness using observable criteria and multiple relevant sources.
3. Assign one capability outcome and a real practice opportunity.
4. Observe behavior, coach with evidence, provide support, and protect speak-up rights.
5. Verify application, decide the next authority level, and renew the development plan.

What this system is not

- It is not a confidential personnel file, investigation file, medical record, or repository for unnecessary personal information.
- It is not the employee training and task-certification system controlled by GRV-T.
- It is not a replacement for approved policy, HR, legal, labor-relations, safety, accommodation, leave, wage, or classification review.
- It is not a personality contest, popularity score, or automatic promotion formula.

1. System Architecture

Thirty tools are organized into six development areas. Every active record uses a controlled ID, named owner, source date, evidence quality, decision state, review date, and qualified escalation where required.

SYSTEM IDENTITY Use GRV-M01 through GRV-M30 as the official tool IDs. Use manager, decision, development-cycle, observation, action, and review IDs instead of uncontrolled names or narrative files.

Role clarity and readiness

- Role and decision-rights charter
- Evidence-based readiness assessment
- Role-based learning and ramp
- Conduct commitment
- Development agreement

Self-management and judgment

- Leadership impact
- Pressure response
- Decision quality
- Priority control
- Learning reflection

Communication and trust

- One-on-ones
- Active listening
- Clear expectations
- Difficult conversations
- Conflict repair

Coaching and accountability

- Observation evidence
- Coaching practice
- Feedback quality
- Performance support
- Recognition

Team leadership and operating rhythm

- Delegation
- Pre-shift leadership
- Manager decisions
- Speak-up climate
- Cross-functional handoffs

Bench strength and renewal

- Weekly review
- Capability scorecard
- Successor map
- Practice experiments
- Annual roadmap

2. Boundaries and System Connections

GRV-M develops manager capability. It coordinates with, but does not duplicate, systems that own personnel, training, service, capacity, profit, standards, risk, food, or guest relationships.

BOUNDARY RULE GRV-M records capability practice and management decisions. The authorized owning function controls protected employment action and confidential records.

Authorized people and employment records

- Approved HR or personnel systems own applications, compensation, protected data, accommodations, leave, investigations, discipline, termination, and official employment decisions.
- GRV-M may reference an authorized record ID and objective development evidence but should not duplicate confidential details.

GRV-T and operating systems

- GRV-T owns employee task training, station certification, trainer evidence, and SOP skill completion.
- GRV-S, GRV-C, GRV-F, and other operating systems own service, staffing capacity, product, food, and execution standards.

GRV-P, GRV-I, and GRV-RC

- GRV-P owns labor, cost, productivity, and financial definitions.
- GRV-I owns source authority, versioning, evidence rules, and controlled change.
- GRV-RC owns material leadership risks, continuity, and response plans.

Protected concerns

- Harassment, discrimination, retaliation, safety, wage, accommodation, leave, concerted activity, representation, and similar concerns must follow approved reporting and qualified-review routes.
- A development conversation must never be used to suppress or privately resolve a protected concern.

3. Roles and Decision Rights

One person may hold several roles, but each development cycle must distinguish the learner, coach, observer, approver, evidence owner, and qualified reviewer.

AUTHORITY RULE A manager may act only within written authority. Urgency does not create authority, and silence is not approval.

Owner

- Defines leadership expectations and approves material authority, manager selection standards, succession risk, and annual priorities.
- Does not bypass objective criteria or qualified review.

General manager

- Owns installation, role charters, weekly review, development opportunities, cross-system alignment, and safe escalation.
- Stops manager practices that create unsafe, retaliatory, discriminatory, deceptive, or uncontrolled action.

Manager coach

- Creates practice assignments, observes behavior, asks questions, gives specific feedback, provides support, and verifies follow-through.
- Does not promise confidentiality that policy or law does not allow.

Manager or candidate

- Owns honest self-assessment, practice, questions, evidence, reflection, commitments, and escalation when authority is unclear.

People/HR or qualified reviewer

- Reviews protected employment issues, policy application, investigations, accommodations, leave, discipline, representation, wage, classification, and other regulated decisions.

Employees and teams

- May provide relevant feedback and raise concerns through approved channels without retaliation; they do not evaluate confidential employment decisions.

4. Evidence, IDs, Fairness, and Data Restraint

Development evidence must describe relevant behavior and results, not identity, rumor, personality labels, protected traits, or unsupported conclusions.

TRUTH RULE If the behavior, standard, source, date, or limitation is unknown, mark the evidence unverified and do not convert it into a conclusion.

ID conventions

- Managers: MGR-####
- Development cycles: DEV-YYYY-####
- Decisions: MDEC-YYYY-####
- Observations: OBS-YYYY-####
- Actions: MA-YYYY-####
- Experiments: MEXP-YYYY-##

Evidence standards

- Record who observed what, when, where, against which approved standard, with what limitation.
- Separate direct observation, documented result, reported information, interpretation, and assumption.
- Use more than one relevant source for material readiness or advancement decisions when practical.

Fairness controls

- Use the same role-relevant criteria and evidence rules for comparable decisions.
- Document support and opportunity to practice, not only deficiencies.
- Review high-impact ratings and decisions for inconsistency, bias, conflict of interest, and protected-activity risk.

Data restraint

- Keep medical, accommodation, investigation, protected-trait, wage, complaint, and other confidential records in authorized systems.
- Use controlled IDs and minimum necessary information in GRV-M.
- Limit access, exports, and copies according to approved retention and privacy policy.

5. Role Clarity, Readiness, and the Role-Based Manager Ramp

Development begins by explaining what the manager is responsible for, what authority exists, what must be escalated, and how readiness will be proven.

READINESS RULE Potential earns a development opportunity. Evidence earns expanded authority.

Role charter

- Define purpose, decisions, required consultation, approvals, handoffs, reporting, prohibited actions, and escalation triggers.
- Distinguish management authority from technical skill and from work the manager merely performs during a busy shift.

Readiness assessment

- Use role knowledge, judgment, reliability, communication, coaching, accountability, and operating evidence.
- Do not treat tenure, confidence, friendship, schedule flexibility, or one crisis performance as complete readiness.
- Require a qualified review for selection or promotion decisions.

Role-based manager learning path

- Shift Leader: shift readiness, clear communication, deployment, basic guest recovery, handoff, and knowing when to escalate.
- Manager on Duty: full-shift control, labor and sales awareness, guest recovery, coaching, corrective follow-through, and manager-log continuity.
- Assistant GM: standards verification, training and competency follow-up, cross-functional closure, basic labor/food-cost review, and manager coaching.
- General Manager: business control, system installation, manager development, owner alignment, financial/operating review, and verified results.

6. Self-Awareness and Leadership Impact

Managers must learn how their tone, timing, pressure behavior, attention, and assumptions affect safety, trust, service, and employee judgment.

Intent and impact

- Ask what the manager intended, what people experienced, what evidence exists, and what the operation paid for the gap.
- Protect useful feedback from retaliation and avoid forcing employees to confront a manager directly.

Pressure response

- Name triggers, early physical and verbal signals, predictable reactions, and decision risks.
- Define a pause, safe words, temporary coverage, consultation, and repair path before the next pressure event.

Attention control

- Protect time for people, standards, verification, coaching, and follow-through.
- Delegate work with authority and checkpoints rather than keeping every task or abandoning ownership.

Reflection

- Capture one real event, evidence, impact, changed behavior, practice date, and verifier.
- Reflection without a changed action is not development evidence.

7. Decision Quality and Escalation

A strong manager slows the reasoning enough to separate facts from assumptions while still acting at the speed the situation requires.

JUDGMENT RULE A fast decision is not strong because it was fast. It is strong when the authority, evidence, risk, people impact, and next verification were controlled.

Decision record

- State the issue, deadline, authority, verified facts, assumptions, options, affected people, constraints, and source standards.
- Identify safety, legal, rights, continuity, financial, service, and staffing implications before material action.

Escalation test

- Escalate when authority is unclear, protected activity or confidential information is involved, serious harm is possible, sources conflict, or an irreversible action is proposed.
- Use the approved emergency route when immediate protection is required.

After-action review

- Compare the expected result with the observed result.
- Record unintended effects, missed evidence, quality of consultation, and the decision rule to reuse or change.

8. Listening, Direction, and One-on-Ones

Trust grows when managers understand before deciding, explain expectations clearly, and close commitments after the conversation.

COMMUNICATION RULE The message is not complete when the manager speaks. It is complete when the receiver can explain the outcome, standard, authority, support, and next step.

Active listening

- Ask for facts, meaning, need, urgency, prior attempts, and what the person wants the manager to understand.
- Restate the issue and ask whether the summary is accurate before offering a solution.
- Do not promise secrecy when reporting duties may apply.

Clear direction

- State the outcome, reason, standard, owner, authority, resources, constraints, due date, checkpoint, and evidence.
- Ask the receiver to explain the plan in their own words without using humiliation as a test.

One-on-ones

- Review priorities, obstacles, support, feedback in both directions, development interests, and commitments.
- Keep the conversation separate from gossip, diagnosis, favoritism, and informal investigation.
- Track manager commitments as carefully as employee commitments.

9. Difficult Conversations, Conflict, and Repair

Respect does not require avoidance. It requires specific evidence, honest questions, controlled authority, fair process, and a repair path.

Preparation

- Define the observed behavior or result, approved standard, impact, known limits, questions, support, authority, and qualified reviewer.
- Do not decide the person's motive before hearing their perspective.

Conversation

- Open with purpose and evidence, ask for the other perspective, clarify the standard, identify support, agree on the next action, and document only what belongs in the authorized record.
- Use interpreters, accessibility supports, representation, or other approved process when required.

Conflict

- Stabilize safety first, then separate facts, interpretations, interests, boundaries, and shared purpose.
- Do not force mediation where harassment, violence, retaliation, coercion, discrimination, or severe power imbalance requires formal handling.

Repair

- Name the impact, accept responsibility where appropriate, correct the record or behavior, restore the operating boundary, and monitor for recurrence or retaliation.

10. Observation, Coaching, and Feedback

Coaching develops capability when it is anchored in relevant evidence, open inquiry, real practice, support, and a scheduled verification.

COACHING RULE A conversation becomes coaching only when it produces a defined practice, support, evidence, and follow-up decision.

Observe

- Record specific behavior, context, standard, outcome, impact, source, and limitation.
- Avoid personality labels such as lazy, negative, not leadership material, or bad attitude without relevant observable evidence.

Coach

- Ask the manager to assess the event, name the desired behavior, select one practice, define support, and commit to evidence and a checkpoint.
- Use real work assignments with bounded risk rather than relying only on classroom discussion.

Give feedback

- Be timely, specific, respectful, proportionate, actionable, and clear about authority.
- Check understanding and emotional condition without demanding agreement or gratitude.
- Return to the commitment and verify change.

11. Accountability, Support, and Recognition

Accountability is the fair control of expectations, evidence, support, action, and follow-through. It is not anger, surprise, humiliation, or unequal enforcement.

FAIRNESS RULE Comparable behavior should meet comparable standards, evidence, support, and review. Differences must have a documented, legitimate reason.

Expectation and support

- Use an approved standard, specific result or behavior, relevant evidence, available resources, reasonable support, checkpoints, and qualified review.
- Do not create an unofficial corrective process that conflicts with policy or bypasses HR, labor, accommodation, leave, safety, or rights obligations.

Manager accountability

- Track whether the manager provided clear direction, resources, timely feedback, fair opportunity, and promised support.
- A failed employee result may also reveal a failed system, unclear standard, unrealistic capacity, or broken handoff.

Recognition

- Name the specific contribution, value, impact, and behavior worth repeating.
- Use fair access to recognition and respect privacy or cultural preferences.
- Do not reward unsafe shortcuts, off-the-clock work, silence, favoritism, or results achieved by harming the team.

12. Delegation, Pre-Shift Leadership, and Meetings

Managers develop when authority is transferred in controlled increments and operating forums end with owned decisions.

Delegation

- Define outcome, owner, authority, constraints, resources, checkpoints, evidence, and return conditions.
- Do not delegate protected employment decisions or unsafe authority to an unapproved role.
- Avoid both micromanagement and abandonment.

Pre-shift leadership

- Share current conditions, priorities, assignments, standards, risks, changes, support, and speak-up routes.
- Ask for questions and operational concerns; do not use the brief to shame individuals or discuss confidential matters.

Daily Manager Log

- Every manager reads the previous entry when starting a shift and adds one short, useful entry before leaving.
- Use it for shift-to-shift continuity only. It does not replace GRV-M22 Pre-Shift Leadership Brief, GRV-M25 structured handoff, or the record that owns a detailed issue.

Manager meetings

- Use current evidence, decide the issue, assign one owner and due date, define verification, and close prior commitments.
- Discussion without an owned action is not control.

13. Team Climate, Speak-Up, and Non-Retaliation

Managers must make it possible for workers to raise safety, service, workload, fairness, harassment, wage, and operating concerns through approved routes without retaliation.

SPEAK-UP RULE A reporting channel exists only when people can use it, receive a response, and remain protected afterward.

Climate evidence

- Review whether reporting routes are known, usable, accessible, timely, and trusted.
- Look for silence after prior concerns, inconsistent treatment, schedule or assignment changes, exclusion, hostility, or other potential retaliation signals.

Manager response

- Listen, thank the person for raising the issue, clarify immediate safety, explain limits of confidentiality, preserve evidence, and route the matter promptly.
- Do not interrogate witnesses, promise an outcome, coach away a complaint, or punish the manner of protected reporting without qualified review.

Close the loop

- Provide appropriate status information, correct operating conditions, protect against retaliation, and verify whether the route worked.
- Keep investigative and protected details in authorized systems.

14. Capability Scorecards, Bench Strength, and Succession

The scorecard should direct development and continuity decisions, not create false precision or automatic promotion.

SUCCESSION RULE The map identifies continuity risk and development work. It does not promise a role or replace the approved selection process.

Capability scorecard

- Use current observable evidence for role clarity, judgment, communication, coaching, accountability, and team leadership.
- Show evidence quality, practice frequency, trend, support, risk, and next review rather than a single unexplained rating.

Bench map

- Identify critical roles, vacancy exposure, interim coverage, potential successors by controlled ID, evidence status, gaps, and development moves.
- Restrict access and require qualified review before selection, promotion, pay, or other employment action.

Readiness language

- Not assessed
- Development candidate
- Developing
- Ready with support
- Ready for defined authority
- Qualified review required

15. Practice Experiments, Renewal, and 30/60-Day Installation

Manager development improves through bounded practice, evidence, learning, and renewal rather than one-time training attendance.

ADVANCE ONLY WHEN Role authority is clear, practice is observed, feedback is specific, support is available, protected concerns are routed correctly, and verification evidence exists.

Practice experiment

- State one behavior hypothesis, baseline, context, change, measure, safeguard, minimum evidence, owner, and dates.
- Choose adopt, revise, retest, or stop and record limitations.

30-Day Accelerated Path - control, practice, and verify

- Days 1-5 measure and define; Days 6-10 train and pilot; Days 11-20 execute and coach; Days 21-27 stress-test; Days 28-30 verify and decide.
- Start with one manager-development pressure, one accountable owner, and only 3-5 GRV-M tools.

60-Day Guided Path - differently sequenced, not doubled

- Days 1-10 learn and measure; Days 11-20 define and prepare; Days 21-30 train and practice; Day 30 midpoint gate; Days 31-46 guided execution; Days 47-54 stress-test; Days 55-60 verify and hold.
- Use the extra time for observation, coached repetition, support, and evidence - not for adding unnecessary forms.

Decision gate - verify readiness and renew

- Review evidence, close material gaps, and decide the next authority, support, or development step.
- Calendar rule: GRV-M installation may follow a 30- or 60-day path; an individual manager advances only when representative practice and evidence support the decision.

16. Complete Tool Directory

Tool	Area / owner / frequency
GRV-M01 Manager Role & Decision Rights Charter	Role Clarity & Readiness Owner: Owner/GM Frequency: At appointment; annual
GRV-M02 Manager Readiness & Evidence Assessment	Role Clarity & Readiness Owner: GM/People Owner Frequency: At selection; semiannual
GRV-M03 Role-Based Manager Learning & Ramp Plan	Role Clarity & Readiness Owner: GM/Manager Coach Frequency: At appointment
GRV-M04 Manager Standards & Conduct Commitment	Role Clarity & Readiness Owner: GM/People Owner Frequency: At appointment; annual
GRV-M05 Manager Development Agreement & Goals	Role Clarity & Readiness Owner: Manager/Coach Frequency: Quarterly
GRV-M06 Self-Awareness & Leadership Impact Review	Self-Management & Judgment Owner: Manager/Coach Frequency: Quarterly
GRV-M07 Trigger, Pressure & Response Plan	Self-Management & Judgment Owner: Manager Frequency: Quarterly; after event
GRV-M08 Decision Quality & Escalation Worksheet	Self-Management & Judgment Owner: Manager Frequency: Per material decision
GRV-M09 Time, Attention & Priority Control	Self-Management & Judgment Owner: Manager Frequency: Weekly
GRV-M10 Manager Learning & Reflection Log	Self-Management & Judgment Owner: Manager/Coach Frequency: Weekly
GRV-M11 One-on-One Meeting Guide	Communication & Trust Owner: Manager Frequency: Biweekly/monthly
GRV-M12 Active Listening & Understanding Check	Communication & Trust Owner: Manager Frequency: Per significant conversation
GRV-M13 Clear Direction & Expectation Planner	Communication & Trust Owner: Manager Frequency: Per assignment/change

Tool	Area / owner / frequency
GRV-M14 Difficult Conversation Preparation	Communication & Trust Owner: Manager/People Owner Frequency: Per conversation
GRV-M15 Conflict Navigation & Repair Plan	Communication & Trust Owner: Manager/GM Frequency: Per conflict
GRV-M16 Observation & Evidence Record	Coaching & Accountability Owner: Manager Frequency: Per observation
GRV-M17 Coaching Conversation Planner	Coaching & Accountability Owner: Manager/Coach Frequency: Per coaching cycle
GRV-M18 Feedback Quality & Follow-Through Review	Coaching & Accountability Owner: Manager/Coach Frequency: Monthly
GRV-M19 Performance Expectation & Support Plan	Coaching & Accountability Owner: Manager/People Owner Frequency: Per approved need
GRV-M20 Recognition & Reinforcement Planner	Coaching & Accountability Owner: Manager Frequency: Weekly/monthly
GRV-M21 Delegation & Decision Handoff	Team Leadership & Operating Rhythm Owner: Manager Frequency: Per delegation
GRV-M22 Pre-Shift Leadership Brief	Team Leadership & Operating Rhythm Owner: Shift Manager Frequency: Each shift
GRV-M23 Manager Meeting & Decision Record	Team Leadership & Operating Rhythm Owner: GM/Chair Frequency: Weekly
GRV-M24 Team Climate & Speak-Up Review	Team Leadership & Operating Rhythm Owner: GM/People Owner Frequency: Monthly/quarterly
GRV-M25 Cross-Functional Handoff & Alignment Plan	Team Leadership & Operating Rhythm Owner: GM/Manager Frequency: Per recurring handoff
GRV-M26 Weekly Manager Development Review	Bench Strength & Renewal Owner: GM/Manager Coach Frequency: Weekly
GRV-M27 Manager Capability Scorecard	Bench Strength & Renewal Owner: GM/People Owner Frequency: Monthly/quarterly

Tool	Area / owner / frequency
GRV-M28 Successor & Bench Strength Map	Bench Strength & Renewal Owner: Owner/GM Frequency: Quarterly
GRV-M29 Manager Practice Experiment & Learning Log	Bench Strength & Renewal Owner: Manager/Coach Frequency: Per experiment
GRV-M30 Annual Manager Development Renewal & 180-Day Roadmap	Bench Strength & Renewal Owner: Owner/GM Frequency: Annual

17. Official Source and Compliance References

These primary sources support the system's general competency, development, performance, worker-participation, anti-harassment, anti-retaliation, labor-rights, work-hours, and workplace well-being guardrails. Requirements change. Use GRV-I to monitor authority and obtain qualified review for actual employment decisions.

Reference	Official URL
U.S. OPM - Supervisory Guide	https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/general-schedule-qualification-standards/specialty-areas/supervisory-guide/
U.S. OPM - Effective Learning Interventions for Developing ECQs	https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/leadership-development/effective-learning-interventions-for-developing-ecqs.pdf
U.S. OPM - Performance Management Toolkit	https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/performance-management/performance-management-toolkit/
U.S. OPM - Career Development and Individual Development Plans	https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/career-development/
EEOC - Harassment	https://www.eeoc.gov/harassment
EEOC - Retaliation and Related Issues	https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/guidance/enforcement-guidance-retaliation-and-related-issues
EEOC - Performance Evaluations for Small Businesses	https://www.eeoc.gov/employers/small-business/5-im-conducting-performance-evaluations

Reference	Official URL
EEOC - Employer Harassment Reporting and Investigation Checklists	https://www.eeoc.gov/checklists-employers-1
NLRB - Concerted Activity	https://www.nlr.gov/about-nlr/rights-we-protect/the-law/employees/concerted-activity
NLRB - Weingarten Rights	https://www.nlr.gov/about-nlr/rights-we-protect/your-rights/weingarten-rights
OSHA - Worker Participation	https://www.osha.gov/safety-management/worker-participation
OSHA - Worker Rights and Protections	https://www.osha.gov/workers
HHS Surgeon General - Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being	https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/workplace-well-being/index.html
CDC/NIOSH - Healthy Work Design and Well-Being	https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/research-programs/portfolio/hwd.html
CDC/NIOSH - Supportive Leaders	https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blogs/2021/supportive-leaders.html
U.S. DOL - Restaurant Manager Exemption Status	https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/compliance-assistance/determining-exemption-status-managers-restaurant
U.S. DOL - Fact Sheet 22, Hours Worked	https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/22-flsa-hours-worked
U.S. DOL - Fact Sheet 21, Recordkeeping	https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/21-flsa-recordkeeping
FINAL OPERATING STANDARD Clarify the authority, protect the person, use relevant evidence, practice the behavior, support the correction, verify the result, and expand responsibility only when readiness is real.	