

## **Second Year BSc HS (2019 Pattern) Third Semester**

### **HS 303 Accommodations Operations I**

#### **Section II Front Office**

#### **Chapter 5**

#### **Situation Handling**

#### **Course Outcomes**

- C1. Establish the importance of Rooms Division Principles within the hospitality Industry
- C2. Learn basic skills and knowledge necessary to successfully identify the required standards in this area
- C3. Understand all aspects of cost control and establishing profitability

#### **Learning Objectives**

- **To understand the various reasons for complaints**
- **To understand the different types of complaints**

#### **Complaints**

The front office is concerned with the selling of a hotel's facilities and services to different types of guest.

Even in the best run and best organized hotels things go wrong and due to its high visibility, the guests usually approach the front office desk to raise their problems and air their feeling.

- Those created by the hotel itself and those created by external factors outside the control of the hotel.
- On an average, most hotel staff do not enjoy a guest with complaints.
- But they must realize that guests who are buying service are bound to be annoyed if any service rendered by the hotel is not up to their expectations.
- Every Guest would want a product worth the money they are paying.
- If a guest feels IGNORED while lodging a complaint it would complicate the issue on hand.
- A guest who does not get an opportunity to complaint or feels that the complaint was not handed well can cause negative reputation to the hotel, and sometimes worse if the guest approaches print media.

- Hence, when guest find it easy to express their opinions both the hotel and guest stand to benefit.

## **Categories of Complaints**

### **Mechanical Complaints**

These complaints usually concern problems with climate control of the air conditioner, lighting, electricity, room furnishings, ice machines, vending machine, door keys, plumbing, television sets, and elevators and so on.

Even an excellent preventive maintenance program cannot eliminate all potential programs. Sometimes, the speed of response to these problems can be the real cause

It is essential to have good tracking method to ensure timely service. Effective use of logbooks and maintenance work orders may help to reduce the frequency of mechanical complaints.

### **Attitudinal**

Guests when feel insulted by rude or tackles staff members would make attitudinal complaints.

The possibility of a guest overhearing staff conversation or arguments may lead to guest involvement, expressing attitudinal complaint later.

It's the managers or supervisor's and not guest who look into staff grievances. Guests must should not become the voice over for your staff members.

This is a critical aspect in maintaining solid guest relation.

In fact hotel staff must make a conscious effort to avoid discussing personal or departmental issued in the pressure of any guest

### **Service-related complaints**

These can be wide ranging, about things like long waiting time for service, lack of assistance with luggage, untidy rooms, missed wake-up-calls, ill-prepared food or requests for addition guest supplies being ignored.

These types of complaints are usually received at the front desk. When the hotel is operating on a near full or full occupancy.

### **Unusual Complaints**

Hotel staffs have little or no control over these types of complaints.

Absence of a swimming pool, lack of public transport infrastructure, bad weather, etc. can be a few examples of these complaints.

Though the hotel staff may have no control cover these complaints they should give a patient hearing to the guests and empathize.

The management must give their staff proper orientation in dealing with such complaints, in anticipation.

**Some reasons that may cause inconvenience to the guest**

Cause of problem	Example
<b>Guest unfamiliar with hotel policies</b>	<p>A guest arrives early in the morning and is told that the room will not be ready until mid-day.</p> <p>The guest arrives at the front desk only to find that their room has been re-lent because they did not guarantee the booking and it was on a 6 pm release.</p>
<b>Guest unfamiliar with terminology</b>	<p>A guest books a room and expects a double bed, not two single beds.</p>
<b>Hotel is fully booked</b>	<p>The guest does not believe the front desk associate who tells him that the hotel is fully booked.</p>
<b>Impolite front desk staff</b>	<p>The guest is ignored on arrival at the front desk.</p> <p>A guest telephones a hotel and is kept on hold for a long period of time.</p>
<b>Errors made by the hotel</b>	<p>A guest books a twin room and is given a double room.</p> <p>The guest is overcharged.</p> <p>A guest does not receive a requested wake-up call/ early morning call.</p>
<b>External</b>	<p>The guest's luggage is lost by an airline.</p> <p>A guest is expecting a visible that has not arrived.</p> <p>A guest had mislaid their safe deposit key.</p>

## Ten ways to handle guest complaints

Front office management and staff should keep the following resolution guidelines in mind when handling guest complaints. The main steps in handling the guest complaints are Listen → Empathise → Apologise → Take action → Follow up.

When expressing a complaint, the guest may be quite angry. Front office staff members should not make promises that exceed their authority.

Honesty is the best policy when dealing with guest complaints. If a problem cannot be solved, front office staff should admit this to the guest early on.

Front office staff should be advised that some guests complain as part of their nature. The staff should develop an approach for dealing with such guests.

1. Listen with concern and empathy.
2. Isolate the guest if possible, so that other guests won't overhear.
3. Stay calm. Don't argue with the guest.
4. Be aware of the guest's self-esteem. Show a personal interest in the problem, Try to use the guest name frequently.
5. Give the guest your undivided attention. Concentrate on the problem, no on placing blame. Do NOT Insult the guest.
6. Writing down the key facts saves time if someone else must get involved. Also, Guest tends to slow down when they see the front desk agent trying to write down the issue.
7. Tell the guest what can be the best done. Offer choices. Don't promise the impossible, and don't exceed your authority.
8. Set an approximate time for completion of corrective actions. Be specific, but do not underestimate the amount of time it will take to resolve the problem.
9. Monitor the progress of the corrective action.
10. Even if the complaint was resolved by someone else, contact the guest to ensure that the problem was resolved satisfactorily

## Handling Emergency Situations in the hotels.

- 1) Bomb Threat emergency situation.
- 2) Fire Threat emergency situation.
- 3) Death of an In-house Guests in the hotel.
- 4) Accident emergency situation.
- 5) Lost and Found.
- 6) Theft emergency situation.
- 7) Illness and Epidemics emergency situation.
- 8) Vandalism.
- 9) Damage to property by the guest.
- 10) Handling drunken guest.

There are different types of emergency situations encountered in hotels during the day to day operations and functioning of the hotel. These unforeseen emergency situations which can come across anytime without any notice and the hotel staffs should be well trained to identify such emergency situation and to be able to act quickly on them.

The various types of emergency situations encountered in hotels are as explained under:

### 1. Bomb Threat Emergency Situation:

In case of any call received regarding the bomb threat, the hotel should tie-up with the local police authority and follow their instructions. The person who receives the call should take complete details of the situation and should even try to note down the voice and accent of the

person calling regarding a bomb threat. Immediately the hotel should inform the anti-bomb squad and should defuse the bomb after locating the place where it is planted.

Signal the colleague to also listen in the call and try to find out the location through the exchange. Listen to the caller carefully and make it prolong and get all the information carefully like the place where planted, time of explosion and strength of explosives.

If possible this call may be taped and note the back noise and try to catch information from accent and police to be informed. Immediately after disconnection, the G M and security officer has to be informed. If the location is identified the department head should be also informed People from that suspected area have to be evacuated from that particular location. After “all clear” signal from the police, the normal process of the hotel can be continued.

## 2. Fire Threat Emergency Situation:

Fire is the most common emergency situation which could [break](#) in the hotel at any point in time. The most probable reason for a fire break in the hotels can be a kitchen or faulty wirings in the hotel. The concerned staff should be immediately informed and fire [brigade](#) should be informed immediately.

Do not panic, If the hotel staff is well versed with the fire fighting equipment then immediately fire extinguisher should be used. The supply of electricity and gas should be immediately turned off whenever any news regarding fire comes to the hotel.

## 3. Death of an In-House Guest in the Hotel:

Whenever information comes regarding the death of an in-house guest the [Front Office](#) Manager should be reported directly who informs the General Manager and the Security Manager. Later on, the police authority is even told and the hotel doctor is summoned to confirm the death of the guest.

The residential address of the guests is also identified and the relatives are informed. Once the doctor has confirmed the death and the police has given the permission the dead body is removed by the help of a stretcher. In the meanwhile, if the deceased guest was under some other doctor consultation then that doctor is also enquired.

A death certificate is also prepared and a report is prepared to mention the time, room number and other details related to the deceased guest. The guest room is locked and sealed and after the permission and clearance of police the room is opened and spring cleaned and can be resold again after the approval of the local authority.

## 4. Accident Emergency Situation:

Accidents can take place in the hotels at any point of time due to faulty stairs, ramps, and balconies and even due to the parking places. The hotels should ensure that handrails, the non-slip surface should be used while framing the architecture plan for the hotels.

### 3. Lost and found:

This is a term used in hotel parlance to refer to any item which is left by the guest or temporarily misplaced by the guest but traced later by the hotel staff. Such articles to be handed over to the housekeeping department which maintained a special locker for this purpose.

If the item belongs to the guest who has already checked out, then a letter has to be sent to the forwarding address left by the guest while checkout or which is there in the registration card. If no reply is received by the hotel within a certain time limit, that may be auctioned to the hotel employees or take a decision as per the hotel policies and rules.

### 6. Theft Emergency Situation:

The front d

esk is having cash with them so there is also the possibility of theft. Also, there are belongings of in-house guest. To discourage theft, the front office should inform the guest to deposit their valuables in the safety deposit locker.

#### 7. Illness and Epidemics Emergency Situation:

There should always be a Doctor on call available for the hotel so that in case if any guest suffers from any kind of problem, he /she can be given the concern treatment as soon as possible.

#### 8. Vandalism:

The front office staff must call the hotel security and order the main door to be locked. If the situation gets out of the hand then the security manager should call the police immediately.

#### 9. Damage to property by the resident guest:

The front office cashier is instructed to raise a charge for the value of the damages to property, a responsible guest will never argue but if he does the subject to be referred to the general manager.

#### 10. Handling Drunken Guest:

A drunken guest may disturb another guest. In order to avoid this, the drunken guest should be escorted to an isolated area like a back office. Hotel staff should calmly handle the situation by following the SOP for Handling drunken guests.

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