DURING THE STAY ACTIVITY

LUGGAGE HANDLING

Luggage handling of the guest is done at various occasions such as arrival, during stay (change of room) and at the time of departure. At the time of arrival when the luggage of the guest is moved from car/taxi to the lobby and further to the allotted room, the activity is called “up bell activity”. When the luggage of the guest is moved from room to lobby and further to the car/taxi at the time of departure the activity is called “down bell activity”.

Temporary storage of luggage: A baggage is collected from the room on request. A left luggage register is maintained by the bell team. Similarly a tag is attached whose counterfoil is handed over to the guest as well, which contains the entire details of the left luggage.

LEFT LUGGAGE REGISTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Room No.</th>
<th>Name of Guest</th>
<th>Bell Boy No.</th>
<th>Luggage Tag No.</th>
<th>Description of Luggage</th>
<th>Date of Delivery</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

HOTEL XYZ LTD.
ROOM NO. 1234

NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR GOODS LEFT OVER 30 DAYS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUIT CASE</th>
<th>BRIEF CASE</th>
<th>SUIT BOX</th>
<th>GOLF BAGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UMBRELLA</td>
<td>OVERCOAT</td>
<td>PACKAGE</td>
<td>OTHERS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR GOODS LEFT OVER 30 DAYS

DATE: 1234
ROOM NO: 1234

PAGING

Apart from luggage handling the bell desk is also responsible for paging a guest. The paging is a system of locating the guest in the hotel. Many times the in-house guest expects a phone call or a visitor but decides not to wait in the room, and might decide to go to a public area such as bar, restaurant, swimming pool, lobby or lounge etc. of the hotel or may go out of the hotel. In such cases the hotel requests the guest to tell about his whereabouts through a location form. This proforma may be kept in the stationary older in the room or at the information section of the lobby.

The completed location form is kept in the key and mail racks. This information is sent to telephone department also (the guest may directly inform or the front desk may do so). The purpose of the form is to earmark the area of paging and save time. In case of computer system the information is recorded in computer instead of location forms. In hotels different systems of paging are used.
This information may be filled by the guest or he/she may ask the hotel to fill it on his/her instructions.

Three methods of paging are:

1) Page board system
2) Pager/beeper system
3) Public Address system

**WAKE UP CALLS**

In some hotels, the wakeup call to groups and crews is coordinated by bell desk.

**MAIL HANDLING**

The term mail handling covers both incoming and outgoing mail.

**INCOMING MAILS**

As per the policy of the hotel, the incoming mails may be received by the bell desk or the informationist.

Incoming mails can be divided into:

1) Mails for the guest
2) Mails for the staff
3) Mails for the management

**OUTGOING MAILS**

The outgoing mails can be of two types:

1) In house guest Mail 2) Mail of hotel staff and management.

1) Inhouse Guest Mail:

In case a guest wishes to send a mail or package through front office then normally this is done by the bell captain who weighs it, put appropriate value postage stamp on it and post it on behalf of the guest. A (visitors paid out) voucher is made for the same and guest sign is obtained on it and then finally posted in guest folio or room account. To keep a record of all the postage used in the hotel they used postage book. Franking machine for stamping the envelope can also be used by the hotel.

2) Hotel Staff mail & Concerning Management:

The hotel staff is usually not encouraged to send mail through hotel. But an official mail can be sent by the particular department maintaining all necessary records.
Mails for the guest can be further divided in the following heads:

(i) **In-house guest mail handling**: In case the key of the room of the in-house guest is in the pigeon hole (which means the guest is not in the room), the in-house guest mail is put in the key and mail rack and is delivered to him along with his room key when he comes to the counter. In case he is in the room, he is intimated about his mail and if he so desires a bellboy takes his mail to his room. Before entering he knocks at the door and enters only when allowed. Sometimes the guest may go out of his room without leaving the key on the counter. In such cases a mail advise slip is put on the key knob of door so that if he goes to room directly he would know about the mail which the hotel has received in his absence. These days hotels use message light on the telephone or on the door and also computers are used for this purpose in some hotels.

(ii) **Checked-out guest**: The mail of the checked-out guest is checked with the forwarding instruction and mail is forwarded according to the instructions left by the check-out guest and appropriate entries are made on the mail forwarding address slip.

(iii) **Awaited arrivals**: Mail of such guests is marked with the date of arrival and kept in the ‘hold mail’ rack. This information is then marked on advance reservation slip/movement list or is fed in computer. On the night before the arrival date the expected arrival guest mail, along with the reservation record is sent to the front desk. When the guest arrives the mail is handed over to him at the time of registration. The awaited mail is retained for a period of one month only. After the expiry of that date it is sent back to the sender. At times the hotel may also receive registered/recorded mail such as letters, packages and parcels etc. for the guest. Since there is a record maintained by the hotel of all such mails at the time of receiving, it is important that it should be delivered urgently to the guest and acknowledgment taken.

2. **Mail for the hotel and mail concerning the hotel** is again classified into two heads, (i) Mail for staff, (ii) Mail concerning management of the hotel and senior staff.

   (i) **Mail for the junior staff** is sent to the time office where the staff coming on duty or going off duty is delivered the mail.

   (ii) **Mail for hotel’s senior staff** is sent to their office through bellboys. Mail concerning the various departments of the hotel such as accounts, personnel, food and beverages, reservations, etc. is sent to the concerned departments.
Receiving messages for in-house guests in their absence, recording them and communicating them to the guests as soon as possible is an important function of the front desk staff. The efficiency and professionalism of the hotel and the attitude of the staff is reflected by the way this function is carried out by the staff. The need for receiving message for the in-house guest is when the guest is not in the room. Usually when a guest goes out of his room he would leave his room key at the counter where the information clerk would put it in appropriate room numbers pigeon holes. Sometimes the guest may leave his whereabouts at the reception counter through a yellow card also called as a locator/location form/whereabouts card.

If a visitor comes to meet the guest and the guest is not in the hotel; moreover his whereabouts is also not known to hotel then the front desk staff takes down the message in a message slip which is further handed over to guest, same method is followed when the message is received by telephone. This message slip is in triplicate form.

**COMPLAINT HANDLING**

1) **MECHANICAL COMPLAINTS**- Complaints relating to hotel equipments malfunctioning. For E.g. A/C not working/TV picture not clear etc.

2) **ATTITUDE COMPLAINTS**- Guest may complaint about the rude behaviour of the hotel staff.

3) **SERVICE RELATED COMPLAINTS**- Guest may make such complaints when they experience a problem with service. For e.g. untidy rooms, missed wake up calls, cold or ill prepared food, etc.

4) **UNUSUAL COMPLAINTS**- Guest may also complain about the bad weather, lack of public transportation. Hotel has little or no control over the circumstances surrounding such complaints.

**STEPS FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS**

1) **Identifying complaints:** The most frequent guest complaint can be identified by:
   - Front desk log book
   - Comments card
   - Mailing to guest after departure
   - Taking feedback while interacting questionnaire

2) **Handling Complaints:**
   Guidelines or handling complaints:
1) LISTEN CAREFULLY- If you are in a doubt about the specific problem o the guest, then do not guess his problem but clarify it by asking and understand the nature of the problem.

2) THINK WHAT THE GUEST WANTS- When a guest complaints he might tell so many things to you therefore you should try to get important message from the guest and find out the real cause.

3) ACT IMMEDIATELY- Take immediate action and do something in front of guest so that he feels that care has been taken in his case.

4) FOLLOW UP- Merely taking an action is not sufficient so follow up action with other departments is necessary.

5) NO FALSE PROMISE- It is very dangerous to make false promise, if you can’t carry out, than do not promise otherwise you may lose not one guest but many.

6) ASK SENIORS- If you feel you can’t solve the problem ask your seniors to help you.

FOLLOW UP PROCEDURE
Management may use the front desk log book to initiate corrective action, verify that complaints have been solved and identified recurring problems. These comprehensive written records may also enable management to contact guest who are still dissatisfied at check out. A letter from FO manager expressing regret about the incident is usually sufficient to promote goodwill and demonstrate concern for guest satisfaction. Some managers may telephone checked out guests to get a more complete picture of the incident depending on its significant.

SAFE DEPOSIT FACILITY
When guest makes request of depositing the valuables or cash, cashier puts them in envelope and seals it. Then it is put in safe box. The guest is given the receipt of the same. When guest wants it, he gives it to cashier, signs register and cashier return it back to the guest.

In large hotels double custody safe deposit lockers are installed in room right behind cash counter.

KEY IN HOTELS
A control system by which it is ensured that room keys are always at proper place i.e. if the room is occupied then the key would be with the guest or in pigeon hole or key rack.

A lack in key control system may result in loss of revenue and may also increase the chances of mishapening in the hotel.

**Hard Key System (metallic keys)**

In this system the key fits into a keyhole in a lock; preset tumblers inside the lock are turned by designated keys. The system is less expensive at the time of initial purchase. Often the guest forgets to return the key at the time of departure and hence guest security may be jeopardized. Regular maintenance and rekeying of lock tumblers are important as necessary part of preventive maintenance plan.

To provide safety, hotels usually don’t put the name of the hotel on the key. In some cases the keys are not numbered numerically but are marked alphabetically. For example, the word ‘PROFITABLE’ is used where each alphabet of this word represents numerals starting from 0 to 9 respectively. For example, room no. 228 will be represented by ‘RRB’ and so on.

**Process of Key Control**

The process of key control in case of hard keys is done by receptionist who prepares a key control sheet at around midnight through night receptionist report which contain details such as room which is vacant, occupied etc.

The keys of vacant room should be at the key and mail rack in the appropriate pigeon hole and if it is not there and also if the bill is settled, then ‘departure’ is shown in the various registers as per bills and housekeeping.

The missing keys of the vacant rooms are tried to be located which could be with housekeeping or bell desk. It is checked, and if not found, is entered in the report.

Details of missing keys list is made. It could be that the guest did a self departure and mistakenly took away the key. Such room numbers are noted. Name of the guest, his check out date and time is also noted. His address is taken from the registration card.

This discrepancy report is sent to the front office manager the next morning who investigates and corrects the discrepancy.

If any key is missing it could be because of the following reasons:

Those rooms whose keys are in the rack but occupied: It could be that the guest might have had a night-out. Hence these rooms are checked and if luggage is there it means the guest is in. If luggage is not there then the bill of that room number is checked with cash counter.