

## STAFF ADMINISTRATION


### Introduction

Alleged favouritism or abuse of power in staff administration, such as staff recruitment, performance appraisal, posting arrangement and staff promotions, leave arrangements, allocation of duties and monitoring of overtime work etc., are often the subjects of corruption complaints. To prevent any perceived malpractice, hotels should have a transparent and equitable system in dealing with staff matters. There should also be procedures to detect and deter abuse of power, favouritism, or other manipulation such as falsification of attendance records and overtime claims.

### Staff Recruitment

To avoid any allegation of impropriety, it is important for the hotel management to ensure that recruitment of staff, including placement of trainees and internship, is conducted in an open and equitable manner. The following are measures recommended:

- The hotel should have a **company policy** for the recruitment and training of staff for specified purposes, e.g. the programme for recruitment of trainees, a system for training that successful candidates should undergo before they become qualified staff members.
- Recruitment exercises should be announced and **open** to all for application.
- The minimum qualifications, remuneration package, deadline for applications etc. should be **announced**.
- Recruitment exercises should be conducted by **a selection panel** where appropriate, comprising managerial staff from the hotel and administration staff from the head office.



### Employment of Temporary or Relief Staff

- The staff involved in the recruitment exercise, including any panel members should be required to **declare conflict of interest**. Any staff member who has declared a conflict should not be allowed to participate or make decisions in the recruitment exercise.
- The **selection criteria** should be pre-determined.
- Candidates should be **notified of the result** as soon as possible.

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Hotels may need to hire temporary or relief staff (e.g. waiters for banquet events) to cater for unforeseen shortfall in manpower. To minimize the risk of manipulation (e.g. overstating the number of relief staff required or bypassing the recruitment procedures), the following measures are recommended:

- The hotel management should **issue guidelines** on the circumstances under which temporary or relief staff may be employed and designate a managerial staff member at the appropriate level to approve the request for additional resources and the rates payable.
- **Payroll records** (e.g. personal particulars of staff, wages and allowances) should be kept at the accounting department for control purposes.
- To ensure actual attendance, the temporary staff should be required to **report duty to a designated officer/department** (e.g. the hotel's Administration Office) before they present themselves at the service unit for work.
- **Attendance records of individual staff members** should be kept and certified by their immediate supervisors and **payment** by **auto-pay/cheque** should be made direct to the temporary staff.

## Staff Attendance and Overtime Work

- Where regular demand for temporary staff is anticipated, the hotel management should have a **pool of suitable candidates** recruited through proper procedures and allocate work to them on a fair share basis.

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Another area of concern in hotel management is control of staff attendance and overtime work because hotel staff are often required to work outside normal office hours. Hotels should have an effective monitoring system to detect and deter forging of attendance records and false claims of overtime payment because such malpractice could involve corruption if it is connived at by compromised supervisors.

The following safeguards are recommended:

- An automated staff **attendance recording system** should be installed, preferably by electronic means.
- **Supervisory checks** should be conducted to verify staff attendance, particularly during the overtime hours. Supervisors should be required to report any irregularities to the management.
- **Overtime work** should be **estimated, justified, and approved** by managerial staff at the appropriate level. The overtime hours of work which often mean extra pay to the staff should be allocated in an equitable manner and properly recorded.
- **Output or work done** should be monitored.

## Allocation of Duties

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As some of the hotel services are provided round the clock, staff are often required to work in shifts. To avoid allegations of favouritism in the allocation of shift duties, the managerial staff should ensure that there is **a fair and transparent system** for the allocation of duties. For this purpose, there should be a properly administered **staff rotation system**.



## Managing Staff Performance

Staff appraisal is a management tool to assess the performance of individual staff for consideration of continued employment, promotion or granting of increments. As staff appraisal could easily give rise to complaints of favouritism or unfairness, hotels should have in place a transparent and objective performance appraisal system.

The following are the pre-requisites of a transparent and objective appraisal system:

- The **core competence** of each grade or rank should be pre-determined and made known to all the staff.
- **Standard appraisal report formats** should be drawn up for use.
- The appraisal report should be made by the immediate supervisor and **counter-signed** by the line manager and unit/department head.
- The appraisal report with all the comments made by the appraising and counter-signing supervisors should be **shown to the staff** member concerned.

## Staff Promotion, Posting and Salary Adjustment / Bonus Payment

Promotion, posting and salary adjustment/bonus payment often give rise to allegations of unfairness and favouritism. The hotel management should ensure that there is a fair system and a due process to determine these matters. The following safeguards are recommended:

- **Criteria** for promotion and salary adjustments/bonus payments should be clearly defined and made known to all staff.

## Handling of Staff Complaints

- Some hotels may engage an outside professional body to conduct an independent evaluation of the hotel's operations and performance. When considering a staff members' eligibility for promotion, salary advancement, bonus payment etc., the hotel management could evaluate the staff concerned against such objective **benchmarks**.
- To enhance objectivity, there should be **a panel** to determine or recommend promotions, payment adjustments, bonus payments etc.

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Complaints from staff could be an indicator of the problems in a company calling for management action. Hotels, like any well managed organization, should provide a channel for complaints from staff and ensure that all complaints received are properly handled.

The following are points to note when handling staff complaints:

- The **channels** for complaints should be made known to all staff.
- Staff complaints should be received by a designated staff member representing the management and handled in **strict confidence**.
- All complaints should first be brought to the attention of the senior management who should designate a managerial staff member to conduct an **independent** inquiry into each complaint with a view to recommending follow up action.
- All complaints and follow up action taken should be properly **recorded**.
- A summary of complaints should be prepared for **management information** on a regular basis