

Security

OPENING DILEMMA

The general manager has been considering establishing an in-house security department. Security at the hotel has been outsourced in the past five years with minimal concern. However, with the recent media emphasis on the safety of both guests and employees, the general manager thinks it is time to prepare a plan of action to investigate the possibility of an in-house security department.

The act of delivering hospitality is thought to occur naturally. However, throughout this text, delivering hospitality is discussed as a planned concept, complete with research on guests' needs, policy and program development, establishment and delivery of training programs, and follow-up information systems. Hospitality also includes providing a safe environment for guests, which requires a well-organized department to oversee and implement safety programs. The security department of a hotel is vital to delivering hospitality to guests. This department is responsible for establishing the details of the following systems:

- Guest and employee safety
- Room key security
- Fire safety systems
- Bomb threat action
- Emergency evacuation plans
- Employee safety training plans
- Emergency communication plans

CHAPTER FOCUS POINTS

- Importance of a security department to effective front office management
- Organization of a security department
- In-house security department versus contracted security services
- Hotel law
- Room key security system
- Fire safety
- Emergency communication procedures
- Employee safety programs

These operational procedures are never really appreciated until a crime occurs or a disaster strikes a hotel. They are assumed to be in place but somehow take second place to accommodating guests' more immediate needs and meeting the financial objectives of the organization. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in New York City and Washington, D.C., have affected security concerns like no other situation. Rebecca Oliva reports the following.

[A] recent survey of hoteliers found that one in three hoteliers fear for the safety of their properties. Even more shocking was the fact that nearly 50% of respondents admitted they had not increased investments in security—more than a year after 9/11. The security survey was conducted by *Hotel Asia Pacific* magazine and Pertlink, hospitality technology consultants.

Even so, many hotels are working to make their properties more secure in other ways—installing state-of-the-art camera surveillance systems in public spaces and conducting more staff security briefings. Properties have hired extra security guards, created security desks and are asking guests for identification cards. Results of these processes are twofold: they create an awareness of security issues among staff; and they tell guests that the hotel is concerned about their safety and security.¹

National, state, and local safety codes and ordinances require the hotelier to provide a safe environment for guests. This chapter discusses safety awareness as it relates to the front office manager's job and how the front office helps provide this essential service to guests.

Importance of a Security Department

The front office is a hotel's communication center; it is the vital link between the hotel management and the guest. When a guest calls for assistance because of fire, illness, theft, or any other emergency, it is usually the front office that must respond. The staff on duty at the front office cannot leave and resolve the emergency because they must continue to provide communication services and process financial transactions. The security department staff must react with speed and efficiency to serve the guest.

The security department is often regarded as a passive department, acting only when called on. In reality, it is an active department, setting policies, organizing programs, and delivering training programs to promote guest and employee safety. The director of security is a trained professional who must ensure that a busy hotel filled with guests, employees, and equipment stays safe. One of the department's goals is to *prevent* emergencies through planning. Another goal, however, is to train all hotel employees to respond to emergencies.

The importance of security to a hotel is emphasized in the following *Hotel Security Report* article by Patrick M. Murphy, CPP, director of loss prevention services at Marriott International, Inc., Washington, D.C., who reports on Marriott International's

adoption of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in its chain of 1,900 owned and managed properties worldwide:

CPTED is part of a total security package. It can include anything and everything from the presence of security or loss prevention officers at a property to plans for protecting the interior, lobby, and guestrooms; exterior and parking area; and the surrounding neighborhood. Its goal is to keep the criminals from breaking into any area of the property; it accomplishes this by subtly making the environment uncomfortable for them.

The hotel priority areas in CPTED include the following.

- Building entrances—When reviewing a property we look to see that all entrances are inviting, brightly lit with no obstructing shrubbery. At night, side entrances should be restricted by use of card readers so that non-registered guests must pass through the lobby and past the main check-in desk.
- Hotel lobbies—They should be designed to be visually open, with minimal blind spots for front desk employees. Lobbies also should be designed so that persons walking through the front door must pass the front desk to reach the guestroom corridors or elevators.
- Guestrooms—These [electronic locking systems] create an environment where keys are automatically changed when a new guest checks in; locks also can be interrogated to determine the last person to enter the room.
- Guest amenities—Marriott designs its new properties with glass doors and walls to allow for maximum witness potential when providing swimming pools, exercise rooms, vending areas, and laundry facilities. Adding house phones in these areas makes it possible for guests to call for help if they feel uncomfortable or threatened by anyone.
- Exterior of the property—CPTED principles call for bright lighting at walkways and entrances. Traffic should be directed to the front of the hotel property to make would-be criminals as visible as possible. Entrances to the hotel grounds should be limited. Landscaping, such as hedges and shrubbery, can also create aesthetically pleasing barriers to promote the desired traffic and pedestrian flow.
- Parking—The preferred lighting is metal halide. High-pressure sodium should be avoided because it casts a harsh yellow light. The optimal parking lot or garage has one entrance and exit with well-marked routes of travel for both cars and pedestrians. Garages need to be as open as possible, encouraging clear lines of sight. Elevators and stairwells that lead from the garage into the hotel should terminate at the lobby level, where a transfer of elevators or a different set of stairs should be required to reach guestroom floors. Other CPTED features in the garage should include CCTV (closed-circuit television) cameras, installation of emergency call boxes, and painting the walls white to increase the luminosity of light fixtures while creating an atmosphere that is appealing to the eye.²

In today's **litigious society**, an environment in which consumers sue providers of products and services for not delivering those products and services according to expected operating standards, it is important to maintain a well-organized security department. The cost of a human life lost because of negligence or the financial loss due to a fire far outweighs the expense incurred in operating a security department.

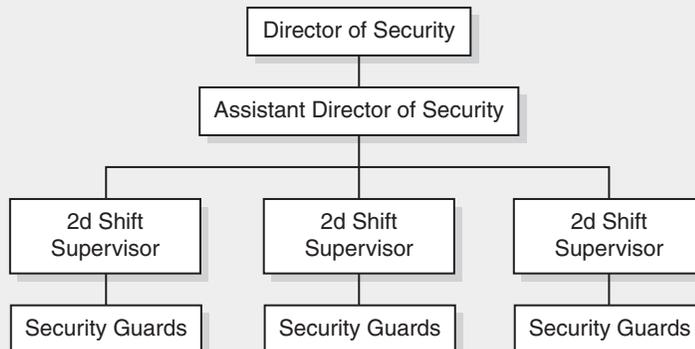
The following case illustrates the expense that can result from security breaches:

Perhaps the most significant [of high-visibility hotel crimes] was the 1974 rape of singer/actress Connie Francis in a Westbury, N.Y., hotel, which resulted in a much-publicized trial culminating in a multimillion-dollar verdict against the hotel. The case is still considered the industry's "wake-up call" in terms of legal liability.³

Organization of a Security Department

The security department of a hotel is organized like any other department. At the head of the department is the director of security, who is responsible for maintaining a safe environment for guests and employees. The security director needs personnel, technology, and a budget to operate a 24-hour control system for the hotel. Depending on the size of the hotel, there may be an assistant director of security who acts in the absence of the director and assists in the administrative and supervisory functions of the department. The director of security reports to and works with the general manager and interacts with each department director. Each of the shifts (7 A.M. to 3 P.M., 3 P.M. to 11 P.M., and 11 P.M. to 7 A.M.) is staffed with shift supervisors and security guards who are responsible for patrolling the grounds to watch the activities of the guests and employees and check on safety and security equipment. The number of people required to staff this department depends on the size of the hotel. Figure 14-1 is an organization chart of a security department for a large hotel.

FIGURE 14-1 Organization chart for a security department.



Job Analysis of the Director of Security

The job analysis of a director of security outlines the administrative and supervisory tasks of this member of the management team. Active planning to ensure quick and effective reactions to problems and emergencies is the basis for successful job performance. A typical job analysis is as follows:

- 8:00 A.M. Reports to the hotel.
- 8:05 Discusses the activities of the previous night with the parking garage attendant.
- 8:15 Discusses the activities of the previous night with the security shift supervisor or security guard on duty.
- 8:30 Obtains notes concerning the activities of the previous night from the night auditor. Obtains the daily function sheet, which lists the events of the day.
- 8:40 Checks the audit report of fire and safety equipment located at the front desk.
- 8:45 Discusses the status of heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning equipment with the director of maintenance.
- 9:00 Meets with the security shift supervisor or security guards for the first shift to communicate activities and duties of the day.
- 9:30 Meets with the executive chef to be updated on special functions of the day and incidental activities in that department.
- 10:00 Meets with the housekeeper to discuss incidental activities in that department.
- 10:30 Returns to the office to review the daily security shift reports.
- 10:45 Updates the general manager on the status of security within the hotel and incidental departmental activities of importance.
- 11:00 Discusses the activities of the day with the restaurant manager.
- 11:30 Returns to the office to prepare the weekly schedule.
- 11:45 Responds to a call from the front office that a guest is stranded in the elevator. Assists maintenance in keeping order.
- 12:45 P.M. Meets with the director of marketing and sales to determine the security needs for an upcoming high school prom and an insurance executives convention.
- 1:00 Returns to the office to work on the budget for the next fiscal year.
- 1:30 Lunches with the city fire marshal to discuss plans for renovating the sprinkler system in the new wing.
- 2:15 Meets with the front office manager to discuss the fire emergency and bomb threat action plan for front office personnel.

2:45	Meets with the security shift supervisors for the first and second shifts to discuss operational procedures.
3:15	Conducts a fire emergency training program for fourth- and fifth-floor housekeeping personnel.
4:15	Returns to the office to revise the fire emergency and bomb threat action plan for front office personnel.
5:00	Meets with the general manager to discuss the status of fire safety training in all departments.
5:30	Responds to a call from the front office that a guest has fallen on hotel property. Assists the guest with first aid and arranges for transportation to a medical facility. Completes an accident report. Assists the family of the guest in making arrangements for an extended stay.
6:00	Confers with maintenance personnel on the operational status of fire safety equipment.
6:15	Prepares a to-do list for the next day.
6:30	Checks with the banquet captain on the status of guests at scheduled banquets.
6:45	Checks with the lounge manager on the status of guests.
6:55	Checks with the front office manager on the status of guest check-in.
7:00	Checks with the garage attendant for an update on activities.
7:05	Checks with the shift security supervisor for an update on patrol activities.
7:10	Departs for the day.

This job analysis shows the security director to be involved with managing details concerning the whereabouts of people and showing a proactive concern for their safety. The job calls for constant interaction with department directors, employees, government officials, guests, and operational equipment. All of these tasks add up to a highly responsible position in the hotel. The following comment on hotel guest safety outlines the objective of a hotel's obligations to guests:

The hotel is not the insurer of guest safety but it must exercise the care of a reasonable and prudent operator in protecting the guest. This duty extends to an innkeeper's obligation to protect guests from

- negligent or deliberate acts of hotel employees
- acts of other guests
- acts by nonguests committed on the premises

Failure to conform to the reasonableness standard in these three areas provides a liability risk for the hotel.⁴

FRONTLINE REALITIES



A guest calls down to the front desk indicating that her son has not returned from the vending machine area. He has been gone for 25 minutes. How should the desk clerk respond? What systems must be in place to assure prompt, efficient actions?

The responsibilities outlined in the job description for the director of security may be assigned to other workers in some hotels due to budgetary reasons. The general manager in a limited-service property, for example, may assign the **crisis management** role of maintaining control of an emergency situation to the manager on duty. The administrative role may be shared with the assistant manager, reservations manager, or housekeeper.

HOSPITALITY PROFILE



John Juliano is director of safety and security at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, Cambridge, Massachusetts. After earning a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, he worked in private security and then went on to work in hotels for the past 17 years.

Mr. Juliano feels a safe, secure environment is very important to travelers. He has been told by guests that they feel as if they are at home when they stay at the Royal Sonesta Hotel; they want to feel as safe there as they do in their own house.

He is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the security department, including scheduling and management. He investigates incidents (theft, damaged property, etc.) and acts as a liaison with the hotel's safety committee. He is involved with employee training (CPR, airborne antigens, etc.); disseminates information on state, federal, and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements to supervisors; and helps implement new safety procedures.

Mr. Juliano says his job requires more in the way of management than operations. He develops protective/preventative measures to keep the hotel from experiencing security problems and liability lawsuits. He must be knowledgeable about local ordinances as well as state laws and OSHA regulations. Mr. Juliano's department is as involved with guest relations as the front desk, guest services, and the concierge are. He maintains a good relationship with the front office manager, whom he provides informational guidelines. By following these guidelines, the front office manager and staff develop an understanding of what to do in certain situations. While Mr. Juliano does not interact with the front office manager every day, the front office manager calls him about situations that occur and asks for his feedback. Mostly, he deals directly with guests or with a hotel employee when something goes wrong.

In-House Security Departments versus Contracted Security

The events of September 11, 2001, urged hotel operators to take the responsibility of guest security very seriously. However, general managers of hotels must determine how to make operating an in-house security department cost-effective. Operating a well-organized security department must be the primary concern when considering hiring an outside security firm. As the job analysis for the director of security indicates, there is more to the position than patrolling the halls and grounds of the hotel. **Foot patrol**—walking the halls, corridors, and outside property of a hotel to detect breaches of guest and employee safety—is an important feature of security, but it is a preventive measure, not an active means of organizing security. However, in some situations, a general manager is forced, for economic reasons, to consider the purchase of an outside service. Administrative and planning procedures for operating a security department are delegated to other department heads. The cost consideration must be weighed against planning and coordinating a safe environment for the guest and employee.

The hourly rate charged by the security service for **security escort service**, or having a uniformed security guard escort a hotel employee to a financial institution to make bank deposits; for performing regular hall patrol; and for maintaining surveillance of the parking garage may seem attractive compared to the annual salaries and administrative overhead associated with operating an in-house security department 24 hours a day. But more than cost must be considered. Who will work with the other department directors to establish fire safety and security procedures? Who will plan and deliver fire safety and security training sessions? Who will monitor fire safety devices? Who will work with city officials in interpreting fire and safety codes? Who will update management on the latest technology to ensure a safe environment? These and other questions must be answered if owners and management are committed to security.

If an outside security service is hired, the role of maintaining security is parceled out to the department directors. The director of maintenance operates the fire safety and security equipment, maintains operating records of fire safety equipment and elevators, and reacts to hazardous situations. The general manager, if time permits, establishes a safety committee that responds to government guidelines and potential hazards. Each department director, if time permits, establishes security guidelines based on personal experience. Under these circumstances, safety and security become low priorities. The lack of coordination almost guarantees disaster when an emergency strikes.

The following excerpt discussing a bombing in a hotel in Jakarta, Indonesia, emphasizes the wisdom of adopting a proactive operational position on guest security.

As terrorism continues to pose a threat to soft targets such as hotels, as evidenced by the recent bombing outside the JW Marriott in Jakarta, security has never been more important. With this reality, global hotel companies are no doubt concerned with how

to strike that delicate balance between security and guest convenience. Although this is an issue that hoteliers grapple with daily, many hotel companies continue to shy away from talking about their security procedures. Understandably, part of the issue is that hotels do not want to compromise their security by disclosing what measures they are taking. However, another issue is that hoteliers must learn to think of security as a positive rather than as a necessary evil.

“Our challenges far exceed appearing to be negative or painting dooms-day scenarios,” says Jimmy Chin, director of risk management, The Peninsula New York. “We need to hammer away at the message that something else can happen, and we need to address it and examine what steps we can take to either protect or respond to it. It should be positive because guests see us as a deterrent against possible crime and terrorism. Guests today expect to be protected. The hotel industry should be discussing security measures openly, sharing best practices instead of worrying about how it looks.”⁵

Meeting the challenges of providing security for guests and employees requires a full-time approach. Part-time efforts to control crises in a hotel may be shortsighted. The following story shows the consequences of not providing adequate security.

FIGURE 14-2

The security department in a hotel works closely with the front office manager. Photo courtesy of Pinkerton Security and Investigation Services.



The verdict against Hilton Hotels Corp. in the Tailhook case could have far-reaching implications for hotel liabilities in providing security for guests, according to hospitality legal experts. In this case, former Navy Lt. Paula Coughlin sued Hilton for failing to provide adequate security during the Tailhook Association convention at the Las Vegas Hilton in 1991. Jurors awarded Coughlin \$1.7 million in compensatory damages and \$5 million in punitive damages. Hilton claimed that three security guards were adequate for the 5,000 people at the event.⁶

Room Key Security

One of the responsibilities of the director of security is to establish and maintain a **room key control system**, an administrative procedure that authorizes certain personnel and registered guests to have access to keys. One court found that “as a general proposition, a guest has an expectation of privacy in his or her room and a hotel has an affirmative duty not to allow unregistered guests, unauthorized employees, and third parties to gain access to a guest’s room.”⁷

Although issuing and filing keys are duties of front office employees, there is more to room key control than these two tasks.

According to Rizwan Saferali, owner of Super 8 Motel Kissimmee in the Orlando, Florida, area, who recently installed eSecure and Gibraltar locks from SAFLOK, “Having electronic locks has improved all aspects of the property, from guest services to employee satisfaction. We are proud to have been able to guide the property through its electronic access management experience.”

eSecure [is] a user-friendly, Windows-based front desk system [that] requires no capital investment—properties just pay a monthly usage fee and receive the system software and electronic locks. The system works in conjunction with the Gibraltar¹⁷⁰ lock by SAFLOK, an extremely durable lock that provides unparalleled electronic security. SAFLOK will install the system and locks and provide technical support and service for the entire system throughout the life of the program contract.

A significant benefit of eSecure is the fact that the monthly usage fees are based strictly on occupancy; therefore, properties pay only when they are receiving revenue from bookings. This structure is even more beneficial for properties operating on only a partial year business cycle.

To make keys or perform other transactions on eSecure, a user simply logs into SAFLOK’s remote server via dial-up or other Internet connection and follows the point-and-click prompts. The request to encode a new keycard is completed within seconds.

With eSecure, SAFLOK can offer the opportunity to upgrade guest security to properties who may otherwise lack the immediate capital to do so. The combination of an advanced front desk system, top-of-the-line locks and affordable monthly pric-

ing truly demonstrates that SAFLOK delivers access management solutions based on customer needs.⁸

Usually one of two lock systems is used—the hard-key system or the electronic key system. **Hard-key systems** consist of the traditional large key that fits into a keyhole in a lock; preset tumblers inside the lock are turned by the designated key. The **electronic key system** is composed of:

battery-powered or, less frequently, hardwired locks, a host computer and terminals, keypuncher, and special entry cards which are used as keys. The host computer generates the combinations for the locks, cancels the old ones and keeps track of master keying systems. The front desk staff uses at least one computer terminal to register the guest and an accompanying keypuncher to produce the card. An electronic locking system allows the hotel to issue a “fresh” key to each guest. When the guest inserts his or her key into the door, the lock’s intelligent microchip scans the combination punched on the key and accepts it as the new, valid combination for the door, registering all previous combinations unacceptable.⁹

Smart Card

Another version of the electronic key is the **smart card**, an electronic device with a computer chip that allows a hotel guest or an employee access to a designated area, tracking, and debit card capabilities for the guest. Bruce Adams reports the following on smart cards:

Keeping track of room access by hotel management has never been easier. Employees have smartcards that grant them access to different levels of security. The cards track what level of key was used, who was there, and creates an audit trail that is easy to manage.

Beyond state-of-the-art locking and tracking capability, the smartcards serve as guest identification cards, which include the guest’s name and dates of stay at Portofino Bay Hotel at Universal Studios theme park. “Their card functions as an ID card, which gives them special privileges at the theme park,” [said Michael] Sansbury [regional vice president for Loews Hotels]. “Some of those benefits include front-of-line privileges at rides and events, early admission to the park and priority seating in restaurants. The smart cards also serve as charge cards at the hotel and park.” “The smartcard is linked to the guest account in the hotel,” Sansbury said. “The credit limit in the hotel is transmitted to the smartcard. Merchants at any shop or restaurant at Universal Studios can swipe the smartcard the same way they swipe a credit card. It works the same way as a credit card,” [reports Sansbury]. “If they lose their smartcard, it is very easy to invalidate,” Sansbury said.¹⁰

Terence Ronson reports on an additional security measure—**biometrics**—that hotels are considering and some are using to control access to.

Biometrics is a term used to describe a measurement of uniqueness of a human being such as voice, hand print or facial characteristics. Some of you may have seen mock-examples of such devices in James Bond movies, *Mission Impossible* and *Star Trek*. Card-based access systems have been around for a long while and control access using authorized pieces of plastic, but not who is in actual possession of that card. Systems using PINs (personal identification numbers) such as ATM's only require that an individual knows a specific number to gain entry. Who actually enters that code cannot be determined. Biometrics devices, on the other hand (no pun intended), verify who a person is by what they are, whether it's their hand, eye, fingerprint or voice. I expect Hotels would be more inclined to be interested in fingerprint or hand-recognition access control systems—probably because of the cost and relative simplicity in which they can be implement[ed] into an existing operation.

For example, when captured, a fingerprint image is converted into a digital form by extracting a set of unique characteristics. The abstract data taken from the recording is then encrypted and stored in the database as a template, to be later used as a reference for comparison purposes.

Users are authenticated by extracting and comparing information derived from unique arches, loops, markings, and ridges of a fingerprint. This set of information, called minutia, is a mathematical representation captured as a series of numbers and relationships of the whorls and ridges of the fingerprint. No actual image of the fingerprint is stored, ensuring privacy and security, the prime concern of users.¹¹

Hard-Key System

The hard-key system is less expensive at the time of initial purchase. However, the costs of purchasing additional keys and rekeying locks must be considered over the long run. Also, reissuing the same key to guest after guest presents a security problem. Often, the guest fails to return the key at the time of checkout. If a careless guest discards a room key or a criminal steals a key, guest safety is jeopardized. If regular maintenance and rekeying lock tumblers are not part of the preventive maintenance plan (and budget), guest security is compromised.

The electronic key system, smart card, and biometrics can be used for guest rooms as well as other areas of the hotel; they are an investment in guest security and safety. As each new guest registers, a fresh plastic key or minutia is produced. The new combination for the guest room lock or public/storage area responds only to the new guest room key or pass key. This procedure almost guarantees guest and employee safety. The initial investment in these types of systems must be evaluated against overall maintenance and replacement costs of a hard-key system and increased guest and employee security.

Electronic key access is one of many alternatives from which facility managers can choose. The system includes an electronically coded key and door controllers that can be easily programmed to recognize one or more codes. Since the electronic keys are assigned codes from one of several billion possible combinations, they are virtually impossible to duplicate.

High-end electronic access control systems can be equipped with numerous . . . features . . . [such as] recording who entered an area and at what time . . . [and can] link this information with a central computer, allowing facility managers to provide reports on the activities of thousands of users through thousands of doors. These reports are extremely helpful during the investigation phase of a crime incident. Access control systems also can be equipped with a panic alert that allows the individual to send a distress signal in the event they are being coerced to open the door.¹²

While the hard-key system is the traditional method that hotels have been using for many years, its cumbersome and costly maintenance indicates that it should be replaced with advanced technology. This may be a slow process, but it will greatly improve guest, employee, and inventory safety. The economies of scale make the electronic key system an affordable necessity.

Fire Safety

Hearing someone shout “Fire!” panics anyone who is unprepared to deal with this dangerous situation. Well-orchestrated safety procedures that are well managed at the onset of a fire can save the lives of guests and employees. The front office manager and the director of security must develop effective fire safety and evacuation plans as well as training programs for employees to ensure their effectiveness.

Fire Code General Requirements

Fire safety plans begin with the fire safety codes of the municipality where the hotel is located. These codes stipulate construction materials, interior design fabrics, entrance and exit requirements, space limitations, smoke alarm installation and maintenance, sprinkler system installation and maintenance, fire drill testing, fire alarm operation and maintenance, and the like. These extensive codes were developed to ensure guest safety. They may require extra financial investment, but they are intended to protect the guest and the occupants of the building.

Guest Expectations

Hotel guests expect, either consciously or unconsciously, to find a safe environment during their visit. Some guests may ask for a room on a lower level or inquire if the rooms have smoke alarms. However, most guests are concerned about other matters and do not ask about fire safety procedures. When the guest settles into a guest room, he or she may give a passing glance at the fire evacuation procedure posted behind the door. Some guests may even count the number of doors to the nearest exit. Is this enough? Will human lives be in jeopardy because guests’ pressing concerns have caused them to place their safety in the hands of the management and employees of the hotel?

Fire Safety Plan

The front office manager who wants to take active measures to ensure guest safety must develop a simple fire safety plan, communicate it to employees and guests, and train employees and guests to handle a stressful situation. This includes the following commonsense elements:

1. Equip all guest rooms and public areas with smoke detectors that are tied to a central communications area.
2. Regularly test and maintain smoke detectors; keep up-to-date records of the tests, as shown in Table 14-1.
3. Install, maintain, and test fire alarms as required by local fire code regulations; again, keep up-to-date records of the tests, as shown in Table 14-2.
4. Constantly monitor smoke detectors and fire alarm systems, preferably at the front desk.
5. Prepare and post floor plans showing fire exit locations by area—public areas, work areas, and guest room areas (see Figures 14-3 and 14-4).
6. Tell employees and guests where the nearest fire extinguishers and fire alarms are located and how to evacuate the building. Instruct them in fire safety guidelines (Figure 14-5).
7. Develop a fire action communication procedure for front office personnel.

TABLE 14-1. Maintenance Records for Smoke Detector Tests

401	12/1	OK	JB inspector	1/10	OK	JB inspector
402	12/1	OK	JB inspector	1/10	OK	JB inspector
403	12/1	bat. repl.	JB inspector	1/10	OK	JB inspector
404	12/2	OK	JB inspector	1/10	OK	JB inspector
405	12/2	OK	JB inspector	1/10	OK	JB inspector
406	12/2	OK	JB inspector	1/10	OK	JB inspector
407	12/2	OK	JB inspector	1/10	OK	JB inspector
408	12/2	OK	JB inspector	1/13	OK	JB inspector
409	12/2	OK	JB inspector	1/13	OK	JB inspector
410	12/2	OK	JB inspector	1/13	OK	JB inspector
411	12/2	OK	JB inspector	1/13	OK	JB inspector
412	12/2	OK	JB inspector	1/13	OK	JB inspector
413	12/3	bat. repl.	JB inspector	1/15	OK	JB inspector
414	12/3	bat. repl.	JB inspector	1/15	OK	JB inspector
415	12/3	OK	JB inspector	1/15	OK	JB inspector

JB = inspector's initials
bat. repl. = batteries replaced

TABLE 14-2. Maintenance Records for Fire Alarm Tests

Floor 1, station A	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Floor 1, station B	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Floor 2, station A	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Floor 2, station B	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Floor 3, station A	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Floor 3, station B	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Floor 4, station A	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Floor 4, station B	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Floor 5, station A	4/10	no sound; repaired 4/10	JB inspector
Floor 5, station B	4/10	no sound; repaired 4/10	JB inspector
Floor 6, station A	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Floor 6, station B	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Kitchen	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Bakery	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Banquet A	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Banquet B	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Lounge	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Lobby	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Laundry	4/10	OK	JB inspector
Gift Shop	4/10	OK	JB inspector

FIGURE 14-3 Well-marked exits from public areas are very important.

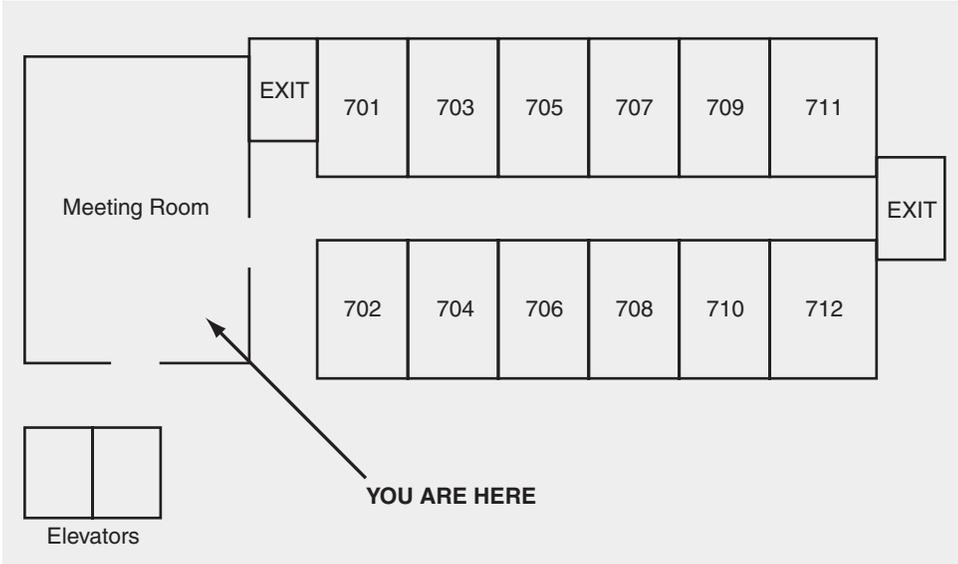
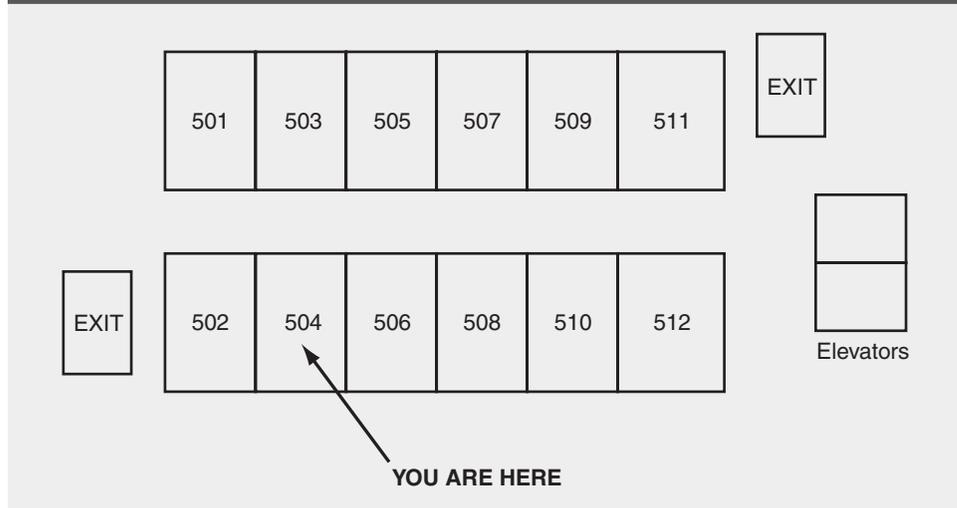


FIGURE 14-4 Signs such as this one are mounted on the back of doors to guest rooms to provide fire safety information for guests.



Employee Training in Fire Safety

Providing training programs for employees on the locations of the fire exits, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms and on methods of building evacuation greatly increases the chances that all occupants will escape the building safely when necessary. After new and current employees are taught the locations of fire exits, extinguishers, and alarms throughout the building, supervisors can spot-check the effectiveness of the training with random questions such as: “Where is the nearest fire exit when you are cleaning room 707? Where is the nearest fire extinguisher when you are in the bakery? Where is the nearest fire alarm when you are in the laundry?” These simple questions, repeated often enough, impress employees with the importance of fire safety.

Local fire departments or the director of security can train employees to use fire extinguishers. These informal training sessions should include operational procedures and information on applying the appropriate type of fire extinguisher. The time to start reading directions is not during the fire. These training sessions give employees confidence in their ability to handle an emergency.

Guest Instruction in Fire Safety

Often, instructing guests on fire safety is overlooked. They are at the hotel for a relaxing, enjoyable visit. But fire can strike at any time, even during relaxing, enjoyable visits. Inform each guest that all rooms are equipped with smoke detectors, that the nearest fire exit from any room is, at the most, four doors to the right of the room, that a fire extinguisher is

FIGURE 14-5 Hotel fire safety procedures should be displayed in guest rooms.

1. When you check into any hotel or motel, ask for a copy of the fire procedures plan. If they do not have one, ask why.
2. Check to see if there is a smoke detector in your room. If there isn't any, ask for a room that has one.
3. Familiarize yourself with the locations of the fire exits and count the number of doors from your room to the nearest fire exit. (If the corridor is smoky, you may not be able to see the exit, but you can feel your way along the floor.)
4. Get into the habit of keeping your key in the same place every time you stay at a motel or hotel so that you'll always know exactly where it is. Then, if you have to leave your room, be sure to take your key with you. (If you cannot reach the exit, you may have to return to your room because of fire or smoke in the hallway.)
5. If you wake up and find your room is beginning to fill with smoke, grab your key, roll off the bed, and head for the door on your hands and knees. You'll want to save your eyes and lungs as long as possible, and the air five or six feet up may be filled with odorless carbon monoxide.
6. Before leaving your room, feel the door with the palm of your hand. If it is hot, or even warm, do not open it! If it is not warm, slowly open it a crack, with the palm of your hand still on the door (in case you have to slam it shut), and peek into the hallway to see what's happening.
7. If the coast is clear, crawl into the hallway, feeling your way along the exit side of the wall. It's easy to get lost or disoriented in smoke. Count the doors as you go.
8. Do not use an elevator as a fire exit. Smoke, heat, and fire may put it out of operation.
9. When you reach the exit, walk down the stairs to the first floor. (Exit doors are locked on the stairwell side, so you cannot enter any other floor.)
10. If you encounter smoke in the stairwell on the way down, the smoke may be "stacking" on the floors under it, and the stairwell would be impassable. Do not try to run through it. Turn around and go up to the roof.
11. When you reach the roof, open the door and leave it open so the stairwell can vent itself. Find the windward side of the building so you won't be caught up in the smoke. Then, have a seat and wait for the firefighters to find you.
12. If you cannot get out of your room safely, fill the bathtub or sink with water. Soak towels and stuff them under the door and between the cracks to keep the smoke out. With your ice bucket, bail water onto the door to keep it cool. If the walls are hot, bail water on them, too. Wet your mattress and put it up against the door. Keep everything wet.
13. If smoke does begin to seep into your room, open the window. (Keep the window closed if there is no smoke. There may be smoke outside.) If you see the fire through the window, pull the drapes down so that they will not catch fire. Also, wet a handkerchief or washcloth and breathe through it.
14. **DO NOT JUMP** unless you are certain of injury if you stay in your room *one minute longer*. Most people hurt themselves jumping, even from the second floor; from the third floor, quite severely. If you're higher than the third floor, chances are you will not survive the fall. You would be better off fighting the fire in your room.

Source: National Safety Council. Courtesy of Knights Inn. Cardinal Industries, Inc., Reynoldsburg, OH © 1989 Cardinal Lodging Group, Inc., management company for Knights Inns and Arbogate Inns.

located next to the elevator on each floor, and that a fire can be reported by dialing 0 for the hotel operator. Guests appreciate that the hotel cares about their well-being and that it has taken every precaution to ensure equipment is available and in working order. Management may want to encourage guests to read the fire evacuation guidelines posted on the door of the guest room by offering enticing promotions. For example, on registering, the guest is informed of a special coupon attached to the fire evacuation plan located on the door. This coupon may be redeemed for a two-for-one breakfast special, a free cover charge in the lounge, a free morning newspaper, a discount in the gift shop, or some other incentive.

Accommodations for guests who are physically challenged should also be a concern for hotel managers. **Visual alarm systems**, flashing lights that indicate a fire or other emergency in a hotel room, should be installed to alert hearing-impaired guests. A report of the locations of physically challenged guests should be easy to retrieve from the PMS registration module in case of an emergency.

Fire Action Communication Procedure

The front office employees must take the lead in controlling the panic that may arise when a fire strikes. The fire communications training program developed by the front office manager must be taught to all front office personnel. If fire strikes during the middle of the day, more than one person will probably be available to assist in maintaining control of the situation. But if the disaster occurs at 10:30 P.M., there may be only one person on duty to orchestrate communications.

The communications procedure begins when a guest or an employee calls the switchboard to report a fire. Unfortunately, in many cases, some time has already been wasted in attempts to extinguish the fire. Seconds are important in reporting the fire to the local fire company. At some properties, the fire company is immediately notified via the interface of the hotel's fire alarm with the municipal or private monitoring station. But front office personnel should never assume that the fire company has been notified and should immediately call the fire station to report the fire. The call may duplicate an earlier report, but it is better to have two notifications than none.

After the fire is reported, security and management should be alerted. Guest and employee evacuation procedures must be initiated and organized. Established procedures stipulating who should be informed and in what manner, as well as who is to assist the guests and employees in evacuating, result in an efficient evacuation. The front desk clerk must produce a list of occupied guest rooms immediately. The rooms located on the floor where the fire is reported and the rooms located on the floors immediately above and below the fire room are of vital importance to firefighters and volunteers who assist in the evacuation.

On arrival, firefighters immediately report to the front desk. They need to know where the fire is located and what guest rooms are occupied. Copies of the list of occupied rooms and special notes on whether the occupants are children or physically challenged aid in the rescue effort.

Front office personnel must remain calm throughout the ordeal. The switchboard will be active, with calls from inside and outside the hotel. Requests for information from the fire emergency crew and first-aid and rescue squad will be mixed with phone calls from the media and persons related to hotel guests. Switchboard operators should keep phone calls brief so the phone lines are open.

Security should not be forgotten during crises. Some people take advantage of such confusion to loot and pilfer. Cash drawers and other documents should be secured.

Each hotel must develop its own communications procedure for a fire. Each plan will vary based on the strengths of the employees in the front office. Training the staff with fire drills aids all employees in handling the emergency; everyone must be part of the drill, no matter how calmly they react to ordinary crises. Holding fire drills on each shift gives employees practice and is worth the effort.

The following stories highlight the importance of being prepared to react in an emergency situation:

[James T. Davidson, executive director, Training Services, Educational Institute] was working as a front desk clerk in Bermuda during the arson riots in 1976. Rioters set fire to the top floor of the hotel. [The hotel's] communications tower was on the roof and [it] lost communications within moments, even though [the hotel's management] thought [that it] had a fool-proof system. Several people were killed, including some guests who tried to use the elevator—it took them straight to the blaze. There was an emergency plan for evacuating guests, but no real plan for getting them a safe distance away from the burning building.

Years later, [he] was general manager of a property on the Seychelles Islands during two attempted coups d'état. A total curfew was imposed during both coup attempts, but the second was worse because it happened during the middle of the night when [the] staff was limited. For six days, [the hotel] made do with a staff of 13 for 300 guests and lived off the food that was at the hotel. The 13 staff members worked in just about every department at one time or another. [They] enlisted guests to help keep the hotel running, and most were glad to pitch in.

Each incident taught [him] the importance of planning and communications, and how essential it is to have regular emergency procedure drills.¹³

Even though these stories are pre-September 11, 2001, planning for a general disaster and communications within that disaster were and are still very important.

FRONTLINE REALITIES



A guest calls the front desk and reports that an iron has overheated and set the bedspread on fire. What action should the front desk clerk take? What previous fire safety planning would ensure prompt, efficient action?

Emergency Communication

There are times when guests and employees must evacuate a building in a nonemergency situation. Although it is imperative that the building be emptied, evacuation is not as urgent as it is during a fire. Examples of such situations include a bomb threat, a fire in an adjacent building, a gas leak, or an electrical power outage. When these situations occur, an emergency communication system must be in place to ensure an efficient evacuation.

The director of security, in conjunction with the front office manager and civil authorities, should develop a plan for all departments. The role of the front office is essential in directing communications with guests and employees. The front office staff is responsible for alerting employees and guests that an emergency situation exists. The emergency communication plan should establish a **communications hierarchy**, which is a listing of the order in which management personnel may be called on to take charge; emphasize cooperation between the hotel and civil authorities; and provide training.

The 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center provides a cautionary lesson in preparedness:

When disaster strikes, inadequate or incomplete preparation becomes painfully evident—and costly. These hard lessons became clear in the immediate aftermath of the February 26, 1993, bombing of New York’s World Trade Center, when the staff of the adjacent Vista Hotel reacted heroically to a very daunting situation. Loss of the facility’s main telephone switch made it impossible to communicate with management and arrange emergency recovery services. Cellular phones could have fetched thousands of dollars apiece that day. Drawings illustrating how the hotel was built were not easily accessible, creating confusion among the rescue teams.¹⁴

Here is another incident of a more urgent nature:

A natural gas explosion tore through the [Embassy Suites Outdoor World at Dallas/Ft. Worth International Airport] swimming pool maintenance room at 6:25 P.M., August 6, 2000, just four days after the hotel’s opening, forcing guests to flee the property. Rapid response by the hotel’s staff, led by GM Bill Bretches, as well as police, firefighters and paramedics, helped clear the property swiftly and minimize injuries. Two hundred fifteen of the hotel’s 329 guest suites were occupied at the time of the explosion, with many of the guests in the property’s atrium for the evening reception.

Guests were brought to the hotel’s parking lot, where they were given water and clothing provided by Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World, a part of the hotel complex. Staff accounted for guests by matching names with the registration list. All guests, accompanied by Embassy Suites staff, were relocated within 90 minutes to nearby hotels.¹⁵

The following discussion of planning for effective emergency communication outlines the most important features of such a plan.

Developing the Emergency Communication Plan

The emergency communication plan is developed in cooperation with the director of security, the front office manager, and local civil authorities. These individuals are responsible for developing a plan to be used in the event of an impending life-threatening emergency that includes training staff and employees.

Emergency Communications Manager on Duty

The job description of each management position includes a task entitled “emergency communications manager on duty.” This duty requires the person to act as the liaison between the hotel and the civil authorities. Each member of the management staff receives adequate training in the responsibilities of the job.

The role of emergency communications manager on duty is assumed in the following order:

- General manager
- Assistant general manager
- Director of security
- Director of maintenance
- Food and beverage manager
- Banquet manager
- Restaurant manager
- Director of marketing and sales
- Controller
- Housekeeper
- Front office manager
- Front desk clerk on duty
- Night auditor

Responsibilities of the Front Office

On receipt of a call informing the hotel that the guests and employees are in danger, these procedures are to be followed (Figure 14-6):

1. Remain calm. Write down the name, phone number, affiliation, and location of the person making the call.
2. Immediately alert the emergency communications manager on duty to the impending danger. If main telephone service to the hotel is inactivated, use a cellular phone.
3. Inform the front desk clerk of the impending danger. Produce a room list of all registered guests in the hotel. Produce a list of all social functions in progress.
4. Alert the emergency communications leaders on duty in each hotel department. These people report to the front office immediately. Hold an emergency action

meeting with the emergency communications manager on duty. The lists of registered guests and social functions in progress will assist in the evacuation.

5. The emergency communications manager on duty will advise you which authorities should be alerted.
 - Police department: 000-000-0000
 - Fire department: 000-000-0000
 - Bomb squad: 000-000-0000
 - Electric company: 000-000-0000
 - Gas company: 000-000-0000
 - Water company: 000-000-0000
 - Rescue squad: 000-000-0000
 - Red Cross: 000-000-0000
 - Owner of hotel: 000-000-0000
 - General manager: 000-000-0000

FIGURE 14-6

The switchboard operator plays a pivotal role in an emergency communication plan. Photo courtesy of Northern Telecom.



6. Respond to phone inquiries as directed by the emergency communications manager on duty.
7. Remain at the front office to manage emergency communications until directed to evacuate by the emergency communications manager on duty.

Responsibilities of Other Hotel Departments

Delegating the task of emergency communications leader on duty to other responsible members of a department requires the following considerations:

- Each department director develops a hierarchy of positions to assume the responsibility of emergency communications leader.
- Each emergency communications leader on duty receives adequate training in the responsibilities of this job duty.
- Upon receiving information indicating that the hotel guests and employees are in immediate danger, immediately relay the information to the front office—dial 0.
- All emergency communications leaders on duty report to the front office for an emergency communications meeting. Directions are given for assisting guests and employees to evacuate.
- Employees on duty take direction from the emergency communications leaders on duty on assisting guests and employees in evacuating the hotel.

Training

The emergency communications managers on duty should receive ten or more hours of training in leading a crisis situation. This training must be documented, with two hours of refresher training every year.

Current employees receive two hours of training in emergency evacuation procedures. New employees receive training in emergency evacuation at the time of orientation. Refresher training, two hours every year, is required of all employees.

HOSPITALITY PROFILE



John Juliano, the director of safety and security at the Royal Sonesta Hotel in Cambridge, Massachusetts, mentioned his participation in the Security Directors' Network, a group of hotels that gather and share information on security issues. For instance, if an incident occurs at the Royal Sonesta Hotel involving a nonpaying guest, he fills out a report and faxes it to the director of security at the Boston Marriott Copley Place, who then faxes the information to 30–35 other hotels in the greater

Boston area. This is especially helpful when a person goes from hotel to hotel causing problems. For example, several years ago in Boston, a man went to several hotels and set off fire alarms (he actually set a fire at one hotel); when the unsuspecting and panicked guests ran from their rooms, he would enter and steal the guests' possessions. The network was helpful in tracking his actions. However, nine of ten times when he receives a request for information about a specific person, Mr. Juliano has no information to supply.

Employee Safety Programs

The hospitality industry is rife with opportunities for employee accidents. Behind the scenes are many people crowded into small work areas, busy preparing food and beverages and performing other services for the guests. The employees who are most in danger include those whose equipment is in need of repair, who work in areas that are too small, or who depend on other employees who are not attentive to the job at hand. The front of the house also provides opportunities for accidents. Employees and guests must use public areas that may be overcrowded or worn from continual use. The following information on hotel law provides insight into an innkeeper's responsibility:

The innkeeper must periodically inspect the facility to discover hidden or latent defects and then to remove or repair those defects. During the time prior to repair the innkeeper has a duty to warn the guests about the existence and location of the dangers.¹⁶

How does hotel management begin to develop guidelines for employee safety?

Employee Safety Committee

The best way to begin is to establish a **safety committee**, a group of frontline employees and supervisors who discuss safety issues concerning guests and employees. Frontline employees know the details of day-to-day hazards. They deal with the faulty equipment, traverse the crowded banquet rooms, work next to one another in a poorly laid-out kitchen, process soiled laundry, push carts through busy public corridors, and hear guest complaints during checkout. Moreover, these people make up part of the group that employee safety procedures are supposed to protect. Why not give them an opportunity to make their environment better? Although some employees do not want this responsibility, other employees will welcome the opportunity. With positive results, there may be a few more volunteers the next time. Management is a necessary part of the committee, not only because it is used to carrying out long-range plans but because it supplies the clout and support needed to implement the procedures.

Composition and Activities of the Safety Committee

The safety committee should include representatives from all departments in the hotel. If this is not possible, then co-committees for each shift might be an option. Management should convey the importance of the safety committee. Every comment received from the members is worthwhile and should be noted in the minutes of the meeting (Figure 14-7). Checklists with assignments for fact-finding tours, to be reported on at the next meeting, should be distributed to begin the process. The meetings should not be mere formalities, quickly conducted with little thought about their content. At each meeting, the minutes of the previous meeting should be read, and progress made in accomplishing goals should be reported. Members should see that the tiles in the laundry room, the leak in the stack steamer, and the worn rug in the lobby have been repaired or replaced as suggested.

FIGURE 14-7 Minutes from a safety meeting keep participants on track.**Hotel Safety Committee Minutes 5/19***Members present:*

A. Johnson, Housekeeping	F. Black, Gift Shop	M. Povik, Lounge
S. Thomas, Housekeeping	B. Lacey, Director of Security	A. Smith, Maintenance
L. Retter, Food Production	T. Hopewell, Food and	J. Hanley, Maintenance
K. Watson, Food Production	Beverage Manager	D. Frank, Parking Garage
M. Bensinger, Front Desk	J. Harper, Banquets	A. Gricki, Accounting
V. Howe, Front Desk	T. Senton, Restaurant	

- The minutes from the 4/12 meeting were read. M. Bensinger noted that the minutes stated that Johnson Rug Inc. was in the process of repairing the rug in the lobby. This was not the case at all. No one to her knowledge has repaired the seams on the rug. The minutes were corrected.
- B. Lacey gave an update regarding the progress on suggestions for improving safety, compiled at the 3/01 meeting.
 - The safety valves on the steam pressure equipment in the kitchen have all been replaced.
 - The electrical cords on the vacuum cleaners on the 11th and 15th floors have been repaired.
 - Five of the kitchen employees have been enrolled in a sanitation correspondence course. T. Hopewell is monitoring their progress.
 - The basement has been cleaned up, and excess trash has been removed. Old furniture that was stored near the heating plant has been removed and will be sold at an auction.
 - A new trash removal service has been selected. Regular trash removal will occur daily, instead of three times a week.
 - The lights in the east stairwell have been replaced. Maintenance has initiated a new preventive maintenance program for replacement of lights in stairwells and the garage.
 - Three employees have volunteered to enroll in a substance abuse program. Their enrollment is anonymous to management and other employees.
- M. Povik reported that the beer coolers are not maintaining the proper temperature. Several requests for service from the Gentry Refrigeration Service have been ignored. The director of maintenance will be informed of the situation.
- A. Gricki reported that her efforts to reach Johnson Rug Inc. to repair the rug have not been successful. The situation is dangerous. One guest almost tripped in the lobby yesterday. The director of housekeeping will be informed of the situation.
- A. Johnson would like support from the committee to request the purchase of two training films on the correct procedure for heavy lifting and the proper use of chemicals. The committee agreed to write a memo to the general manager in support of this motion.
- Members of the committee will meet at convenient times to do an informal safety survey of the maintenance department, housekeeping department, and kitchen. These surveys will provide feedback for department directors. All surveys are to be returned by June 1.
- Meeting was adjourned at 4:42 P.M. Next meeting will be held June 10.

FRONTLINE REALITIES



After slipping on debris while assisting a guest with his luggage, a front office employee shrugs off the injury, saying, “I needed a few days off anyway.” Discuss the danger inherent in this type of employee attitude.

Department Supervisors' Responsibility

Each department director must encourage a safety-conscious attitude. Management members can set an example by following safety procedures themselves when operating equipment and by scheduling adequate staff during busy time periods and following up on requests for repairs. If employees know that you place safety first, they will also adopt that attitude.

Safety Training Programs

Specific safety training programs should be developed by each department director. The directors review their departments to determine where safety training is needed. Security, equipment operation, sanitation, chemical use, transport of materials, and movement of equipment are areas to examine in compiling a program. The orientation program is the best opportunity for providing employees with safety training. Films, handouts, and booklets produced specifically to teach the safe way to perform a task reinforce on-the-job training and practice.

Regularly scheduled training sessions with notations of progress for use in the annual employee review are a necessity; otherwise, the employee gets the impression that management is showing that same old film again just to meet the insurance company's requirements. Safety training sessions should be scheduled when the employee is able to concentrate on the session and is not distracted by other duties. This may mean that sessions must be scheduled before or after a shift, with additional pay. If management wants to enhance safety with training programs, then this must be a budget item. Planning for safety takes time and financial investment.

Solution to Opening Dilemma

The investigation of establishing an in-house security department could address the following topics:

- How are communications with public safety officials regarding safety issues handled?
- How are fire safety and emergency communication plans developed?

- Who is responsible for establishing and maintaining an employee safety training committee?
- Who is responsible for maintaining the integrity of the key system in the hotel?
- Who is responsible for the safe delivery of cash deposits?
- How are smoke detector and fire alarm tests conducted and records maintained?
- Who conducts fire and emergency evacuation training and drills?
- How can all members of the hotel staff adopt a cautious attitude with respect to potential terrorist activities?

Chapter Recap

The expense of the security department is a vital expenditure. This chapter examined security as it relates both to the front office and to the overall objective of the hotel in providing a safe environment for guests and employees, especially in light of the September 11, 2001, disasters. The organization and operation of a security department, along with a job analysis of the director of security, were outlined to demonstrate the many facets of this department. The decision about whether to use an in-house security department or to contract outside security services should be based on ensuring the safety and security of hotel guests rather than on costs.

Both the front office and the security department are involved in room key security, which is easier to guarantee with the new electronic key, smart card, and biometrics systems than it is with hard-key systems. Building evacuation requires that established procedures be in place and that both employees and guests receive instruction on how to react during a fire. An employee safety program should involve both staff and management and include a safety committee that addresses safety concerns on a regular basis and a training program for all employees. Emergency communications procedures should be developed, with a plan that involves management, employees, and civil authorities.

End-of-Chapter Questions

1. How does the security department interact with the front office? Give examples.
2. Visit a hotel that has an in-house security department. How is this department structured? How many employees are needed to provide 24-hour coverage? What are the typical job duties of employees in this department?
3. Visit a hotel that contracts with a private security agency for security services. What services does this agency provide? How satisfied is management with the level and range of services provided?
4. Compare your answers to questions 2 and 3.

5. Contrast the level of security in a hotel that uses a hard-key system with that in a hotel that uses an electronic key or smart card system.
6. Discuss the features of a hard-key system.
7. Discuss the features of an electronic key system.
8. Discuss the features of a smart card system.
9. What advantages does biometrics provide for guest and employee safety?
10. How can a hotel take a proactive stance on fire safety?
11. Why are testing and maintenance of smoke detectors and fire alarms so important?
12. Consider the fire safety procedures provided in guest rooms. How detailed do you think they should be? How can hotels encourage guests to read them?
13. Why is it important for management to include employees when developing safety programs?
14. Review the minutes of the safety committee meeting in Figure 14-7. What issues do you feel are top priorities? Which are low priorities?
15. What value do you see in preparing an emergency communications system to be used in a hotel?
16. Review the emergency communication plan presented in this chapter. What are the important features of the plan?

CASE STUDY 1401

Ana Chavarria, front office manager of The Times Hotel, has scheduled an appointment with the director of security, Ed Silver. Mr. Silver has just learned that a nearby hotel, Remington Veranda, recently received a bomb threat that required the evacuation of all guests and employees. The situation caused a great deal of confusion and panic. Several employees were screaming, “Bomb! Bomb! Run for your life!” while other employees and guests were absolutely stunned and couldn’t move. Although the bomb threat was of no substance, five guests and three employees had to be treated in the emergency room

for shock and broken limbs caused by the crush to evacuate the building.

After reviewing the files in the security department, Ed Silver feels that he and Ana should develop an emergency communication procedure to be sure that the situation that occurred at Remington Veranda will not be repeated at The Times Hotel. Ana agrees; her prior experience at a hotel on the East Coast makes her realize the importance of such a plan.

Give Ana and Ed suggestions for developing an emergency communication plan.

CASE STUDY 1402

Cynthia Restin, night auditor of The Times Hotel, waited to see Ana Chavarria, front office manager, after her shift was over. She related a few incidents to Ana that occurred during her evening shift. She said she received a call from a guest in room 470 who said that he had received a threatening call from someone at 1:45 A.M. Cynthia discussed the incident with the guest and said she would alert the security guard on duty. At 2:05 A.M., Cynthia called the guest to see if he was OK. He thanked her for her concern and said he was ready to retire for the evening.

At 2:35 A.M., a guest in 521 called Cynthia at the front desk reporting a loud noise coming from the room located below him. Cynthia alerted the security guard on duty and asked him to go to room 421 to investigate the situation. The security guard found the door ajar and the room vacant. There was no sign of violence, and the guest's belongings were removed; otherwise, everything looked like a normal self-checkout.

At 3:29 A.M., Cynthia noticed a green sports car circling the portico of the hotel. The driver stopped

the car once and drove off after 15 seconds. Cynthia again alerted the security guard on duty.

Ana asked Cynthia to stay a few more minutes and prepare a report of the three incidents for the file. She said she would be talking with Ed Silver, The Times Hotel's director of security, later, and she wanted to discuss the events with him. These incidents seem to have been increasing over the past several weeks, and Ana feels there could be some problem.

The discussion with Ed Silver was brief. He said he feels these incidents are no cause for alarm but that a training program for front desk personnel on safety and security procedures should be initiated. Ana indicated that similar situations have occurred in other hotels where she worked and were the beginning of large problems for those hotels. Ana said she wanted the local police department involved and agreed that a training program on safety and security procedures is critical.

What do you think of Ana's suggestion of involving the police? What major topics would you include in a training program on safety and security procedures for front office personnel?

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Key Words

biometrics	litigious society
communications hierarchy	room key control system
crisis management	safety committee
electronic key system	security escort service
foot patrol	smart card
hard-key system	visual alarm systems