

UNIT – 6: KEYS AND KEY CONTROL

Keys are instrument used for operating various types of locks. Keys are important for safety and security purposes for guest as well as hotel. Every good lock should have a unique key and should not be opened by any unauthorized persons. There are many different locking systems used in hotels. These include:

- Individual locks and keys put on a bolt – small establishments.
- Built in door lock with a double locking system opened using traditional key.
- Built in door lock with a double locking system opened using card key.

A double lock is a kind of latch that when put in from inside the room, cannot be opened from outside the room except with emergency key.

Apart from this another safety feature – magic eye or security chain is put in place from inside

the guest room to protect guest's privacy.

Types of keys used in Hotels:

The housekeeping department is primarily concerned with the following categories of keys

1. **Guestroom keys**
2. **Sub Master key / Section master keys**
3. **Floor Supervisor keys/ Floor master key**
4. **Master key/ Pass key**
5. **Grandmaster key / Emergency key**
6. **Supply room keys**

Guestroom keys: These are keys issued to guests upon their registration. The hotel guest room key is normally issued to open only one room for which it

was intended viz. individualised key for each lock. The guestroom key opens a single guestroom so long as it is not double locked. Once the guest checks out, it must be returned at the front desk.

Sub Master Key / Section Master key: A GRA is given this key to open the room he or she is assigned to clean on a floor. The floor key opens all rooms on a particular floor that are not double locked. Floor keys typically open the storeroom or floor pantry for that floor too.

Floor Master key: Key operates all sections on the floor /floor supervised by the particular supervisor. A Supervisor may be issued more than one key of this type as he or she may be required to inspect the work of more than one GRA.

Pass key/Master key: A master key is used to open all doors of the hotel, including the floor door itself if they are not double locked. This key is used to supervise and examine the work done by maids and room boys, as well as in emergency purposes. The Master keys are used only by the head of housekeeping and are not given to anyone else that has a lesser authority. This key is kept by the deputy or assistant housekeeper. It opens any internal door that has not been double locked. These keys open all guestroom doors that are not double locked

Grandmaster key/ Emergency key: This key opens all hotel guestrooms and often all housekeeping storage rooms as well even if they are double locked. This key usually held by the Chief or Duty Manager at the time of the afternoon, and is used to open the locked door or twice in double lock. Double Lock occurs. This key can be used in emergency situation. It is kept under lock and key either at Housekeeping or at the front desk of hotel.

Supply room keys: These keys are used within the servicing sector of the hotel by the supervisory level staff to ensure that stocks and equipment are safely stored away when not in use.

KEY CONTROL: Key control is the procedure of reducing guest property theft and other security related incidents by carefully monitoring and tracking of keys. Following policies should be considered for control of keys.

1. Issuing keys
2. Custody of keys
3. Loss of keys
4. Changing locks and keys

Issuing keys

1. Guest room keys: these keys are handed over to the guest on his arrival after completing registration facilities. Guest is requested to submit these keys at front desk whenever he leaves the hotel premises.
2. Other keys: all section master keys, master key and grand master keys should be signed out each time they are taken and their return noted in a key control sheet. All keys should be stamped do not duplicate.

Key control sheet

Hotel ABC							
<u>Key control sheet</u>							
Date _____						Page no.	
Key code	Name	Signature	Time out	Issued by	Time in	Signature	Received by

Custody of keys

These are the measures to be taken while the key is with a guest or employee after being issued as per the correct procedure.

- Usually master keys are to be attached to the belt / uniform of an employee at the beginning of the shift to prevent loss / misplacing it.
- Employees are not be allowed to loan the keys assigned to them to one another.
- Employees have to hand over keys whenever they leave the property.
- Spot checks should take place to ensure that keys are in right hands.

Loss of keys

This is a time when particular vigilance must be exercised

- If a section master key is lost under circumstances that may result in a guest being at risk, the entire section should be re-keyed.
- If a master key or grand master key is lost under any circumstance, it must be reported to the owner or the corporate office immediately by the general manager.

Changing locks and keys

Whenever a new key is made or a new lock is fitted, certain precautions are necessary

- A record must be kept on how many keys are made for each room and they are made.
- A log must be kept of all locks change and re-keys

ELECTRONIC CARD KEYS

Metals room keys are being replaced by electronically coded key cards. Many hotels now-a-days are using card key system. A card key, while not actually considered a key, is a plastic card which stores a digital signature that is used with electronic access control locks. It is normally a flat, rectangular piece of plastic and may also serve as an ID card for the guest. The Plastic cards look like credit cards with holes punched in them. Some have a magnetic strip instead of the holes. The System uses a computer that codes the cards to lock and unlock the doors. Rather than re- keying the door locks in case of loss of keys the computer is used to create new room lock codes for each room. Master keys may be easily created and destroyed through the computerized card system. The security advantage of the key cards has made it popular and many medium and large sized hotels are adopting this key-card system.

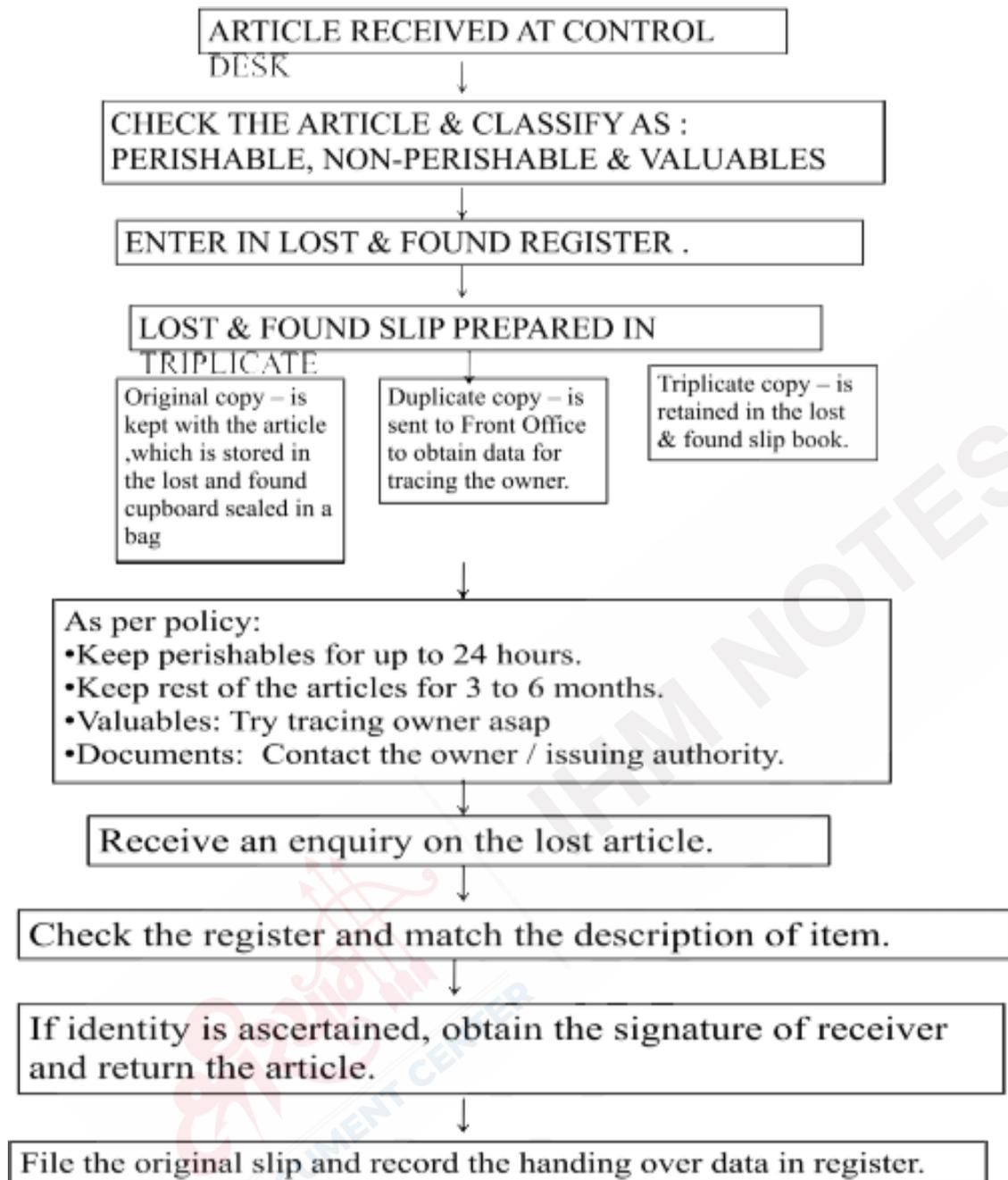
LOST AND FOUND

Lost and found is a term used in hotel terms for those articles left by guests or misplaced by guests in a hotel. Such articles can range from jewellery, costly electronic goods, travel documents, to simple garments. The hotel is obliged to protect such items and return to the guests. All unclaimed articles found on the hotel premises should be handed over to the housekeeping control desk.

LOST AND FOUND PROCEDURE-

1. When the article is found the housekeeping staff, usually room attendants and public area houseman, must immediately report this to the immediate supervisor.
2. The supervisor (the floor supervisor or the public area supervisor) immediately informs the control desk attendant.

3. The control desk attendant will verify with the front office cashier whether a resident guest is still in the process of paying his or her bill or whether guest has checked out. If the guest is still available, if guest is contacted for the handed \over of the article to guest.
4. The lobby manager is informed in case those guests, who may be visitors the hotel and not residing in it, are to be contacted to lodge a complaint.
5. Any where in the hotel, if an article is found by an employee which is not traceable to owner, is handed over at the Housekeeping control desk.
6. There is a lockable cupboard (even locker for valuables) or a storage room near desk to store lost and found items.
7. The desk supervisor is responsible for keeping the keys of lost & found room and maintaining records thereof.



HOTEL ABC LOST AND FOUND REGISTER							
S. no	Type of articles	Place or room no. where found	Finder's name	Finder's signature	Name of the claimant	Claimant's signature	Remarks

LOST AND FOUND SLIP/ FORM

ENTRY	CALIM
Sl.no:	Date handed over:
Date found:	Time handed over:
Time found:	Handed over to:
Location/room no:	Handed over by:
Guest's name:	Issued by
Address:	
Email ID of guest:	
Contact no:	
Description of article:	Remarks:
Finder / depositor:	
Designation and identity no:	
Depositor's sign	Receiver's sign

FORMAT OF LETTER TO INFORM FINDER OF THE ARTICLE

To the finder:

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Dear sir/madam,

I would like to inform you that the found by you in the and handed over to the housekeeping control desk, has been claimed by the article was handed over on against his /her signature recorded in the lost and found log book kept at the control desk.

Your name and address as the finder of the article have been supplied to the claimant.

Thank you for your action in handling the article.

SAMPLE LETTER FOR INFORMING THE GUEST

Respected sir madam

We would like to inform that the Found by On date at time is lying with us and has not been claimed by any one so far. Therefore, sir madam, if it belongs to you kindly intimate us the detail of the articles so that we can arrange for sending it to your address. We, as our policy, keep an unclaimed articles for a period of 6 months. If there is no response from your side before this period, we are not liable for any claims made later.

Thanking you

GUESTROOM INSPECTION

This is a planned, systematic process in which guestrooms are checked for cleanliness and maintenance and accordingly approved for occupancy by supervisors. The supervisor inspects guestrooms keeping in mind that their last look will be the guest's first look at the room. 'An eye for details' is the most important aid to supervisors inspecting guestrooms. The supervisor inspects for anything that is not upto the establishment's

standards before the guest finds them amiss. Guestroom inspection is carried out for the following:

- ✓ To ensure the working order of all electrical appliance, furniture and fixture.
- ✓ To ensure proper placement of guestroom supplies
- ✓ To ensure room cleaning as per hotels standards.

A systematic method should be followed while inspecting guestrooms so that the process is thorough, leaving no room for neglect. The executive housekeeper should develop an efficient checklist to help supervisors in this aspect of their work. **The inspection of bedrooms and bathroom may be carried out in a clockwise or anticlockwise direction, moving from high to low levels, first checking every article on the wall or working in the same particular direction.**

INSPECTION OF VIP ROOMS

- This is not a supervisor's responsibility though a supervisory task.
- VIP rooms are checked personally by the assistant housekeeper or executive housekeeper.
- All the items as per the checklist are checked for thorough cleaning.
- The room smell should be fresh with no bad odours or dampness.
- White ragging is carried out on random surface.
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(White ragging is checking the cleanliness of any area by wiping a white rag across it to see the degree of soiling.)

- Dirty dozen must be inspected.
- The toilet bowl should be checked by running a damp cotton swab under the rim.
- Room must be checked for all VIP supplies placed in the room.

INSPECTION CHECKLISTS

Inspection of the cleaned areas forms a major part of a supervisor's work. The Guest room inspection ensures that the desired results of an established cleaning system are consistently achieved by the housekeeping department. The main purpose of a room inspection is to catch any problems that may have been overlooked during the cleaning before it is found by the guest and becomes a cause of dissatisfaction and complaints.

Use of a pre-printed room inspection check-list form will prove effective for the hotel management. It will establish a set procedure ensuring that will remind both Housekeeping Supervisor / Executive and Room maids of any defects and missing amenities for the guest.

HOTEL XYZ					
Date:	Room No.:	Room type: <i>Standard</i>	Inspected By:		
Specifications	OK	Remark	Specifications	OK	Remark
I. Entrance			V. Closet/ Wardboard		
Room No. Plate			Doors		
Entrance door and			Hangers		
Lock Operation			Bath robes		
Peep Hole			Shelves		
Fire exit plan			Laundry bag & rate list		
Door Knob cards			Safe		
II. Vestibule Area			Bathroom slippers		
Ceiling			Shelves		
Mirror			Lighting		
Floor			VI. Wall pictures		
Lighting			Clean / Dusted		
III. Bathroom			VII. Television (Dusting / working)		
Door			VIII. Writing Table		

Door knob			Folder with all stationery		
Vanity counter			Sewing kit		
Washbasin			Dustbin		
Mirror			IX. Window		
Amenity tray			Ledge / Glass		
Soap & Soap dish			Curtains / Hooks		
Moisturiser			X. Coffee table		
Shower cap			Dusting / Magazine		
Toilet Rolls			Sofa		
W.C.			VII. Bed side table		
Sani Bin			Night Lamp		
Bath tub (Amenities & towels)			Telephone		
Shower area (Amenities & towels)			TV Remote		
Bath Mug			Scribbling pad & pen		
Taps & Shower			Holy book		
Shower curtain			VIII. Bed		

Tiles & ceiling			Head board		
Bathroom telephone			Sheets / duvet/ pillows/ runner/		
Bathroom floor			Switch board		
IV. Luggage Rack			Lights and fan		
Clean / Dusted			IX. Carpet		
Shoe mitt			X. Room freshener		

Similarly checklists can also be developed for public areas so as to ensure no area is left out of notice of the supervisor.

QUICK SIX INSPECTION

These are the six major areas a supervisor must check as these are also the areas which are readily observed by the guest as he / she enters the room.

1. **CREDENZA:** A credenza is more often a type of sideboard used as a side surface and storage cupboards. Check the carpet under and behind the credenza for dust or trash. Usually this piece of furniture being heavy, its back and underside is ignored.
2. **NIGHT STAND:** There is generally a little area between the night stand / bed side table and bed. Here dust, food crumbs, small paper tears may fall. As the bedspread hides this area when the day bed is made, the area is often neglected. Inspect this area and wall around for cleanliness.
3. **BED LINEN:** The bed linen must be inspected for not only cleanliness but wrinkles, dryness, hair, smell etc. A clean and freshly made bed is welcoming.
4. **UNDER VANITY COUNTER WALL:** Many a times a dustbin may be kept under the vanity counter. Due to this, and often because while standing the area is not visible, it is often ignored. However, a guest using the W.C. has a plain view of the underside of the counter.
5. **SHOWER AREA WALL:** The wall of the shower area or bathtub which need scrubbing to clean water and soap marks is often ignored as they are difficult to reach areas. A supervisor must check them if they have been scrubbed clean.

6. TOILET BOWL: A toilet may look clean / flushed. However, a supervisor must take a tissue paper, roll it, dip in little water and rub it under the rim of the toilet bowl. Thoroughly cleaned toilet will have clean underside of the rim.

THE DIRTY DOZEN:

Certain areas of the guest room elude the maid's attention and tend to accumulate dust. Such areas are normally hidden from the guest's eyes too. However, their cleanliness reflects the

standard of cleaning of the hotel. Experience shows that the following areas are usually overlooked and are appropriately termed as the Dirty Dozen.

1. Top of the door edges and ceiling
2. Air conditioning ducts and diffuser grills
3. Under bathroom counters
4. Beneath the tables
5. Behind the W.C. Bowl & the S-trap
6. In the toilet roll niche
7. Faucet nozzle filter
8. Toilet vents
9. Top of picture frames
10. Area above towel racks
11. Rear surface of doors
12. Interior surface of drawers

EXTRAS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN

ROOM OCCUPANCY REPORT	HOUSEKEEPING ROOM REPORT
1. Prepared by receptionist at desk	Prepared by GRA/Floor supervisor and consolidated by Control desk supervisor
2. This report is based on the available with front office	This report is based on the physical check of the room.
3. Room report assists housekeeping in organising their room cleaning task.	This report helps in finding out any discrepancy in room status so that guests can be billed accurately.

ROOM STATUS CODES

CODE	STATUS
O	Occupied
V	VACANT
DND	DO NOT DISTURB
L	LUGGAGE IN ROOM BUT BED UNUSED
UR	UNDER REPAIR
NB	OCCUPIED BUT NO BAGGAGE
SB	SCANTY BAGGAGE
OOO	OUT OF ORDER
OOS	OUT OF SERVICE
DL	DOUBLE LOCK
NC	NOT CLEARED THOUGH DEPARTURE HAS TAKEN PLACE
DNCO	DID NOT CHECK OUT

Soft furnishings

These articles serve various functions. Some may be simply decorative, providing colour, pattern and texture to the room. Some are protective and others may provide warmth and comfort.

Types of soft furnishing

The soft furnishing in a guestroom include

- cushion,
- loose covers,
- curtains,
- blinds,
- bedspreads

Loose covers- Loose cover are detachable covers fitted over upholstered chairs, stools etc. They can give a clean, fresh appearance to a room, but the constant need to straighten them. The choice of pattern, colour and texture is as for any other soft furnishing in that materials.

Curtains- These often contribute more to the atmosphere of a room creating the desired atmosphere, curtains give privacy, filter heat, light and to some extent noise. Good curtains are usually lined and heavy curtains are interlined. The lining helps the curtains to drape well, as well as protecting from sunlight and airborne dust.

- Sheer curtains: Light net curtains put on the windows of guest room which permit some light from outside to come into the room still maintaining privacy.
- Heavy curtains: Heavy opaque curtains put parallel to sheer curtains, usually closed during turndown service
- A third type of curtains called shower curtains are put in shower area or bath tub. These curtains are made of a plastic kind water proof

material and are opaque. They provide privacy to guest while taking bath.

Pelmets, Valances and swags-

Pelmets and valances are decorative headings fixed over the top of the curtain to hide the suspension, to add decoration to the room.

Valances are gathered or pleated fabrics drapes across the top of a window or covering a shape form placed above it. They conceal the curtain tops and the rods from which the curtains hang.

Pelmets are rigid and may be shape pieces of wood or hardboard which can be painted to match the décor of the room or they may be of padded plastic or stiffened fabric to match or contrast with curtains.

Swags are decorative drapes meant to hide the curtain headings and frequently completed with tail.

MINIBAR MANAGEMENT

A minibar is present in guest rooms as a guest amenity in all luxury hotels. It is usually a piece of furniture with a cabinet for small refrigerator. There are also shelves to stock crockery and glassware and also to keep dry supplies (those that are not refrigerated). A typical minibar in a standard guest room may have:

Free of additional cost items

Tea kettle (electrical)

Tea caddy – supplies like tea bags, coffee sachets, dairy creamer, sugar, sugarfree, stirrers etc

One mineral water bottle per guest per day

Chargeable items

Some snacks such as packets of wafers, cookies, chocolates.

Inside the refrigerator one may have mineral water bottles, wines, miniatures of alcoholic drinks, soda, aerated beverages, juice cans etc.

For guest use (non chargeable)

Crockery – Tea cups and saucers

Glassware – For drinking water or wine glasses if present in refrigerator.

The minibar may be a little briefer or may be more elaborate depending on the house policy. Housekeeping or Butler service (IRD) is responsible for maintaining, replenishing and charging the minibar.

MENU:

- A menu is fixed in terms of quantity and pricing.
- It is displayed at the minibar counter prominently in each guest room.

Stocking a minibar:

- Stocking of used items is done of a daily basis by GRA / Butler and bill is raised for consumed items that are chargeable
- The bill is immediately posted in guest folio by housekeeping desk / IRD.
- Whenever information is received from Front desk regarding a guest checking out, immediately minibar of the room must be checked and front desk should be informed of

- pending charges so that they can be added to the final bill.
- For stocktaking, a minibar consumption sheet is prepared for each floor by supervisor and suitable entries are made for stock consumed & charged. Issues from main store are also recorded.
- Challenges in maintaining minibar:
 - Promptly raising the bills.
 - Checking frauds such as replacing alcoholic beverage with water (check seals of bottles)
 - Before stocking minibar, check the expiry dates of the products.

HANDLING GUEST COMPLAINTS

Guest often expresses their displeasure when certain situation or services at the hotels are not to their satisfaction. Many guest curb their tendency to complain when they are not pleased with one or two of hotel's services, but when the displeasure build up through a series of problem, the guest does complain. It may be that for every guest who complaint, there are five or six who keep quite. Then again, hotels also have guests who complain just for the sake of complaining and like to find fault with everything. In the hotel jargon, these guests are called handle with care (HWC) guests.

Types of guest complaints-

There are primarily four types of guest complaints that employees in a hotel come across:

1. Technical /mechanical
2. Service related
3. Attitudinal
4. Unusual

Technical/Mechanical-

- These complaints relate to the malfunctioning of hotel equipment or a set of guest supplies provided by the hotel.
- These may be due to problems with the air conditioning, guestroom safes, room furnishings, door keys, plumbing, television sets, or elevator s.
- Efficient and alert housekeeping attendants help minimize mechanical complaints.
- Effective use of the log book and of maintenance work orders is essential.
- At times, the technical problem in itself is not the cause of complaint, but rather the delay in rectifying the problem.
- **Service- related complaints-**
- These complaints arise when guests feel they are not receiving value for money in terms of the services provided by the hotel.
- For instance, a guest may complain about a delay in procuring a guest loan item, problems in phone services, carpets that are not clean, a stale odour in the room, linen not having been changed twice. And so on.
- **Attitudinal complaints-**
- These complaints are a result of tactless or rude behavior towards guests on the part of hotel employees.
- Sometimes these complaints may also result from employees using guests as a sounding board for their problems at work or from guests overhearing conversations between employees.
- **Unusual complaints-**
- As the name suggests, these are odd complaints that often have no foundation and their solutions are usually not in the hands of hotel staff.
- These complaints are the result of the whims (sudden change of mind) and fancies of guests.
- For instance, guests complaining about the size of the suite, the absence of swimming pool, plane timing s, bad weather and so on.

Dealing with complaints-

Here are some guidelines a supervisor should follow when confronted with a plaintive guest.

- Listen with concern and empathy.
- Isolate the guest, if possible, so that other guests may not overhear the conversation.
- Stay calm. Avoid responding with hostility or defensiveness.
- Be cautious of injuring the guest's sense of self-esteem; rather, try to pander to it subtly.
- Show that you take a personal interest in the problem. Use the guest's name frequently in the conversation. Take the complaint seriously. Give the guest your undivided attention. Concentrate on the problem, not on apportioning blame. Certainly do not insult the guest.
- Take notes. Writing down the facts save time if someone else must get involved. Also, guests will tend to slow down if they are speaking faster so that you can write, which helps them clam down too. More importantly, the fact that a staff member is concerned enough to write down what they are saying is reassuring to the guest.
- Tell the guest what can be done. Offer choices. However, do not promise the impossible, nor exceed your authority.
- Set an approximate time for the completion of corrective action. BE specific, but do not underestimate the amount of time it will take to resolve the problem.
 - Monitor the progress of corrective action.
- Follow up. Even if the complaint was resolved by someone else, contact the guest personally to ensure that the problem was resolved to his /her satisfaction. Report the entire event, the action taken and the conclusion of the incident.