GUEST CYCLE

The guest cycle describes the activities that each guest passes by from the moment he/she calls to communicate a reservation inquiry till he/she departs from the hotel. In fact, the guest cycle encompasses 4 different stages, which are depicted in the underneath, diagram:

Pre-Arrival | Arrival | Occupancy Departure

Each stage of the guest cycle is associated guest service, and guest accounting activity (ies).

1. Guest services:

Reservation Þ Registration Þ Occupancy services Þ Check-out and history

2. Guest Accounting:

Establishment of credits Þ Posting charges Þ Night auditing Þ settlement of accounts Below is a description of the activities undertaken at each stage of the guest cycle?

1. **Pre-arrival:**
   - At the pre-arrival stage, the hotel must create for every potential guest a reservation Record. Doing this initiates the hotel guest cycle. Moreover, reservation records help personalize guest services and appropriately _schedule needed_ _staff and facilities_
   - The reservation department should, then, complete all the pre-registration activities and prepare guest folios (applicable only for automated systems). Doing so will eventually maximize room sales by _accurately_ monitoring room availability and forecasting room revenues

2. **Arrival:**
   - At the arrival stage, registration and rooming functions takes place and the hotel establishes a business relation- ship with the guest.
   - The check-in clerk should determine the guest's reservation status (i.e. pre-registered guests _versus_ walk-ins). Later, he/she shall prepare a registration record or make the guest sign the already-printed pre-

registration record (under some of the semi-automated and all fully automated systems).

- The registration records shall include the following *personal* and *financial* items:

A   Personal information:

1. Name and Surname of the guest along with billing address, telephone number, and any other coordinates
2. Passport number, birth certificate, and/or driving license number (whatever applicable)
3. Any special needs or requests
4. Guest Signature

B   Financial information:

1. Date of arrival
2. Expected date of departure or length of stay depending on how the system in the hotel is designed
3. Assigned room number
4. Assigned room rate
5. Guest's intended method of payment

Registration records can be used for various purposes:

a. Satisfy guest needs
b. Forecast room occupancies
c. Settle *properly* guest accounts
d. Establish guest history records at check-out [personal & financial information]
e. Assign a room type and a room rate for each guest
f. Determine long-run availability [i.e. reservation information] versus short-run availability [i.e. room status]
g. Satisfy special categories of guests such as disabled people through barrier-free designs

3. Occupancy:

- At the occupancy stage, the front office department shall coordinate guest services *in a timely and accurate manner*. Moreover, front office clerks should encourage repeat guests by paying <u>a great attention</u> to guest complaints. This is ensured by placing complaint and/or suggestion cards in every public place and revenue centers in the hotel. Moreover, the hotel shall, at least on a daily basis, collect comment cards, proceed with their analysis, and provide positive feedback to guest as soon as possible.

- In addition, shall design effective procedures in order to protect the funds and valuables of guests. This might be ensured through guest key control, property surveillance, safe deposit boxes, and well designed emergency panels and exits...

- Another activity at occupancy is to process posting of guest charges [i.e. post room rates, F&B charges, additional expenses, and taxes...] to various guest folios, master Folios... While doing so, front office clerks shall continuously check for deviations from the house limit, and take corrective measures as to change the status of the guest to Paid- in-advance. Finally, front office clerks shall *periodically* review Account Balances in coordination with the night auditor.

4. Departure:

- At the departure stage, the guest shall be walked out of the hotel. Moreover, front office clerks shall create guest history record. Finally, cashiers shall settle guest account outstanding balances [i.e.: balance the Guest account to 0]

- In general, a proper checkout occurs when the guest:
    a. **Vacates the room**
    b. **Receives an *accurate* settlement of the guest account c) Returns room keys**
    c. **Leaves the hotel**

- At departure, checkout personnel should encourage guests to consider returning to the hotel on any future date. That's why cashiers should act like a true sales person, and might eventually accept guest future reservations. That way, the stages of the guest cycle become really a cycle (i.e. start from where it ends).
- If at departure, the guest account is not fully settled, then late charges accumulate. In such an undesired case, the responsibility of collection lies within the accounting department, however the front office department shall provide all necessary types of information to make this collection easier, quicker, and feasible.