

Senior Secondary Vocational Course

HOTEL FRONT OFFICE OPERATIONS



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NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL

B-31-B, Kailash Colony

New Delhi-110 048

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Course Development
(Dr. Manoj Kumar)

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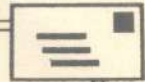
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CONTENTS

Lesson	Page No.
1. Introduction to Hotels	1
2. Front Office - An Introduction	9
3. Qualities of the Front Office Staff	19
4. Room Reservations	27
5. Reception	42
6. Reception - Control Activities	54
7. Information	65
8. Guest Relations	73
9. Front Office Cash - Guest Billing	81
10. Front Office Cashier General Work	92
11. Night Auditing	101
12. Bell Desk	109
13. Telephones	119
14. Emergency Situations	127
15. First Aid	134



Dear Learner

You might have seen various hotels or might have stayed in one of them. Have you ever wondered how these function so efficiently? Well, here is a course on "Hotel Front Office Operations", which will tell us about the functioning of a front office – one of the important constituents of Hotel administration and how the various departments work in close coordination and are apprised of each and every smallest detail.

So, next time when you stay in a hotel, you will know how it functions and meets the needs of its guests.

If you have any difficulty please feel free to contact me.

Manita Behera
Tutor
Home Science (Voc.)

1

INTRODUCTION TO HOTELS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Most of you must be aware about hotels. A hotel consists of some rooms where one can stay and has one or more than one restaurant. In other words, a hotel provides us boarding and lodging. But have you ever thought what more is there to a hotel? How does it function or operate? Well, in this book we shall study about one section of the hotel operations which largely deals with the rooms and the people who stay there. These people visiting or staying in a hotel are known as "guests". But, before that let us familiarise ourselves a bit more with a hotel in this chapter.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to know:

- brief history and evolution of hotels,
- types of hotels,
- departments of a hotel,
- room as a commodity and its different types,
- various plans – EP, CP, AP and MAP.

1.3 BRIEF HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF HOTELS

As we know, a hotel is a place where one can stay for some period of time and also find arrangements for food. But have you thought how did it come into being? What was the need for such a place?

Well, we can trace the growth and need of such places right into ancient times. The need for a place to stay and eat began when people started to travel. Can you think of some reasons for travelling? Yes, people travel to visit places of interest, also

when they have some office work or for business. Religion is another reason for traveling. People visit religious places, shrines and temples. Now-a-days people also travel for education and medical treatment. There can be many reasons for traveling, but not at every place they have their friends or relatives to stay with. At such destinations they need some place to stay and feed themselves.

Earlier, when traveling was less and mainly due to religious purposes, there used to be self- service institutions, generally known as 'Dharamshalas' in India. Similar places were also known as "inns" or "Sarais" in other countries. They were mainly dedicated places and were easily affordable, sometimes even free of any charges. The hygienic conditions were, however, not very good. Most of them mainly provided shelter only.

As traveling increased , so did the need for food and shelter. In addition people also wanted more comfort. These demands from the travelling people turned the charitable work into a profit making business of "HOTELS". This revolution saw the opening of small establishments like guest houses, dak bungalows, etc. which provided food, shelter and security to the people on payment of some fees.

In India, Government aid was necessary to make bigger hotels. In 1966. The India Tourism Development Corporation was formed which opened small and big hotels across the country. A committee was set up to define certain standards for the hotels and the government also announced various schemes and incentives to promote the business.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.1

Mark True or False :

- (a) Religion is one of the reasons traveling.
- (b) People only travel to places where they have friends and relatives to stay with.
- (c) The business of hotels is a charitable work.

Fill in the blanks :

- (d) A hotel provides us with _____, _____, and _____.
- (e) People visiting or staying in a hotel are known as _____.
- (f) Earlier when people used to travel, normally they used to stay in dedicated places known as _____ in India.

1.4 TYPES OF HOTELS

We have read how the hotel business developed. We also know that hotels differ in size; they could be small, medium or large. Certain other factors also distinguish one type of hotel to another. Let us now read about them.

(1) Size

We already know size as a distinguishing factor. Based on the number of rooms, we

can differentiate between the types of hotels as –

- (a) Small hotels – which have up to 25 rooms.
- (b) Average/medium size hotels – which have 26 to 100 rooms.
- (c) Above average size hotels – having 101 to 300 rooms.
- (d) Large hotels – which have more than 300 rooms.

(2) Length of Guest Stopover

What does a hotel provide us with? Yes, food and shelter, a place where one can stay. We can also divide hotels into different types based on the period of stay by the guests –

- (a) **Transient hotels** Where people need to spend one or two nights only, such hotels fall into this type, these are usually located near bus terminals, railway stations and airports or even on highways.
- (b) **Residential hotels** These enable people to stay for a longer duration, say three months, six months, or may be even more. They may have small apartments which are let out furnished or unfurnished. They may also have a kitchenette attached to the suites or apartments.
- (c) **Semi-residential hotels** As the name suggests they provide accommodation for longer periods than a transient hotel. Usually tourists and business people come and stay in these hotels for three or four days. However, here people can stay for a long duration as in residential hotels, or for a short period as in transient hotels.

(3) Location

You are aware that hotels exist in cities. But is that all? While travelling, you must have seen hotels besides highways. There are hotels also located in the hills and near beaches. Based on where they are located, you can divide them into various types :

- (a) **City hotels** These are hotels situated in the city or around important commercial centres.
- (b) **Resort hotels** These are located at places of public interest and leisure. The prime objective of resorts is to provide relaxation and recreation. You will usually find them in hills, on beaches and also in the countryside.
- (c) **Motels** These are hotels situated on highways. They cater to the needs of the people travelling by road. In addition to rooms and a restaurant they may also have facilities for car repair, fuel station, etc.
- (d) **Star hotels** You must be familiar with three-or five-star hotels. The hotels can be classified by the standards it maintains and the facilities it provides. This star categorisation is done by a classification committee which inspects the hotels periodically and then grades them between one-to five-star categories.

1.5 DEPARTMENTS OF A HOTEL

Through the previous pages, you must have become quite familiar with the objectives of a hotel. Do you think only a few people can take care of the hotel and its occupants? Here we will have a short peep into how a hotel operates.

You know that a hotel is a place to stay. So, we need people to keep track of rooms. You also know that one can find food at a hotel. There have to be cooks to cook food and others to serve it. Some staff is also needed to keep the place clean, and so on. Different professionals and managers are needed to manage the place and the staff. So the working of a hotel is divided into different sections or departments which report to the manager of the hotel who may also be known as the General Manager. A General Manager is in overall incharge of the entire hotel.

Broadly, the important divisions of a hotel can be stated as follows :

1. Front Office

This department deals basically with the accommodation aspect of the hotel – letting out rooms, keeping track of the rooms, empty or full and looking after the requirements of the guests in general. The working becomes very complex, once we go into the finer details of this department. The head of this department is known as the Front Office Manager. We will study in detail about this department in the subsequent chapters.

2. Food and Beverage

The Food and Beverage department looks after the food aspect of the hotel, the cooking of food and serving the same to the guests. The head of this department is known as the Food & Beverage Manager. It can further be divided into the following two departments –

- Kitchen or Food and Beverage Production, which looks after the preparation of various food and beverage items. This is under the control of an Executive Chef.
- Food and Beverage Service, which looks after the service of various food and beverage items to the guests. It is under the direct control of the Food & Beverage Manager.

3. Housekeeping

As the name suggests, this department is responsible for the cleanliness and general upkeep and decor of the the hotel including maintenance of the hotel furniture, equipment and linen, etc. The head of this department is known as the Executive or simply Housekeeper.

Apart from these departments looking after the main operations, a hotel also has other departments common to any other organisation such as Accounts to keep track of the financial transaction and Personnel & Administration dealing with the staff employed in the hotel and its security.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.2

State True or False

- (a) Hotels can only be differentiated by star categorisation.
- (b) In semi-residential hotels, people cannot stay for more than four days.
- (c) Star categorisation is done on the basis of certain set standards and facilities.

Fill in the blanks :

- (d) Motels are situated on _____.
 - (e) The three main departments of a hotel are _____, _____, _____.
 - (f) The incharge of a hotel is known as the _____, _____.
-

1.6 ROOM AS A COMMODITY AND ITS TYPES

You know that in every profit making business, money is charged for providing services or a commodity. What does a hotel charge for? Yes, it is the room which the hotel lets out which can be treated as a commodity in this business. Other things which a hotel charges are food and beverage items and the service it provides. Here we are concerned mainly with the accommodation part of the hotel and therefore will study in detail about the rooms.

Rooms in a hotel can be of different types. They can also be divided into different categories depending on their decor, facilities and services provided e.g. normal and deluxe rooms. Such categorisation of rooms depend on the individual hotels and they may name these categories in different ways. However, the basic types of rooms as followed universally can be listed as follows :

- (1) **Single room** – It is a room with one single bed, i.e. one bed for one person.
- (2) **Double room** – It is a room with one double bed, i.e. one bed for two persons.
- (3) **Twin room** – It is a room with two separate single beds.
- (4) **Studio** – It is a room with a single bed and a sofa-cum-bed.
- (5) **Suite** – It normally consists of one double room and a living room, there could be larger suites consisting of two bedrooms, one living room and/or one dining room with a kitchenette (normally where there is separate cottages or apartments).
- (6) **Duplex suite** – It is a suite where rooms are spread over two floors with an interconnecting staircase (inside the suite).

1.7 ROOM RATES

In the last section, you have read about the different types of rooms and that the room is used as a commodity by the hotel.

What happens when you go to a stationary shop to buy pens? The shopkeeper shows you different types of pens and tells you the price of each. He might also give

you a certain discount if you are a regular to his shop. What happens when you visit a shop for the first time or very rarely? Does the shopkeeper give you discount?

As you have seen in the above example, the management of the hotel also determines a price for letting out their rooms. This is known as the tariff and is printed on the hotel's tariff card. This is the tariff which the hotel lets out its rooms for to any visitor wanting to make use of this facility. However, similar to the above example, if any individual or a company uses the hotel quite often, the management may decide to extend a discount to them. Also there is special tariff for a group of fifteen or more persons. Thus we see that generally three types of rates are prevalent in a hotel. These are –

- (1) **Rack rate** – It is the rate of a room as fixed by the management for letting out of rooms to individuals.
- (2) **Group rate** – It is the rate per room offered to a group of fifteen individuals or more.
- (3) **Company volume guarantee rate (CVGR)** – It is the discounted rate offered to companies on a guarantee of a definite volume of business. This may be a negotiated rate and is kept strictly confidential.

Usually two types of tariff are printed on the hotel tariff card – rack rates and group rates.

1.8 PLANS

A hotel may suggest to you a rate which is for the room only or a rate which is inclusive of one or more of the three major meals of the day, viz., breakfast, lunch and dinner. When a hotel does so, these rates are known as plan rates. The normal plans existing universally are –

- | | | |
|--------|--------------------------|---|
| E.P. | – European Plan | – consists of room only. |
| C.P. | – Continental Plan | – consists of room + continental breakfast. |
| A.P. | – American Plan | – consists of room + all the three meals. |
| M.A.P. | – Modified American Plan | – consists of room + breakfast + one of the other two meals (either lunch or dinner). |

Wherever the meals are included, they are on the fixed menu basis and the guest has limited choice to order from.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 1.3

State True or False :

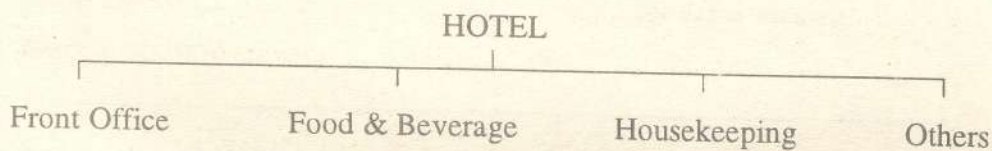
- (a) A double room is a set of two rooms.
- (b) A suite cannot have a kitchenette.
- (c) A hotel may give discount to a company depending the volume of business it gives.
- (d) Continental Plan consists of room only.

Fill in the blanks –

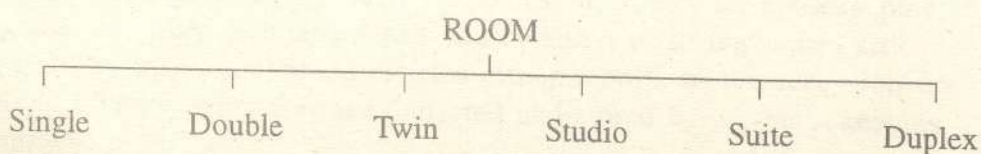
- (e) A twin room is a room with _____
- (f) A room with a single bed and one sofa-cum-bed is known as a _____
- (g) A suite has one or more bedrooms and a _____ room.

1.9 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

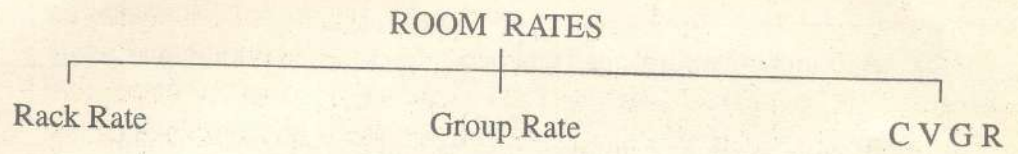
- People travel for different purposes.
- Earlier they used to stay in 'dharamshalas', 'inns', or 'sarais'.
- With time the travel increased and people wanted more comfort and security. Thus evolved the profit making business of hotels.
- Hotels can be divided into various types based on –
 - Size
 - Small hotels
 - Average/Medium hotels
 - Above average hotels
 - Large hotels
 - Length of stay
 - Transient hotels
 - Residential hotels
 - Semi-residential hotels
 - Location
 - City hotels
 - Resorts
 - Motels
 - Standards and Facilities
 - One to five star hotels
- Departments of a Hotel



- Types of Rooms



- Types of Rates



- E.P. - European Plan
- C.P. - Continental Plan
- A.P. - American Plan
- M.A.P. - Modified American Plan

1.10 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. How can you distinguish between different type of hotels?
2. What are the different departments of a hotel?
3. What are the common types of
 - (a) Rooms,
 - (b) rates, and
 - (c) plans.

1.11 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 1.1 (a) True (b) False (c) False (d) Food, shelter, security (e) Guests (f) Dharamshalas.
- 1.2 (a) False (b) False (c) True (d) Highways (e) Front Office, Food and Beverage, Housekeeping. (f) General Manager.
- 1.3 (a) False (b) False (c) True (d) False (e) Two separate single beds (f) Studio (g) Living.

2

FRONT OFFICE – AN INTRODUCTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

After reading Lesson 1 you must now certainly be more familiar with the constitution of a hotel. You have read about different departments in a hotel. Can you remember them?

All right, now, one of these departments is the Front Office which deals with the aspect of accommodation or rooms in a hotel. Let us study more about it in this chapter. Then we shall move to other chapters to find out about the various activities which you will be required to perform as a staff member of the Front Office and how you will operate, but first a general overview of this department.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter you will learn

- Front office – its importance and role in the hotel,
- Different sections of the Front Office,
- Staff organisation in this department,
- Co-ordination with other departments.

2.3 WHAT IS FRONT OFFICE?

Have you ever been to a hotel, even to a small one?

Consider yourself a guest in a hotel. As you enter the hotel, what is the first thing you notice? Yes your entrance may be into a hall which is known as the lobby. At one side of this lobby you see a desk or a counter behind which there are some friendly looking people standing to help you. This is known as the 'Reception'. So at once you approach the reception and ask questions if you have any or seek any kind of assistance regarding your visit to the hotel. If you have gone there to stay, these are the people who register you in the hotel and assign you a room to stay.

In the last paragraph we were dealing with a section of the hotel which is always at the front, near the front gate and is the first office which a person entering the hotel comes in contact with. Thus we call it as the "Front Office". The lobby and the reception are two of the many sections of this department.

There is another desk in the lobby where people are standing to assist you with your baggage and similar other jobs. This is known as the **bell desk**. Another section of the Front Office is **reservations** where you can reserve a room for yourself or your guest for visits in future.

In a small hotel, all these activities may be carried on at only one place that is at the Reception. However in a large hotel, these activities are divided into different sections to facilitate smooth and efficient functioning of the department. In the later chapters of the course we shall study in detail about each of these sections.

Thus we can say that the Front Office is the office situated at the entrance to the hotel and is the first point of contact between the guest (customer in a hotel) and the hotel. It is also the constant point of contact for a guest who is staying in the hotel. It deals with the most important aspect of the hotel business and that is a systematic sale of rooms. In addition it also provides assistance and help to the guests visiting the hotel. The guests also express their impression, pleasant or unpleasant, about the hotel, to the receptionist (person manning the reception counter).

2.4 IMPORTANCE OF THE FRONT OFFICE.

In the last section you came to know that the Front office is the first point of contact in a hotel, for any person entering it.

It acts as a source of information regarding the hotel, its services also includes giving information about the town, city, state and country to the guests. It also allots rooms to them for their stay and continues to be the immediate point of contact for any assistance required by the guests. Thus to the guest it gains importance as a continuous point of contact and a source of information. A guest can look for any sort of assistance when he approaches the Front Office.

While the Front Office plays an important role in keeping the guest happy and assisting them in all possible ways by co-ordinating with other departments, it also becomes necessary for other departments to co-ordinate with the Front Office. Other departments or staff-members of the hotel get their entire information about guests staying in the hotel from the Front Office, including their needs and any special requests, or about his departure etc.

Apart from being the first point of contact, the Front Office also becomes the last point of contact for a guest when he is leaving. The guest settles his bills at the reception desk or at the Front Office Cash, wherever it is separate. Then it becomes essential for the dealing clerk to check that all his bills have been settled, e.g. bills for various restaurants, laundry, etc., alongwith the bill for room. Other departments must make sure that they have handed over the unpaid bills to the Front Office cashier, so that he can realise the payments at the end of the stay. Similarly staff in the Housekeeping and Room-service departments must know how many guests are staying in the hotel, who is in which room and till when. All this information can be had from Front Office.

Thus we see how the Front Office is important to guests and how important its role is in the day-to-day activities of the other departments in a hotel. Do you think there is some other importance of the Front Office? Yes, there is. We already know that this department takes account of the most important part of the hotel business and that is the sale of rooms. So it becomes a very important place for the management also. It is from here that they can find out how their business is progressing. How many rooms are being sold and what is the revenue being generated in the hotel. Are the guests happy or unhappy, because the guests leave their comments at the Front Office while leaving the hotel and share their good or bad experiences with the Front Office staff. Based on the information received from the Front Office, the management decides their further plans of action.

So we have seen how important is this department and how the entire activity of the hotel revolves around it.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.1

Fill in the blanks –

- (a) In a hotel, the Front Office is always situated at the
- (b) The Front Office is the point of contact when a guest enters the hotel and is also a constant point of point of contact during his stay in the hotel.

State True or False –

- (c) In a small hotel, all the activities of Front Office can be carried out from the reception.
- (d) Other departments do not need any information from the Front Office.
- (e) The Front Office is of importance to the guest, the hotel and also to the management.

2.5 SECTIONS OF A FRONT OFFICE

As you have read earlier in this chapter, there are various activities taking place in the 'Front Office, like reserving and allotting rooms to guests, co-ordinating with other departments, being a constant source of information, settling bills etc. In small hotels all these activities may be done from one place only and that may be called the 'Reception'. However in a large hotel, since the volume of business is more, it may be necessary to further divide the Front Office into smaller sections performing specific activities. If you have ever visited a large hotel, you might have observed that at the reception counter or Front Desk (as it may be called) itself there are three separate sections for Reception, Information and Cash. Similarly, there are other sections also. Let us read about these sections and familiarise ourselves with them before studying in detail, the activities of each –

1. Reception

The 'Reception', as you can understand from the word itself, is a place meant to receive somebody. In a hotel it is meant to receive a guest. A guest is received,

registered and assigned a room here. It also acts as a place where all guests' requests, appreciation and grievances are taken care of. Apart from maintaining rooms and guests' records during a stay, it is from here the entire hotel co-ordinates in order to keep the guests happy, comfortable and satisfied.

2. Information

'Information' is a place where guests can seek some information about the hotel, city, state or country, of any event, even of railways and airlines. There could be a wide variety of queries a guest might have counter. In case an instant reply is not possible, the staff present on this counter can assist in getting information from other sources. More important than that it also handles the guests' mail and messages. It is usually attached to the reception. In small hotels there may be only one counter for reception and information. Wherever different, the duties are very difficult to separate out and usually the same team is present at both the counters, which are adjoining.

3. Reservation

These days, due to a large number of people travelling and requiring rooms to stay, it is always advisable to inform the hotel of their visit in advance, so that they can keep a room available on his arrival. This is known as reserving a room or making a reservation. In large hotels, a separate section of the Front Office deals with this aspect and is known as 'Room Reservations' and is generally located near the reception. This section receives requests for reservation, processes and records them in a systematic manner and intimates the reception at a proper time so that a room is kept ready for the guest on his arrival.

4. Bell Desk

When a guest arrives to stay in a hotel, he would have some luggage also with him. This luggage is carried to the room and from the room to the exit at the time of leaving by certain staff members of the hotel known as bell boys. They can also be used for certain errand jobs like getting medicine, stamps or alike. To approach them easily, they are stationed near the entrance to the hotel, and are available for work on the call of a bell. The desk from where their activities are monitored and co-ordinated is known as the bell desk.

5. Front Office Cash

You know that every business activity is done to earn revenue, and so is the that hotel business. You have already read how a hotel earns money in the previous chapter. Can you recall it now? Yes, the guests who come and stay in the hotel and eat in the hotel, or its restaurants, have to pay money to the hotel for the services they have used there. During their stay, a bill is opened and updated continuously with every transaction or service they utilise. This is done by a cashier. This bill is presented to the guest usually at the time of his leaving. The cashier is also situated with the reception desk, near the main door as it is also the last point of contact of a guest. This section, where it is separate from the reception, as in larger hotels, is known as the Front Office Cash. Although it falls under the jurisdiction of the accounts department, but its day-to-day working is greatly influenced by the Front Office management. For daily operations the Front Office Cash reports to the Front

Office Manager and is considered to be a part of the Front Office. There are other activities also, like if a guest wants to change foreign currency, he can do it here. Also, if a guest wants to store his valuables in a safe place, this is the place to contact. We will read about this section and all others in detail, later.

6. Guest Relations

In large hotels, where the number of guests is high, as also the standards of the services rendered by it, the reception alone may not be able to look after each and every guest. To give a more personalised service and show their attention towards the guests, the management usually appoints some staff who are known as Guest Relation Assistants or Guest Relation Executives. Their desk is situated in the lobby, outside the reception. Their main function is to interact with the guests and make them feel comfortable as also trying to solve any problem or fulfill the requirement the guest may have. They also keep a history of each guest's visits to the hotel so that they can know the preferences and interests of a particular guest in future.

7. Lobby

Have you ever visited a large city hotel? What do you notice as you enter the hotel? Yes, you first enter a large hall which is known as the lobby of the hotel. This includes a sitting area for the guests and the above mentioned sections of the Front Office, as also, a maybe the travel desk, pastry shop a etc. The lobby of the hotel is always very lively and full of activity, the management appoints an executive in the lobby, often called the lobby manager, whose main duties are to supervise and co-ordinate the activities of the other sections situated in the lobby as also to take immediate decisions on any situation demanding so. He also keeps a check on the activities in the lobby. His desk is situated outside the reception at a place from where he can directly view the entrance, the lobby itself and where he can be easily located and identified by the guests.

8. Telephones

You know how important it is to be connected to the outside world, constantly and effectively, in modern times.. Telephones is one such means to remain connected. It is essential for any hotel, big or small, to be connected through telephones. Apart from being a need to the hotel it is an essential facility provided to the guest. However, like other sections, in a small hotel since the amount of telephone calls received by or made to the hotel is less, the telephones may be handled by the staff at the reception. In a large hotel, where there are a large number of telephone extensions and the number of calls are also more, a separate section is provided by a bigger telephone exchange to monitor and regulate the incoming and outgoing calls. This is headed by a Telephone or Communication Manager who in turn has telephone operators and line-men to help him.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.2

State True or False –

- (a) If some information is not available with the Front Office, the staff can not do anything about it.

- (b) While taking a room in the hotel, the guest have to carry their luggage themselves.
- (c) the Front Office cash is a part of 'Accounts and not' Front Office.
- (d) In small hotels a receptionist acts as a Guest Relations Assistant.
- (e) The lobby manager only looks after the lobby and has nothing to do with other sections of Front Office.
- (f) Telephones is not a part of Front Office.

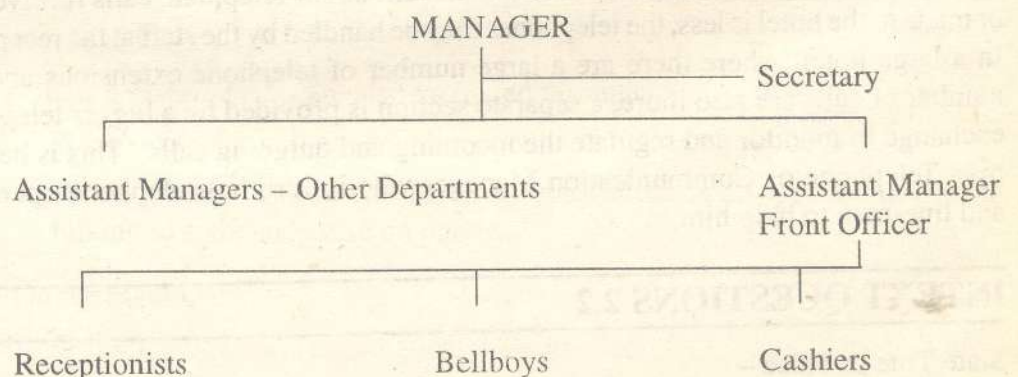
Fill in the blanks –

- (g) In a large hotel, the Front desk has three sections for , , and
- (h) A guest is and at the reception.
- (i) The reservation section receives requests for reservation, and them in a systematic manner.

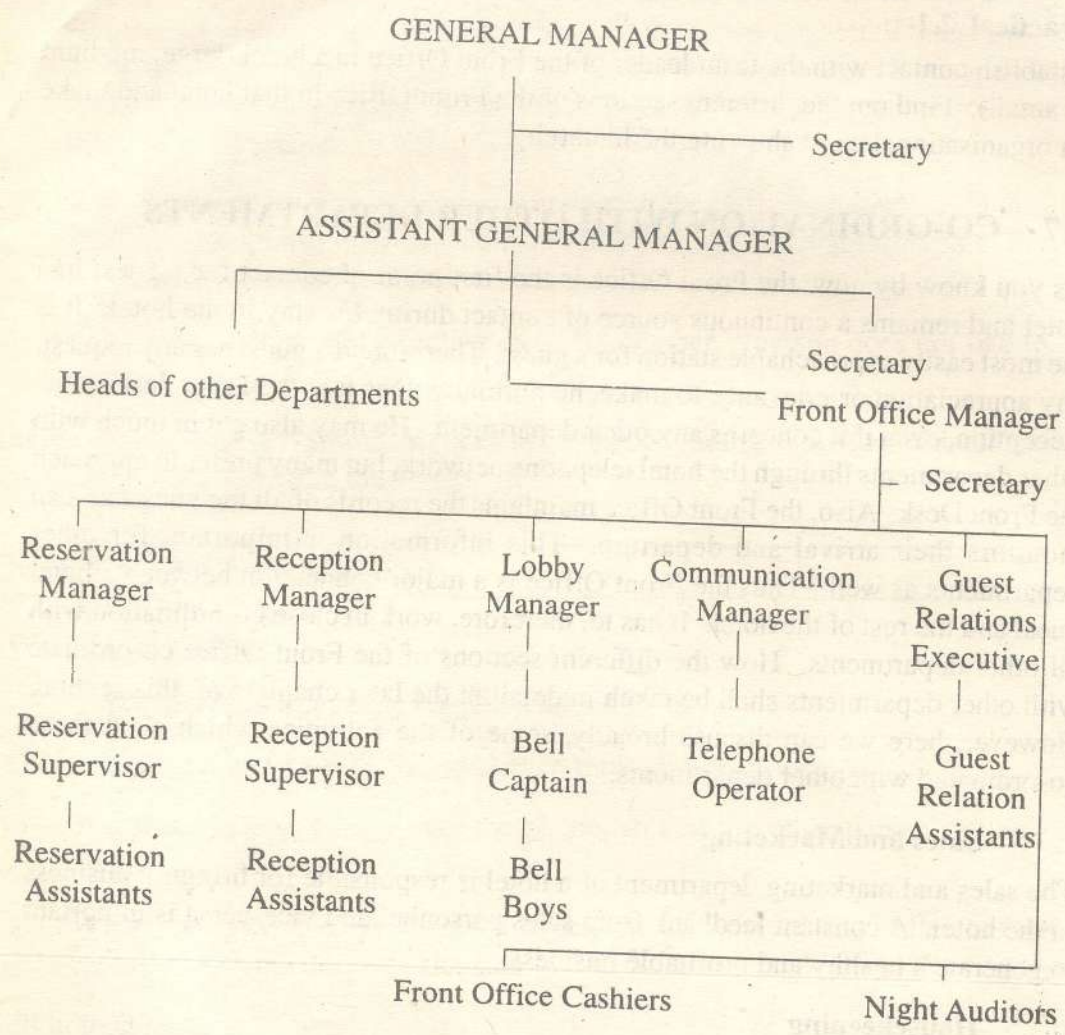
2.6 STAFF ORGANISATION

By now we know that whereas in a small hotel, the various sections of the Front Office can be clubbed together and fewer number of staff members are needed to operate it, in larger hotels, since the volume of work increases, as also the services rendered, and these sections need to be separated and a larger number of personnel is needed.

Whatever may be the type of hotel, for a smooth and efficient performance the department must be well organised and properly structured. You know that in a school, the staff is headed by a Principal and then there are other departments as accounts and teachers. Also, each class has a class teacher. Similarly a hotel is headed by a unit manager. In a large hotel he may be called a 'General Manager' and in a smaller one, just 'Manager'. He then has different department teams led by team leaders or 'Heads of Departments'. In a large hotel, the team leader of the Front Office maybe called a Front Office Manager and in a small hotel as the Assistant Manager – Front Office. To understand clearly the hierarchy of a large hotel and a small one, let us study the following charts –



Hierarchy in a Small Hotel



Hierarchy in a Large Hotel

From the above charts, it is quite clear how the staff organisation differs in a large hotel from a small hotel. You are already aware that in a small hotel, the work of different sections combine to form lesser number of sections, or even one section.

As clear from the chart, the entire hotel staff is headed by a General Manager of the hotel assisted by the Assistant General Manager. In a smaller hotel the same responsibility is held by the Manager. He is entirely responsible for all the activities in a hotel as also the growth in business. For an efficient and smooth operation of the hotel, he is assisted by various departmental heads.

In a big hotel, The departmental head of the front office is known as the Front Office Manager. The same may be designated as Assistant Manager – Front Office in a smaller hotel headed by a Manager. He is responsible for a smooth and efficient working with good results of his department. In a large hotel, a Front Office Manager is assisted by Assistant Managers of different sections. All sections then have a frontline work force as receptionists, reservation assistants, bell-boys, etc., usually termed as Front Office Assistants. We will read about them in the coming lessons, where each section is taken in detail.

Practical 2.1

Establish contact with the team leader of the Front Office in a hotel (large, medium or small). Find out the different sections of the Front Office in that hotel and make an organisational chart showing the hierarchy.

2.7 CO-ORDINATION WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS

As you know by now, the Front Office is the first point of contact for a guest in a hotel and remains a continuous source of contact during his stay in the hotel. It is the most easily approachable station for a guest. Therefore if a guest has any request, any appreciation or grievance to make, he normally does it at the Front desk or the Reception, even if it concerns any other department. He may also get in touch with other departments through the hotel telephone network, but many prefer to approach the Front Desk. Also, the Front Office maintains the records of all the guests as also monitors their arrival and departure. This information is important for other departments as well. Thus the Front Office is a major connection between a hotel guest and the rest of the hotel. It has to, therefore, work in close co-ordination with all other departments. How the different sections of the Front Office co-ordinate with other departments shall be taken in detail in the later chapters of this section. However, here we can discuss broadly, some of the activities which need to be co-ordinated with other departments.

1. Sales and Marketing

The sales and marketing department of a hotel is responsible for bringing business to the hotel. A constant feedback from sales personnel and vice-versa is important to generate a healthy and profitable business.

2. Housekeeping

As the Front Office monitors the sale of rooms, the Housekeeping is responsible for the upkeep of rooms and other parts of the hotel. The Front Office gets information from the Housekeeping dept. whether a certain room is clean and be allotted or not. Since the Housekeeping personnel regularly visit all the rooms to clean, any discrepancy about the occupancy of the room must immediately be cleared with the Front Office. At the time of departure, the Front Office immediately informs the Housekeeping so that they can clear the room. Any special request by the guest, e.g. if an extra bed is required or if an extension is required or for of change of room, which are to be executed by the Housekeeping, if made at the reception is immediately passed on to the Housekeeping by the reception staff.

In fact where the rooms are concerned, the Front Office and Housekeeping need to work in very close co-ordination. Both the departments should be aware of each other's activities all the time.

3. Food and Beverage

You know that the Food and Beverage department looks after the production and sale of various items of food and beverages. The Front Office personnel should be well educated about the various restaurants and the type of food served there. Similarly the Food and Beverage department should be in constant touch with the Front Office to know as to how many guests are staying in the hotel and also who is

staying in which room. Any special requests about the food may be given to the Front Office staff, which in turn informs the Food and Beverage department. The resident guests often sign their bills in a restaurant instead of paying in cash. The restaurants must send these signed bills to the Front Office cashier so that he can post the transaction in the bill of the particular guest.

Similarly the Front Office has to be in constant touch with other departments like Security and Accounts as all information regarding the guests staying in the hotel, that any of the other departments need is available with the Front Office and any special requests and comments of the guests are mostly made at the reception.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 2.3

State True or False –

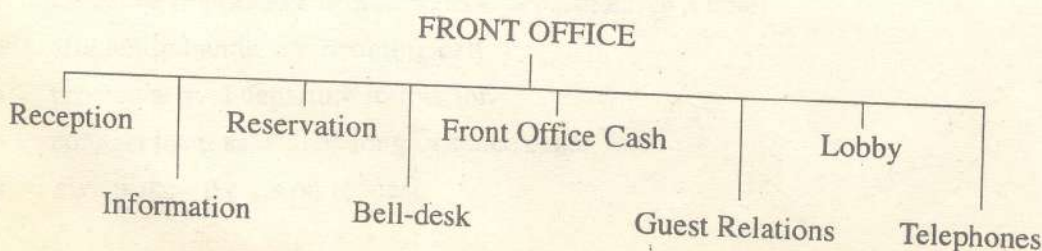
- (a) The staff organisation in a small hotel is the same as in a large one.
- (b) For a hotel to operate successfully, it is important that its Front Office co-ordinates well with other departments.
- (c) It is important that the Front Office and Housekeeping work in close co-ordination.
- (d) A guest staying in the hotel has to settle his bills in cash, if he uses the services of a restaurant of the hotel.
- (e) The Lobby Manager only looks after the lobby and has nothing to do with other sections of the Front Office.
- (f) Telephones is not a part of the Front Office.

Fill in the blanks –

- (e) The General Manager of a hotel is succeeded by various,,,,
- (f) The team leader of the Front Office is known as the,,

2.8 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

The Front Office is that department of a hotel which deals with the sale of rooms. It reserves, receives and registers a guest wanting to stay in the hotel as also assigns a room to him or her. It has various other activities in making a guest's stay comfortable and takes care of his needs during his stay. It acts as a source of information to the guests, other departments and also to the management. It is the first and the last point of contact with the guest and is located at the entrance.



Organisational Structure of Front Office and difference in large and small hotels. The Front Office co-ordinates with other departments for the smooth and efficient functioning of a hotel.

2.9 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What do you understand by Front Office. Establish its importance in the hotel.
2. (a) What is the organisational structure of the Front Office in a large hotel? Mention the different sections.
(b) How does the organisational structure of the Front Office in a small hotel differ from that in a large hotel?
3. What are the different qualities you would like to imbibe in yourself to be a good Front Office team member?

2.10 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 2.1 (a) entrance (b) first, constant (c) True
(c) True (d) False (e) True
- 2.2 (a) False (b) False (c) False
(d) True (e) False (f) False
(g) Reception, Information, Cash
(h) Received, Registered (i) Processes, Records.
- 2.3 (a) False (b) True (c) True
(d) False (e) Heads of Departments
(f) Front Office Manager.

3

QUALITIES OF THE FRONT OFFICE STAFF

3.1 INTRODUCTION

To a person unfamiliar with the working of a hotel, it may seem that you are working in the most delightful surroundings and comfortable conditions. It is so, because he is never aware of the effort and the amount of work which is actually done. He comes and interacts with you at the reception or any other point for a very short period of time. In fact, there is a whole amount of work done at Front Office which a person can never imagine of. To do this kind of work efficiently you need to attain certain qualities. These also become important because of the very nature of the job. Here in this chapter, you will identify the basic roles you are supposed to play at the Front Office and what qualities you should imbibe in yourself to perform well.

3.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to

- identify your basic roles in the Front Office,
- know what qualities makes a good Front Office Assistant,
- know how to effectively communicate on telephone.

3.3 ROLE OF FRONT OFFICE STAFF MEMBERS

You have read about the different activities carried out in different sections of the Front Office. These activities are carried out by the members of the Front Office staff. Here we shall read about what is expected of you as a Front Office Assistant, apart from carrying out the other operational activities.

1. The First Impression

You know that Front Desk or the Reception is the first place of contact of the guest with the hotel personnel. Who is available at the front desk?

Yes, you as a Front Office Assistant stand there to greet and welcome the guest. The guest starts making his impression from there. As it is the first impression which matters the most, you have to make it the best. You have to be conscious of the fact that you are projecting an image of the hotel and its working to the guest. Of course, there are various qualities needed for this, which you can imbibe in yourself. You will read about these qualities a little later in this chapter.

2. Point of Reference

If a guest wants to know something about the hotel, city, state or any other activity, in fact, if he has any query, he would always get in touch with you at the Front Office, either by telephone or personally. A guest staying in your hotel may not be very familiar with the city. That makes you a reference point for all his queries. Also, if he wants to leave any instruction, message or any other kind of information, he would do so with you.

Not only the guests staying in the hotel, but also those visiting the hotel for a short period of time may also come to you with queries.

3. Salesman

You, at the Front Desk come in contact with almost every guest entering the hotel. As such you are at an advantageous position to sell various facilities and services of the hotel. You may be selling the rooms directly, but you always act as a salesman for other services like the restaurant, bar, beauty parlour, etc.

4. Co-ordination

Since the guest is in constant touch with you, he looks up to you and expects you to help him in a number of ways. You will be required to co-ordinate not only with other departments of the hotel but also with travel agents, airlines etc. for the guest. He might ask you to follow-up on his laundry or any particular task, say some electricity maintenance with engineering department. Outside the hotel, he might ask you to reconfirm his tickets, or help him book a sight-seeing tour etc.

5. Solving Guest Problems

If a guest encounters any problem during his stay, where will he go and seek help? Yes, it is you at the Front Office, he will approach. He might have lost his baggage in transit, or he might need some medical help. There are numerous of these situations you will come across when the guest could come to you for help.

Also if he has some complaints about any service in the hotel, like if the water supply is faulty, or food quality is not up to his satisfaction, he will usually come to you to state the same. He would expect you to send his comments to the management.

In such situations, you have to use your resources and make sure that the guests' problems and complaints are handled promptly and efficiently, and a good solution is arrived at.

In brief, you are there to make a guest's stay happy, comfortable and satisfied. You should remember that only a satisfied guest will come again and use the services of your hotel.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 3.1

State true or false –

- (a) You at the Front Office, project the image of the hotel.
- (b) If a guest has some queries, he can always approach you at Front Office to seek help.
- (c) At the Front Office, you try and sell only the rooms of the hotel.
- (d) You may have to help a guest by co-ordinating with different departments and agencies, inside or outside the hotel.
- (e) If a guest encounters a problem, your duty is to politely refer him to the General Manager.

3.4 QUALITIES OF FRONT OFFICE STAFF MEMBERS

You must often be visiting the market to do shopping, to the restaurants, sometimes hotel, banks or alike establishments. What kind of places do you prefer to go to? Yes, places where the people are courteous and helpful and also have good appearance. A hotel business thrives on people visiting it. Therefore, it is important to have staff with the qualities mentioned above. Let us go through some of the qualities you must develop in yourself to be a good Front Office Assistant.

1. Pleasant Appearance

The first and the most important quality of the Front Office staff is his or her appearance. A guest entering the hotel lobby expects to meet a well groomed person behind the reception counter. Here are certain grooming standards for you reference–

- i) Hair should be short and neatly cut. For ladies with long hair, it should be neatly tied in a bun. One must take care not to touch the hair frequently. Men with moustache and beard should have these neatly trimmed.
- ii) Nails should be clipped. Hands should be manicured.
- iii) The hotel staff usually wears a uniform. It should be clean and well ironed.
- iv) Shoes must be well polished.
- v) Jewellery should be worn to a minimum, only to enhance the grace.

2. Personal Hygiene

One should observe high standards of personal hygiene. This itself will enhance the grooming and appearance of the staff members.

3. Welcoming and Cheerful Smile

The front office staff, specially those behind the reception desk, must always welcome with a smile. Think of yourself visiting some place. Would you not like

to talk to a person who has a smiling face and a re-assuring smile? You would. Similarly, any guest visiting the hotel would like to communicate with a cheerful and smiling staff.

4. Willingness to Help

The staff must always project that they are willing to help a guest in any situation. They should have a welcome smile on their faces, making the guests feel comfortable and re-assured.

5. Self-Confidence

All the personnel should have confidence in themselves as they are to meet different types of people and from different countries perhaps. This is important because people of different status come to the hotel and the receptionist should not be hesitant to speak to sometimes better anyone be it a junior officer or the Chairman of a company.

6. Calmness

Various Kind of people who visits a hotel. Some guests may unruly or irate and misbehave. In such situations one must remain clam and deal effectively with such situations.

7. Diplomacy

There could be guests with various kinds of requests and the hotel might sometimes not be in a position to help them. The staff must handle such situations very diplomatically so as not to hurt the guest's ego or feelings and at the same time assuring him or her of the best results.

8. Social Etiquettes

You must observe good manners while on duty. Showing respect to the guest and his companions, wishing the time of the day, e.g. saying 'Goodmorning, Sir' and adding 'Thank you' at the end of a conversation are all part of good manners and politeness.

9. Physical Fitness

Working at the Front Officer or even in the hotel could be very strenuous. The Front Office personnel has to work for long hours, without any break, and most of the time standing on their feet. Therefore it is important for them to be physically fit to take the required strain.

10. Memory

Memory is another quality one must have. You shall meet a number of people in a hotel. Some might be staying in the hotel, others might not. Remembering their names, faces and their nature of visit to the hotel, even their room numbers is a boon to a receptionist. People find it good, if they are addressed by name as they approach.

11. Communication

Since you will deal with so many guests of different status, you should be able to communicate effectively and clearly with each of them. It is important that each

guest understands the message you want to carry. Your pronunciation must be absolutely clear. It is very important that you are extremely courteous in your speech.

Your manner of conversation often holds the key for success. Always speak politely and using suggestive language like – "May I help you?"; "May I recommend"; "Would you allow me", etc. Do not use any slang words or offensive language.

12. Decision Making

There will be a number of situations demanding immediate action. For each situation you may not be able to go to your superiors for advice. Therefore you must be able to deal with the situation yourself as far as possible.

13. Salesmanship

As stated before, a Front Office personnel is the first who a one comes in contact with and remains in continuous touch throughout the guest's stay. He also gives the first impression about the hotel on the guest and therefore is sometimes also called the image builder of the hotel. Apart from the qualities you have read so far, it is also important that the Front Office Assistant is well aware of the facilities and services of the hotel. You should have complete knowledge of these, such as, the various restaurants and the type of food being served in the hotel, i.e. Indian, Chinese or any other, their timings; other facilities available like a beauty parlour, health club, shopping arcade, etc. Only then will you be able to sell them to the guest. You should also familiarise the guest with these facilities and services when he checks in and suggest he make use of them during the course of his stay. In course of your various meetings and conversation with the guest, try to identify the guest's needs and suggest your services accordingly. Give as many choices as possible, recommending a few, but see that the guest himself makes the final choice.

You must keep in mind that the more you sell the services of your hotel, the more revenue the removal that will be generated.

14. Systematic Working

A Front Office staff member is never free. He is always busy. To work efficiently and accurately it is important for him to follow certain systems and work according to them, specially when working under pressure and in rush hours.

15. Sincerity

One of the most important quality that you must have is your sincerity. Sincerity towards your work as well as towards the guests is most vital. If you are casual towards your work, you will not be able to show good results and the overall performance will fall. Similarly, you should be sincere and truthful to your guests. Never try to dodge him or give excuses to him. A regular guest will always be able to identify this and will become unhappy. If you have done a mistake or are unable to complete a job on time, do not hesitate to apologise. Always try to win his trust and confidence.

These were certain qualities you must try to incorporate within yourself if you already do not have some of these. Can you think of some more?

Above all you must have a strong will to perform well and keep the guests happy, with a positive attitude, and a keen desire to be a good Front Office member. Only

then you can incorporate the above qualities and be able to work efficiently under high work pressures and in long working hours.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 3.2

State true or false –

- (a) The hotel staff can dress anyhow to look pleasant and attractive.
 - (b) As hotel staff, you should always be ready to help your guests.
 - (c) If a particular guest misbehaves in the lobby, you should deal with him diplomatically by remaining calm.
 - (d) You should be able to communicate confidently with guests of any social status.
 - (e) In all situations, decisions are taken only by senior managers.
-

3.5 TELEPHONE MANNERS

Most of the time you interact with a guest on telephone, be it inside the hotel on an intercom or any body calling from outside. You may be stationed at the reception or any other desk or handling the telephone system of the hotel. It is important to note how you are handling a telephone call. You must remember one thing always, and that is the person on the other side of the telephone can not see you or your expression. Neither will he be aware of how busy you are. Most people calling from outside the hotel gather their impression from the way their telephone calls are handled. Apart from being courteous and polite, you must care to be careful about certain other points while attending a telephone call. Some of these points are given below:

1. Never let the phone ring for a long time. Try and pick up the receiver within the first two or three rings.
 2. Always identify yourself or your place or work, wishing the time of the day. e.g. if you are stationed at the information counter and receive a call at 1400 hr., you may say 'Information, Good-afternoon, How may I help you?'; or if you are handling a direct outside call, 'Hotel xyz, Good-afternoon, How may I help you.'
 3. Listen to the guest very carefully without interrupting him. Once he has completed his point, only then make any statement. Never be in a hurry to finish a conversation. At the same time, keep to the point without spending much time unnecessary.
 4. Always speak in a soft and friendly tone. The caller must get a feeling that he has called the right place and his point will be attended in the most efficient manner.
 5. Never speak in a loud tone. Not only the caller might get offended, but you might also disturb people around you. For this, keep your mouth near the mouthpiece and speak directly into it.
-

6. If you are busy, or maybe for any other reason, you have to ask the guest to wait, request him to do so. At the same time, get back to the call at short intervals and keep him informed that his request is being attended to, or you will soon be back on the call. Always remember that nobody likes to wait, specially on the telephone. A long silence may be understood by the guest as if nobody is paying any attention to him. Never keep a call on hold for too long a time. This only projects your inefficiency. It also blocks other calls which may be coming on your extension.
7. If a typical guest request is beyond your authority, note down his request, and transfer his call to the person concerned. While doing so, always inform the caller that you have noted down his request and shall connect him to the right staff member, giving him the identity of the person. Later, you should check with the particular staff member and confirm about your conversation.
8. Always end a telephone conversation with a note of thanks. You can always add phrases like, 'Thank you for calling, Mr.....', or, 'It was a pleasure to be able to help you, Mr.....'.

How you speak on the telephone and handle a call will greatly speak about you and your organisation. It is important that each and every call is attended promptly in the most efficient manner.

3.6 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

Roles of a Front Office staff member –

- The first impression
- Point of reference
- Salesman
- Co-ordination
- Helping Guests

Different qualities in the Front Office Staff include –

- A pleasant Appearance
- Personal hygiene
- A welcoming and cheerful smile
- Willingness to help guests
- Self-Confidence
- Calmness
- Diplomacy
- Social Etiquette
- Physical Fitness
- Memory
- Communication
- Decision Making

- Salesmanship
- Working in systematic manner
- Sincerity
- Telephone manners.

3.7 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What are the different roles you are expected to play at the Front Office and what qualities should you possess to be successful in playing them?
2. How can you make a telephone conversation a most effective one?

3.8 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 3.1 (a) True
(b) True
(c) False
(d) True
(e) False
- 3.2 (a) False
(b) True
(c) True
(d) True
(e) False

4

ROOM RESERVATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

You must have often travelled by train. Sometimes you just go to the railway station, purchase a journey ticket and board the train. At other times you purchase the ticket a few days in advance and assure yourself of a seat or a berth in the train. Making such advance assurance is known as making a reservation. Similarly you can make a reservation for a room in a hotel also. In this lesson we will read about this aspect of the hotel business in detail.

4.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to

- identify the need for reserving a room,
- receive and process a reservation request,
- maintain reservation correspondence systematically,
- make changes and cancel a reservation,
- handle group reservations,
- treat no shows,
- know some alphabetical codes (Phonetic codes).

4.3 NEED FOR RESERVATION

You have already read in the introduction to this chapter that, reservation of rooms mean that the hotel keeps a room for a guest, knowing that he would definitely come and stay in the hotel for a specified duration of time. Have you wondered why is it beneficial to make a reservation? In fact, it is not only good for the guest but also for the hotel. Let us see how.

1. To the Guest

Sometimes there is a lot of rush, specially if any international event is taking place in the city. Lot of people participating in the event may come and stay in the hotel, apart from others who may have come for various other reasons. In such case most of the hotels in the city are full and are unable to provide rooms to every guest walking into the hotel. Also a particular hotel might be so popular among people that anybody visiting the city wants to stay in the same hotel. Then also it is difficult to give rooms to each and every guest till the last moment. To avoid all this, a guest usually makes a reservation in advance. By doing so he is assured that the hotel will keep a room available for him even if others are being refused due to non-availability of rooms.

2. To the Hotel

As the guest is assured of a room in a hotel through the reservations made, a hotel is also assured of a certain amount of business. When there are confirmed reservations, the hotel management knows for sure that at least these many guests are to come and stay in the hotel, and that business is assured.

4.4 RESERVATION OFFICE

You have already read in the 'Introduction to Front Office' that in small hotels the reservation section is merged with the Reception itself. In large hotels there is a separate office for this work and the staff working there are known as Reservation Assistants. In a medium size hotel there would be only one or at the maximum two reservation assistants. In yet larger hotels there could be one or two persons attending the telephones and confirming reservations, another person making bulk reservations for groups and airline crews (airline staff flying with the aircraft), another for checking reservations of guests scheduled to arrive next day. There could be one supervisor and a reservation manager.

The reservation office is so situated as to be easily located and accessible by the guests who want to make reservations personally. It is usually located at the back of the reception counter and is open during the usual office hours.

4.5 MODES OF RESERVATION

For train reservation, one has to personally go and make a reservation at the railway reservation centre. In a hotel, it is not necessary to approach a reservation office personally, through one can do so also. Hotel reservations can be made on telephone, through telex, fax, or even mail apart from doing so in person. A request can be made through any of these modes and the reservation assistant, after checking the availability of the rooms confirms or denies the reservation, usually through the same mode.

4.6 PROCEDURE OF MAKING A RESERVATION

You know the different modes through which a reservation request can be made. Can you identify them now? Yes, these are – in person, telephone, telex, fax or letter. Let us go through the following points to see how you as a reservation assistant

can process a reservation request –

1. You will receive a reservation request by any of the modes mentioned above.
2. Fill up the reservation form. A sample reservation form is shown below –

HOTEL XYZ		RESERVATION FORM		DATE:
Guest Name :				
Company :				
Address :				
No. of Rooms	Type of Room	No. of Persons	Arrival date and time	Departure date and time
Billing Instructions :				
Other requests :				
Reservation	<i>Made by :</i>	<i>Confirmed by :</i>		

Fig.1 Reservation Form.

This is just a general sample of a reservation form and may differ from hotel to the hotel, basic information being the same.

3. While carefully filling in all the information required, also notes down the name of the person giving the reservation and his telephone number if the request is made in person or by telephone. If the request is made through a telex/fax or a letter, attach the document with the reservation form.
4. Check the availability of rooms through the room status board or the reservation charts (room status board and reservation chart are explained later in this chapter).
5. If the required rooms are available for the requested dates, then confirm the reservation.
6. Update the chart immediately.
7. Confirm the same to the visitor or caller immediately. If the request is made through telex/fax or letter, send a reply at once.
8. If the rooms are not available for the requested dates, regret confirmation and waitlist the reservation. No updation on the reservation chart or room status board is required in this case. This reservation may be confirmed later in case of any cancellation. Whenever the reservation is confirmed then, of course, the reservation charts and status board are updated.
9. After the reservation is confirmed, type a reservation slip in duplicate, as

follows –

Accommodation Name	Rate No. of Persons	Arrival Date and Time
Company		Expected departure date and time
Requested by		Confirmed by

10. Attach one copy of the reservation slip with the form and place the second one on a carrier which is then placed in a rack. This system of storing information and using it is known as the Whitney System and the racks are known as Whitney Racks. These slips are arranged in a chronological order with reference to the date of arrival.
11. File the entire correspondence including the form, with other reservations of the same date.

In hotels where the entire system is computerised, the reservation is fed into the computer by the reservation assistant. There is no need to type the reservation slip then. Instead, a pre-determined notation such as reservation number of the computer, is made on the reservation form, to indicate that the reservation has been processed, or entered in the computer.

Room Status Board

We have read earlier that before confirming or waitlisting a reservation, a Reservation Assistant has to check the availability of the rooms. He does so with the help of a room status board. As is clear from the name, it is a board which indicates the availability of the room on a particular day.

A room status board is usually for one calendar month. It is divided into rows and columns. In the top row are written the dates of a month, thus each column represents a specific date of the month. Similarly in the left most column are written the categories of the rooms available in the hotel, thus each row represent a different category of room. Each squares thus formed by the row column division carries a peg on the top on which can be hung round counters usually of red and green colour. Red denotes that there are no rooms available of a particular category on a particular date, while green shows that the rooms are available. This can be followed more closely in the following figure :

Room Status Board for the month of January 1997

Date	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	30	31
Single	R	R	R	R	R	G	G	R	G		G	G
Double	R	R	G	R	R	R	R	G	G		G	G
Deluxe	R	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	G		G	G
Duplex	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R		G	G
Suite	R	G	G	R	G	G	G	G	R		G	G

ROOM STATUS BOARD

The above figure will give you a fair idea of what a room status board looks like. Here the squares are filled by letters R and G. G denotes a green counter and R, a red one. Let us say that today is 1st January 1997 and we have to find the availability of a suite on 8th January 1997, then we know by the above board that the suite is available on the 8th. But if the reservation is for two days, i.e. 8th well as 9th then we cannot reserve the suite because all the suites are already reserved and none is available for the 9th as is being shown by 'R' in the above board. Now, can you tell wether a single room is available for a guest wanting to stay from 7th to the 10th January?

A room status board is usually divided into two parts, one for the current month and the other for the following month. A room stauts board is updated with the help of the reservation charts.

Reservation Charts

Reservation charts are more detailed forms to indicate the availability of rooms. There is a register for each month having a sheet for each day. Each sheet has small squares drawn in it equal to the number of rooms in the hotel, thus each square representing one room. Whenever a reservation is confirmed, squares equal to the number of rooms confirmed are crossed by a pencil for the dates the reservation is confirmed for. It is done by pencil so that in case of a cancellation the crosses may be rubbed off. A reservation chart may be shown as follows –

Reservation chart for 7th January 1997

Single	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\										
Double	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\
	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\	\								
Deluxe	\	\	\	\	\	\	\												
Duplex	\	\	\	\															
Suite	\	\																	

In small hotels where the number of rooms are less, one sheet is sufficient for the entire month. Then it looks something like an attendance register, where instead of names could be the room numbers.

Blocking of Rooms

Sometimes along with the reservation request, there is also a request for a specific room. In such a case, if it is available, the hotel tries to keep that room for the particular guest. Then the reservation immediately informs the reception to make a note of the same. The reception then tries not to assign that room to anybody else for those dates. This is known as blocking the room for a particular guest.

Practical 4.1

Following are three reservation requests, coming to you on phone. Write down step by step procedures on how you would process them. For room status, refer to the room status board and reservation chart given above. Also update the above reservation chart wherever required.

- (i) Mr Ram Mohan, Tel. No. 123456 calls to make a reservation for Mr N. Jain, Director of XYZ Industries, for a suite, arrival on 5/1/97 at 2.00 p.m. and departure on 7/1/97, departure time uncertain.
- (ii) Mr Ashok, Tel. No. 324165 calls to make a reservation for Mr N. Jain, Manager of WX Telecom, for a single room arriving on 4/1/97 at 10.00 a.m. and departure on 5/1/97 at 1.00 p.m.
- (iii) Mr Kapoor, Tel. No. 413265 calls to make a reservation for Mr M. Gupta, Manager of FGH Industries for a deluxe room, arriving on 4/1/97 at 11.00 a.m. and departure on 8/1/97 at 4.00 p.m.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.1

Fill in the blanks –

- (a) Room reservations in a hotel can be made in person or by,, or
- (b) A reservation slip is typed in
- (c) The room status board is updated with the help of

State true or false –

- (d) Making a reservation is beneficial, both for the guest and for the hotel.
- (e) Reservation requests can only be made at the reception counter.
- (f) Availability of a room can be checked either by the reservation chart or by the room status board.
- (g) If the rooms are not available for a particular day, you should not accept the requests for that day.

4.7 MAKING CHANGES IN A RESERVATION

Since a reservation is made for a future date well in advance, sometimes it is possible that a guest, for various reasons, might have to cancel or alter his programme of stay in the hotel. In such a case, he must inform the hotel through the reservation section. Let us now read as to how you will deal with such situations.

(a) Cancellation

When a guest does not need the reserved accommodation, he would usually inform you of the same. On receiving such an information you should carry out the cancellation procedure in the following manner :

1. Fill in a cancellation form. A general idea of the cancellation form can be

had from the following figure.

HOTEL XYZ		CANCELLATION FORM		DATE:
Guest Name :				
Company :				
Address :				
No. of Rooms	Type of Room	No. of Persons	Arrival date and time	Departure date and time
Reservation cancelled by :			Received by :	

Cancellation Form

2. Attach this form to the other correspondences regarding the same reservation along with the reservation slip.
3. Cross the reservation slip and mark it with the word 'cancelled'.
4. While confirming the reservation you had updated the reservation chart with a pencil. Update the reservation chart again by rubbing the pencil marks from the squares in the relevant dates. The number of squares rubbed should be equal to the number of rooms reserved, and are the last of the marked squares.
5. Update the room status board also if need be.
6. Replace the reservation correspondence where it was already filled.

Any waitlisted reservation can also be confirmed on the basis of this cancellation. This correspondence remains in the file for future references.

PRACTICAL 4.2

In sequence with Practical 4.1 (i), Mr Ram Mohan calls to cancel Mr S. Verma's reservation. Other details remain the same. Write down step by step how you will process the cancellation.

(b) Amendments

If a guest changes his programme and still wants to keep the room reserved for himself, he will inform you of the change in his programme. On receiving such an information you should carry out the following steps to change or amend his reservation.

1. Fill up an amendment form as given below. In some hotels you do not need to fill in the entire form. Only the changed information may be filled.

HOTEL XYZ		AMENDMENT FORM			DATE:
Guest Name :					
Company :					
Address :					
Earlier information :					
No. of Rooms	Type of Room	No. of Persons	Arrival date and time	Departure date and time	
New information :					
No. of Rooms	Type of Room	No. of Persons	Arrival date and time	Departure date and time	
Billing Instructions :					
Other requests :					
Reservation		Made by :	Confirmed by :		

Amendment Form

2. Pull out the already filed correspondence of this reservation. Attach it with the amendment form.
3. If the change is in the date of arrival or departure, check the availability of the rooms on the days not already included in the previous reservation. Can you recall how the availability of rooms is checked?
4. If the rooms are available, then confirm the amendment to the guest.
5. Update your charts crossing the squares in the additional dates and rubbing the squares in the dates now not required.
6. If the rooms are not available, regret confirmation and check with the guest if he wants to cancel the reservation or waitlist it, and proceed accordingly.
7. The change in the reservation could be in the number of rooms required in the same period. In case the guest wants more number of rooms, then carry out the procedures explained from point (3) to point (6).
8. In case there are less number of rooms required, treat the reduction as cancellation of those many rooms and update charts as a cancellation.
9. Type new reservation slips.
10. File the entire correspondence with the other reservation records for the new arrival date.

Practical 4.3

In sequence with Practical 4.1 (iii), Mr Kapoor called to say that Mr M. Gupta will now arrive on 5/1/97 at 10.00 a.m. and leave on 9/1/97 at 11.00 a.m., other details remaining same. Write down step by step, how you will process the amendment.

4.8 STORAGE OF RESERVATION RECORDS

We have read earlier that the reservation section receives and processes all the reservation requests and stores them in a systematic manner so as to retrieve them as and when required. We already know that when the reservation slips are typed, they are placed in a Whitney Rack. These slips are arranged in a chronological order of the arrival dates. The slips of the same date are arranged in alphabetical order, usually of the last name. By doing so, it is easy to locate them whenever needed. Are these the only records which need to be stored?

No, there is more to each reservation. Do you remember filling in a reservation form? Also, if the reservation request was through telex, fax or letter, that and any other document containing relevant information or any special instructions. All these papers also need to be stored in a systematic fashion.

Can you tell how these are stored? Yes, the easiest way to store any papers is to put them in a file. But, before that, all the papers for one particular request should be pinned together so that you do not have to search the entire file to find them. Then there has to be a method to store them, or, as we can now call, to file them. Like you arrange the reservation slips in a particular order, in the same manner you should also arrange these papers or the reservation correspondence in a file. Do you remember the order for arranging the reservation slips?

In a large hotel, where the volume of business is high and so is the amount of reservation correspondence, it is difficult to maintain the correspondence in one file. In this case one file each is opened for the coming twelve months. For the current month files are opened for each date. This can also be done for the next month.

Till now, we have read about the reservation records of the future dates. What happens when the date arrives, and also when we move to future dates?

Every evening, the next days reservation slips and the relevant correspondence file is handed over to the reception by the reservation section. This is done so that the next day the reception is ready to receive and allot rooms to the guests who have already reserved rooms for themselves.

At the end of each day, the reception returns the correspondence to the reservation section. After the end of each month the reservation section collects all the correspondence of the month and puts it together. This is then sent to the record room for storage. This record is stored usually for a period of ten years depending on the hotel and its storage capacity.

4.9 MAKING GROUP RESERVATIONS

Till now we have dealt with reservations for individual guests for one or two rooms. If there are a large number of guests arriving as a group, it is to be dealt in a slightly different manner.

Usually a group size is of 15 or more guests. It has a fixed routine. There could be a discounted rate for a group which is usually informed to you by the Reservation Manager or the Front Office Manager. The rates quoted to a group could be on EP, CP, MAP or AP and they could have their meals on a fixed menu basis. Do you recall the full form and meaning of EP, CP, MAP, and AP? You have already been familiarised with these terms in an earlier chapter. There could be certain other facilities provided to the group and these are also informed to you by your managers.

The confirmation of a group reservation is done well in advance and in writing. All the **details** of a group should be available with you one month prior to their arrival in writing from the organisation making reservation. This duration could change from hotel to hotel. Since a group reservation involves a large number of rooms, the reservation charts must be accurately updated. A separate file is opened for each group which contains all the details such as –

- The name of the group and the group leader
- Arrival details of the group
- Number of rooms
- Names of the guests arriving
- Passport details of the guests if they are foreigners
- Their meal plan
- Any other specific information regarding their stay in the hotel.

The reservation department also informs the Food & Beverage and Housekeeping departments of the arrival of the group and if any special arrangements are to be made, well in advance.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.2

Fill in the blanks –

- (a) After the reservation slips are typed, they are placed in a rack.
- (b) The reservation slips are arranged in a order.
- (c) The rates quoted to a group could be on,,, or plan.

State True or False –

- (d) Once a reservation slip has been typed, there is no need to store the documents used in the process.
 - (e) When there is an amendment, there is no need to update the reservation charts.
 - (f) Whenever there is a cancellation, the reservation charts are updated.
-

4.10 ARRIVAL LIST

At the end of every day the reservation has to inform the reception of the next day's arrivals. How is this done?

The reservation hands over the reservation slips and the related correspondence for the next day to the reception. In addition it also compiles a list for easy reference.

This list consists of the name of the guest arriving, the number and type of rooms required, the expected time of arrival and the departure date, as also special instructions if any. Since this is a list of guests arriving on a particular day and their other details, it is referred to as 'Arrival List'.

While compiling the arrival list, reservations also makes a final check on all the details of each reservation. Whether all the information is available or not. If any more information is required, you should try to contact the source and obtain it. You should also check that there is no duplication in the reservations. If any reservation is present in duplicate, then one of them should be treated and processed as cancelled.

The arrival list is always compiled in an alphabetical order.

4.11 NO SHOWS

By now you must be familiar as to how the reservation requests are received, processed and stored. They are then passed on to the reception as a particular date arrives. Do all the guest, who have reserved accommodation, arrive on that day? Well, they are expected to, but due to some or the other reason some guests do not. As they do not show up at the hotel, these reservations are generally termed as no-shows. Do we leave it at that? If we do so then what happens?

The hotel has banked on these guests for its business. If the periods is a busy one and the hotel is generally full, you must have refused accommodation to some other guests on account of non-availability of rooms. Therefore there is a business loss to the hotel. All these things are to be taken into account. Then how do we deal with these no shows?

Usually a room is kept reserved for the guest for the entire day of his expected arrival. Some hotels also wait only for a period of time after the expected arrival time, e.g. say six hours or so. Next day, when the correspondence is returned to the reservations, the unused reservation slips are also returned with it. You as a reservation assistant will then carry out the following simple procedure –

- (i) If the reservation was through telephone, you will call up the source and check on the reason for not coming. Also check if the reservation should be cancelled for the continuing dates if any or should it be amended for any other dates.
- (ii) If the source shows suggests cancellation for the continuing dates, treat and process the reservation as cancelled.
- (iii) If the source informs you of any change in the programme and requests amendment, treat and process the reservation as in amendments.
- (iv) The reservations for which you are unable to get across to the source are treated as cancelled for continuing dates and you should process them as cancellations.
- (v) In the points (ii) to (iv) above, while processing them, you will note that you are also updating your charts. In the event of doing so, you will make some rooms available to confirm some waitlisted and fresh reservation requests.
- (vi) When the reservation is cancelled as in (ii) or (iv) above, some hotels also charge the guest for one night as they have not let the room out to anybody

else and thus lost revenue on that account. You will inform the accounts for this purpose, which in turn sends the bill to the source. This is known as charging the retention. The policy defers in different hotels.

4.12 ALPHABETICAL CODES

Whenever reservation information is taken on phone, the names and some other information like the flight number etc. should be spelt correctly and you should always check on the spelling for these. However, while spelling out the alphabet on the phone, there is a possibility of generating a confusion say between 'M' and 'N'; 'U' and 'Q'; 'S' and 'F' and similar other alphabet. To clarify between these it is customary to refer them by certain common words starting with the letter to be used. Here is a list which you can use while clarifying the spelling –

Alphabet	–	Code
A	–	Alpha
B	–	Baby
C	–	Child
D	–	Daddy
E	–	Easy
F	–	Father
G	–	God
H	–	Harry
I	–	India
J	–	Jack
K	–	King
L	–	London
M	–	Mother
N	–	Nancy
O	–	Orange
P	–	Peter
Q	–	Queen
R	–	Roger
S	–	Sugar
T	–	Tango
U	–	Union
V	–	Victory
W	–	Window
X	–	X-Ray
Y	–	Yellow
Z↓	–	Zebra.

It is not binding to use these words only. You could also associate letters with other convenient words or names of the cities like 'A' for Allahabad, 'B' for Baroda, etc. You must always remember that whatever word you are using, must clear the pronunciation and the letter as that is the objective of using them e.g. using 'Bangalore' may be confused with 'Mangalore'.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 4.3

Fill in the blanks –

- (a) At the end of every day, the reservations has to inform the of the next day's arrivals.
- (b) The list of guests arriving on a particular day is referred to as
- (c) In the event of a no show, the hotel can charge to the guest for one night.

State True or False –

- (d) While compiling the arrival list, there is no need to check on the details of each reservation.
- (e) The arrival list is compiled in an alphabetical order.
- (f) In the event of a no show, you can confirm a waitlisted reservation.

4.13 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Need for Reservation –
 - By making a reservation, the guest is assured of a room on his arrival in the hotel.
 - Through reservations, the hotel is assured of certain amount of business.
- Reservation Office –
 - small hotels – with reception,
 - medium or large hotels – separate section.
- A reservation can be made in person or through telephone, telex, fax or letter.
- Reservation process –

Receive request



Check availability of rooms

Rooms not available



Rooms available

Regret confirmation



Confirm Reservation

Waitlist reservation



Update charts



Type reservation slips

Place one copy in whitney rack

other with correspondence

→ File Correspondence

- **Reservation charts and Room status board -**

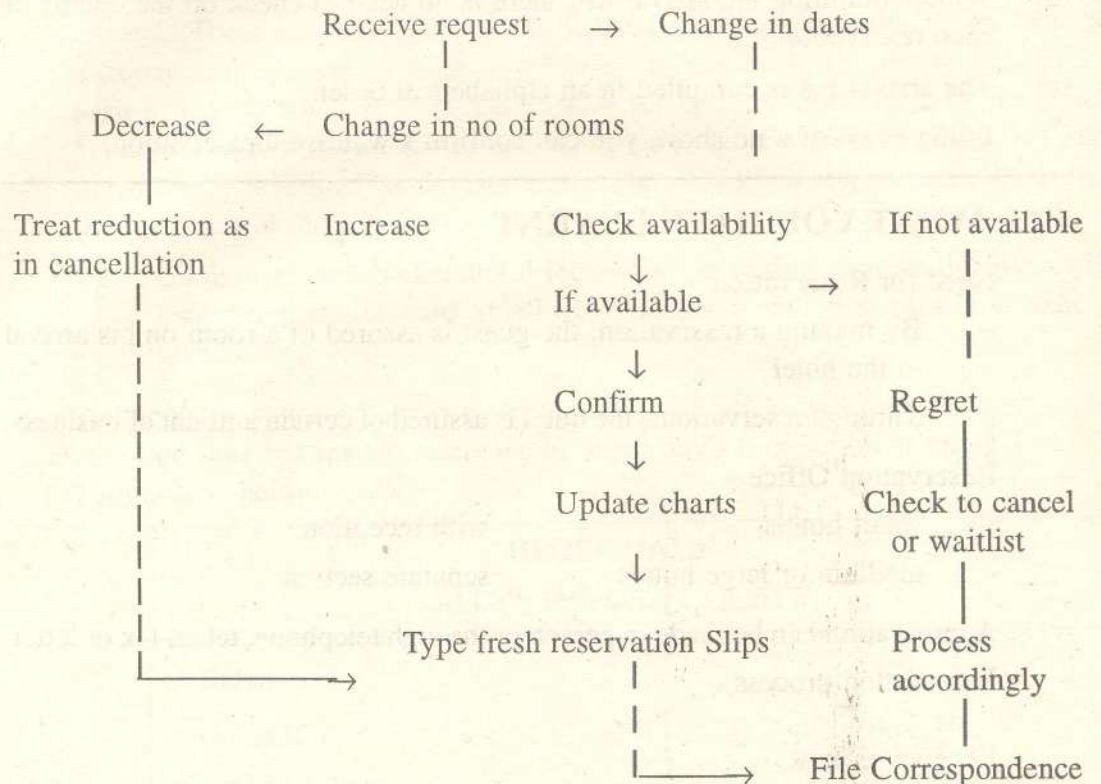
Their importance, use and updation while processing a reservation request.

- A room may be blocked for a particular guest, if available and reception should be informed.

- **Cancellation procedure**

Receive request → Remove reservation slip → Cancel
 in correspondence → Update charts.

- **Amendment procedure -**



- Filing of reservation correspondence of future, current and past dates.

- **Group reservation -**

- Group size is usually of 15 or more guests,
- A group has a definite routine,
- A group has discounted rates on EP, CP, AP or MAP
- Confirmation is well in advance,
- A separate file is opened for each group,
- F & B and Housekeeping are informed in advance.
- Arrival list is a list of guests arriving on a particular day.
- 'No Shows' is a term used for expected guests who do not arrive. The reservation usually checks back from the source, for the reason, updates charts for the continuing dates and charges retention if required.

- Certain alphabetical codes as they are helpful in spelling a name or any other information.

4.14 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What are 'Reservation Charts' and 'Room Status Board'? How are they used and updated?
2. What are group reservations and how are they different from individual reservation?
3. How do you store reservation correspondence?
4. How would you deal with 'No Shows'?

4.15 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 4.1 (a) telephone, telex, fax, letter; (b) duplicate;
(c) reservation charts; (d) True
(e) False (g) True (h) False.
- 4.2 (a) Whitney, (b) chronological,
(c) European, Continental, American, Modified American,
(d) False, (e) False (f) True.
- 4.3 (a) reception, (b) arrival list, (c) retention,
(d) False, (e) True, (f) True.

5

RECEPTION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

You are already familiar with 'Reception' as a part of the Front Office. Do you recall what is the 'Reception'? You have been introduced to this term in Chapter 2. It is that section of Front Office where the guest is received, registered and assigned a room to stay. It also handles guests' comments, appreciation or grievances. Also, the 'Information' section, where the guests seek answers to their various queries, may be merged with it. Even where it is separate, then the two are known as 'Reception' and 'Information' and are located next to each other. 'Reception' in such a case may also be called the 'Registration' desk. In this chapter we will mainly deal with the activities related to 'Registration'.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to –

- know the basic knowledge of a receptionist,
- handle an arrival or a check-in,
- handle check-in of guests with no or less luggage,
- handle group check-in,
- change a room of a guest already staying,
- process a departure.

5.3 A RECEPTION DESK

Before proceeding to the various activities carried out at the reception, we must familiarise ourselves with the desk itself.

You already know that the reception desk is usually a counter where you stand as a receptionist. From the guest's side or the front is usually a plane and has a plane

surface on top. From the inside, there is an extension, slightly lower than the plane top meant for guests, where you can work. There are also lot of shelves and drawers to keep various stationary items and formats which you may use from time to time. You will read about these formats later when the specific use of each is explained. There are slots to keep the keys. Some hotels have a board with pegs and room numbers to hang the keys. This board is fixed on the wall facing the guest, or at your back. There is also place for the whitney racks. Do you remember what the whitney racks are? At the reception we use two sets of whitney racks apart from the one sent by the reservations for expected arrivals. In one set, the carriers are marked and arranged in order of the room numbers. These racks are also called 'Room racks'. These carry slips with information about the guests staying in a particular room. Since only occupied rooms have these slips, also known as whitney slips, it is easier to find out which rooms are occupied and which are vacant, at a glance. The other set of whitney racks also contain slips with the same information, but these are arranged in the alphabetical order of the names of the guests. These are also known as information racks and are placed at the information counter.

Can you tell why two sets of whitney racks are needed at the reception? It is for easy and quick reference. If you want to know who is staying in a particular room, say 201, then you look in the racks arranged room number wise, and if you want to know in which room a particular guest is staying, say Mr Anthony, then you look in the racks arranged alphabetically.

While we are reading about the desk let us also discuss the time and duration of its working. You know that any office is normally open in the day, usual working hours being 9.00 a.m to 6.00 p.m. Can we apply the same working hours for a hotel reception? What will happen if a guest arrives early in the morning, say before 9.00 a.m or late in the evening after 6.00 p.m or maybe even in the night?

Considering the above situations, the working hours of a hotel receptionist will depend upon the arrival and departure schedules of the guests. It will also depend upon the size of the hotel. Normally, the reception works for all 24 hours. However, it may not be necessary in the night, to have the full staff at the reception, but there certainly should be at least one person to handle the activities of the reception. In larger hotels, or in hotels situated in large cities or metros, where arrivals may take place regularly in the night as well, the reception may be required to be completely staffed at night as well.

It is not possible for the same person to be present all the 24 hours. Therefore, people at reception work in shifts. There are three shifts of 8 hours each or as the management decides.

5.4 CHECK-IN PROCEDURE

You already know that the reception is located so as to be easily noticed and accessible by a guest entering the hotel. It is situated in the lobby near the main entrance.

Welcoming a Guest

As the guest approaches the reception, you as a receptionist should welcome him with a warm smile and wish him the time of the day in a very courteous manner,

e.g. 'Good Morning Sir, may I assist you?' or if you already are familiar with the guest, you could also use his name, e.g. 'Good Morning Mr John, how may I help you?'. In fact whenever you are familiar with a guest, you must always address him by his or her name. Using one's name makes the guest feel comfortable and he also feels that he is recognised in the hotel.

Registration of the Guest

HOTEL NAME :			REGISTRATION CARD NO. :	
LAST NAME :		FIRST NAME :	NATIONALITY :	
			PASSPORT NO. :	
DESIGNATION :			DATE OF ISSUE :	
COMPANY :			PLACE OF ISSUE :	
ADDRESS :			REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE NO. :	
			DATE OF ISSUE :	
			PLACE OF ISSUE :	
DATE OF ARRIVAL IN HOTEL TIME :			PROPOSED DURATION OF STAY IN INDIA :	
DATE OF DEPARTURE : TIME :			DATE OF BIRTH :	
PURPOSE OF VISIT :			BILLING INSTRUCTIONS :	
ARRIVED FROM :				
PROCEEDING TO :				
ROOM NO.	NO. OF PERSONS	ROOM RATE	CHECKED BY	GUEST'S SIGNATURES
	ADULTS CHILDREN			

REGISTRATION CARD

Once a guest reaches the reception or the registration desk and the above welcoming formalities are complete, he will state his purpose of visit to you. If he wants to stay in the hotel, you should carry out the following steps to register him and assign him a room in the hotel –

- (i) Find out whether he has made a reservation. How will you do it? Do you remember the arrival list compiled at the reservations. You could also check with the guest.
- (ii) If he has, give him a blank registration card to fill in. Some hotels have pre-printed or typed-in registration cards for guests with reservation.
- (iii) If he does not have a reservation, find out if you have some rooms available in the desired category, for guests without reservation. These guests are also known as 'walk-ins'.
- (iv) If you have rooms available for walk-in guests, give him a blank registration card. A sample of a registration card is given below. It consists of two identical

leaves separated by a carbon paper so as to produce two copies. The format may differ from hotel to hotel but the basic information remains the same –

You must remember at all times that registration of a guest is a legal formality. Most of the information included in the registration card is not only for hotel information and records, but also the department of tourism may ask for the information and the government authorities may like to see the registration of any particular guest, specially foreigners. These cards are numbered and therefore should be kept under strict control so as not to lose any. The hotel can be questioned by the authorities if any card is found missing.

What will you do, if you do not have rooms available for a walk-in guest? You can assist him in locating a room in any other hotel. You can call another hotel of his choice and find out if they have some rooms available and inform them of his arrival.

- (v) Once, the guest has filled the registration card and signed it, you should check all the details and whether the registration card is complete in all respects. In case of foreigners, check whether all the passport details have been correctly filled in.

Assigning a Room

- (vi) You should then check for a vacant clean room in the desired category. How would you do so? You have already been explained this earlier. You can go through the room racks and vacant clean rooms will have no whitney slips in them.
- (vii) Once you have the numbers of the vacant rooms, you can assign one of them to the guest and note the same number on the registration card. If you have more than one room on different floors or with different views, you can also check with the guest if he would like to prefer any particular one, and then assign the same.

Handing over the Keys

- (viii) After assigning the room, hand over the keys to the guest with the words 'Have a nice stay with us' or 'Please let me know if I can do something else for you.' or some other polite and welcoming statement. Some hotels have a practice of giving the keys in an envelope known as the 'key-envelope'. On top of the envelope the name and the room number of the guest are written.
- (ix) Some hotels also have a practice of giving a key-card with the key. It contains the name of the guest, the room number, the arrival and the departure dates. Wherever, prevalent, you should fill in a key card and hand it over to the guest.

Showing to the Room

- (x) Call a bell boy and inform the guest that this person will take his luggage and show him to the room.

A Welcome Call

- (xi) Once the guest reaches the room, give him a telephone call welcoming him and checking with him if he has found the room to his satisfaction. This is also known as the 'Welcome Call'. If anything is to be explained to the guest,

it can be done now. You can also make an effort of explaining other facilities of the hotel to the guest now if not done earlier at the time of registration.

As far as the guest is concerned, the check-in procedure is complete here. You still have to complete you records which is explained in the next few steps. These are also referred to as back office procedures.

- (xii) After the guest has been registered and assigned a room attach the reservation slip with the second copy of the registration card and pass it on to the Front Office Cashier. Some hotels have a practice that the registration card must first be checked by the reception manager or the lobby manager before being passed on to the cashier.
- (xiii) From the registration card type whitney slips giving the following information in the same format :

Room number	Name of the guest	Number of persons
Arrival date	Company	Departure date
Arrival time	Room rate charged	Departure time
Checked-in by	Billing instructions	Slip typed by

- (xiv) Place one copy of this slip in the room rack at the reception counter and one in the information rack.
- (xv) Send the copies of this slip to the following departments/sections also, who maintain whitney racks for their instant information –
 Front Office Cash, Telephones, Room service, Housekeeping, and Laundry,
- (xvi) Fill in all the details from the registration card into a register known as 'Arrival/Departure register'. Small hotels may register a guest straight into this register. In that case they do not get the registration card filled in. The guest then, has to sign in the register itself.
- (xvii) In case the guest is a foreigner, fill in a 'C' form. A format of 'C' form is shown below –

Arrival/Departure Register

HOTEL XYZ	'C' FORM
Name of the guest :	
Nationality :	
Passport Number :	
Date and Place of Issue :	
Address in India (Other than to : :	
Date and time of arrival at the : :	
Date of Arrival in India :	
Arrived from :	
Proposed duration of stay in India :	
Registration Certificate Number :	
Whether employed in India : Yes/No	
C' Form :	Signature of Manager

This form is filled in duplicate and the original copy is send to the FRRO (Foreigners Regional Registration Office).

- (xviii) File the registration card with other cards of the day. This is then stored for information.

You are now familiar with the usual check-in or the registration procedure of any guest arriving in a hotel to stay. These guests may or may not have a room reserved for themselves. Every guest wanting to stay in the hotel must register himself first at the reception. Only then the room is allotted to him for his stay.

Apart from normal check-in of individuals there are a few arrivals which are to be handled in a little different way. We shall read about these cases now.

Practical 5.1

In sequence with practical 4.3, Mr Gupta arrives for check-in and room 234 with rate being Rs 2,000/- is allotted to him. Complete a registration card for him with whatever details you can and complete your records.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.1

State true or false –

- A reception counter has many shelves and drawers to keep various formats and equipment like keys, whitney racks, etc.
- All guests who approach the reception counter must be registered.
- Registration cards for the guests with reservations may be pre-printed.
- A whitney slip is printed for all the guests checking-in the hotel.
- A "C-form" is filled for all the guests checking in the hotel.

Fill in the blanks –

- The two sets of whitney racks kept on the reception are called racks and racks.
- You can find out whether a guest has a reservation or not, with the help of
- Guests wanting to stay in the hotel but do not have a reservation are known as
- All the information from the registration card is entered into the/ register.

5.5 GUESTS WITH LESS OR NO BAGGAGE

There might be some guests who do not have any luggage or maybe only a small bag or a briefcase. These guests can walk out of the hotel any time without settling their bills. The hotel has to be careful as this will be a loss in revenue. These kind of guests, since have scanty or no baggage, are known as 'scanty baggage guests'.

Can you tell how will you come to know of these guests? Yes, since the bell boy is the one who handles a guest's luggage at the time of arrival, he informs you whether a particular guest is a scanty baggage case or not. With such a guest you carry out the check-in procedure in the usual way except that you should ask for an advance payment if the billing instructions say that the payment is to be collected from the guest. If the guest indicates payment through credit card, then a charge slip should

be filled and his signatures taken on it. In both cases a receipt should be given to the guest. Only in the case where the instructions are to send the bill to his organisation he should not be asked for any advanced commitment.

5.6 GROUP CHECK-IN

You have studied in the chapter on reservations that rooms may be reserved for a group. The reservation for a group is handled in a different way. Similarly some difference is also to be observed while attending a group on arrival. Do you remember that a separate file is opened for each group while making a reservation? This file is passed on to the reception with the arrival list. Since it contains all the information about the group and its participants, there is nothing much required to be done. The following steps are taken to ensure a smooth check in of a group –

- (i) The required number of rooms are assigned before the arrival of the group. If the list of participants is already available, the rooms can be assigned to the participants also.
- (ii) The keys to these rooms are collected and kept separately, preferably in key envelopes with the names of the guests.
- (iii) On arrival the participants are usually served a soft drink or fruit juice, called as welcome drink, while their check-in is handled with the group leader.
- (iv) Only one registration card is used for the entire group. It is signed by the group leader or the tour escort. Tour escort is the person accompanying the group, if the group is through a travel agent.
- (v) The keys are then distributed to the individual participants. You can also hand them over to the group leader, who in turn distributes them to the participants.
- (vi) A meal plan sheet is filled with the guidance of the group leader. The meal plan sheet is a information sheet indicating the time for wake-up call on each day of the stay and the time and venues for the meals of the group on each day. Usually the venues are suggested by the Food & Beverage Manager and the time of each meal indicated by the group leader. The information of each meal is then also circulated to concerned venues. A group meal plan sheet looks something like as follow –

HOTEL XYZ				
GROUP NAME :				
Number of persons :				
Arrival date :		Time :		
Departure date :		Time :		
DAILY SCHEDULE				
DATE	WAKE-UP	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
		Venue/Time	Venue/Time	Venue/Time
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
NOTE :				

GROUP MEAL PLAN SHEET :

- (vii) Rest of the activities are performed as you have read earlier. Do you recall them now?

5.7 CHANGE OF ROOM

You have seen how an arrival is taken care of, in the previous sections. During the stay of a guest, due to some or the other conditions, sometimes it may be necessary to change the room of a particular guest. Let us read here as to how would you carry out this procedure –

- (i) Ensure that it is necessary to change the room of the guest. Find out the exact reasons.
- (ii) Locate a room where the guest should be shifted so that the earlier reasons of shifting may be eliminated, e.g. if the guest is staying in a room with a front view of the hotel and desires a pool facing room, locate a vacant pool facing room.
- (iii) Ask the guest to keep his baggage packed. Check with him if he wants the shifting to be carried in his presence, or if it can be done in his absence (if the guest is going out of the hotel).
- (iv) Fill in a room change information slip. It is usually in a book form to keep a record of other changes also together. A format of the room change information slip is given below. These are filled so as to make multiple copies.

GUEST ROOM CHANGE INFORMATION RECORD		
GUEST NAME		
Room number		New room number
<input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>		<input style="width: 80px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
Reason for Change		
Room change done by –		
Reception	Bell boy	Date :

- (v) Call a bell boy and instruct him accordingly. Hand him the room change book.
- (vi) After the bell boy has executed the shifting, he will inform you at the reception.
- (vii) Get the copies of this information circulated to the other departments as you had done at the time of check-in. Do you recall, which all sections you had circulated the information at the time of check-in?

- (viii) When the shifting is completed, check with the guest if the room is to his satisfaction and whether he is comfortable now.

5.8 DEPARTURE PROCEDURE

You know that in a hotel the guests come and go. You have read about the arrival procedure earlier in this chapter. Let us now what is your role at the reception at the time when the guest leaves or check out.

- (i) The guest may call the reception desk informing you that he is checking-out.
- (ii) You in turn send a bell boy to the room to collect the baggage.
- (iii) Inform the cashier to keep the bills ready for the guest to settle.
- (iv) The guest may return the key to you at the reception. You can show him to the Front Office Cashier where he can settle the bills. It is possible that the guest goes straight to the cashier and leaves the key with him or the bell boy.
- (v) While the guest is settling his bills, the bell boy will come and inform you that the guest is doing so. He will also check whether you have received the key.
- (vi) Inform the housekeeping about the departure giving them the room number so that they can start cleaning the room. Inform other departments also, where you had sent the information on arrival. Do you remember which departments had you sent the arrival information? This time you do not have to inform the Front Office Cashier now as the guest is already checking-out there. Record this in the departure information sheet.

Departure Information Sheet

Date :

Room	Guest	Time	H/k	Tel.	R/s	Laundry	Inf. by

DEPARTURE INTIMATION SHEET

- (vi) Remove the whitney slip from the room and information racks and enter the contents in the departure section of the arrival/departure register. Some hotels have a separate departure register.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 5.2

State true or false –

- (a) Advance payment is usually taken from guests with less or no baggage.
- (b) For a group arrival, rooms are assigned and their keys kept aside before its arrival.
- (c) Pre-printed registration cards are kept ready for each member of a group on its arrival.
- (d) A room change can never be made in the absence of a guest.

Fill in the blanks –

- (e) The guests with less or no baggage are usually referred to as _____
- (f) The room change intimation is circulated to _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____ apart from Reception and Information sections.

5.9 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- A reception counter has lot of shelves and drawers to keep various items of use.
- Two sets of whitney racks are used at the reception –
 - Room racks
 - Information racks
- A reception counter is open 24 hours a day.
- Check-in procedure includes –
 - Welcoming the guest
 - Registration of the guest
 - Assigning a room
 - Handing over the keys
 - Showing to the room
 - A welcome call

and is followed by –

- Sending the second copy of the registration card to the cashier
 - Preparation of whitney slip
 - Circulation of information
 - Filling in Arrival/Departure register
 - Filling in the C-Form
-

- Scanty baggage guests have less or no baggage. Usually an advance is taken from them.
- For a Group Arrival, the following is ensured apart from the regular check-in procedure –
 - Assigned rooms
 - Welcome drink
 - Registration by group leader
 - Circulation of meal plan information.
- Change of Room –
 - is done with proper reasons
 - the new room should be more satisfying to the guest,
 - may be done in the presence or absence of a guest,
 - a room change slip is made and circulated to all sections/departments as with arrival intimation.

5.10 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Describe in detail a complete CHECK-IN procedure including the back office procedure.
2. Describe in brief, how will you handle a
 - (a) Group arrival
 - (b) Scanty baggage arrival

5.11 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 5.1 (a) True (b) duplicate (c) True
 (d) True (e) False (f) Room, Information
 (g) arrival list (h) Walk-ins (i) arrival/departure
- 5.2 (a) True (b) True (c) False
 (d) False (e) scanty baggage
 (f) Front office cash, Telephones, Room service, Housekeeping, Laundry.

6

RECEPTION – CONTROL ACTIVITIES

6.1 INTRODUCTION

You have read about the various arrival procedures and the basic function of the reception in the previous chapter. Is that all what happens at the reception? No, there is much more to it. Earlier you have read that the Front Office keeps track of the rooms part of the hotel, let us read in this lesson, how does it do so through the reception.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to –

- Calculate the room position,
- Check Housekeeping discrepancy report,
- Keep the rack information information updated,
- Maintain guestroom keys safely and accurately,
- Prepare the VIP report for internal circulation,
- Prepare the night receptionist's room report,
- Understand and calculate occupancy statistics.

6.3 ROOM POSITION

By now you are quite familiar with the work at the reception. One of the activities you are performing is that of selling the rooms. Some of the rooms are already reserved in advance and the list of such guests is sent to you by the reservations. However, as discussed earlier there are some guests who might not have made reservation and come to the hotel in an effort to take a room to stay. These guests are known as walk-ins. Can you give them rooms as and when they come without considering some guests who have reserved accommodation and are scheduled to

arrive later in the day? No, you must be sure that after keeping rooms for the guests with reservations, there still would be some rooms available which then can be sold to these guests. You also can not keep these guests waiting till all the reserved guests arrive and take rooms to let you know whether some rooms are remaining or not. So what do you do? How do you find out that you would have some rooms to sell to walk-in guests and still keep some rooms for the guests with reservations.

For this purpose you should be aware at any given moment of time about the right availability of rooms, also known as the ROOM POSITION. It can be known through very simple calculation as described below –

- (i) First you count the vacant rooms through the room rack. Do you recall how to locate these in the room rack? E.g. the number of vacant rooms be 20 at the time of calculating room position.
- (ii) Then from the occupied rooms, count the rooms which show the departure date as of the day. Remember, the departure date is on the right side of the whitney slip. E.g. say the rooms having departure date for the day be 15.
- (iii) Add the vacant rooms and the expected departures, i.e., (i) + (ii). This will give you the total number of available rooms on that day. In the above example it will be $20 + 15 = 35$.
- (iv) Now count the number of rooms required for the guests with reservations. How will you find that? Yes, from the arrival list. Let the expected arrivals be for 30 rooms.
- (vi) Then subtract (iv) from (iii), i.e. $35 - 30 = 5$. These are the number of rooms available to you which can be sold to walk-ins. In other words you can sell 5 rooms to walk-ins. This is also known as the room position and is called as +5.

Let us see the above example collectively as follows to get a clearer picture –

(i) Number of vacant rooms	20	
(ii) Number of expected departures	15	
(iii) Total number of rooms available	35	(i + ii)
(iv) Number of expected arrivals	30	
(v) Room position	5	(iii - iv)

As we see that this is a positive figure, we call the room position as positive.

Now take the same example with the change in the number of expected arrivals. Let the number of arrivals be 40. Let us see what happens now –

(i) Number of vacant rooms	20	
(ii) Number of expected departures	15	
(iii) Total number of rooms available	35	(i + ii)
(iv) Number of expected arrivals	40	
(v) Room position	-5	(iii - iv)

As you see now, the number of expected arrivals is more than the number of available rooms and therefore the room position is negative in nature. This shows that you are short of rooms even to provide to your reserved guests. In that case can you sell rooms to walk-in guests? No, as you have to keep all rooms reserved.

Thus we see that when the room position is positive you can sell some rooms to the walk-in guests and when it is negative you cannot.

The room position can be calculated at any given moment of time, whenever a need arises, but as a routine it should be calculated at the beginning of every shift. Some hotels have a routine of calculating the position at pre-determined intervals of time.

Practical 6.1

On a given day when you arrive on duty, you find that the number of vacant rooms available to you are 12, expected departures are 5 and you have reservations for 13 guest rooms. Calculate your room position. Also state whether you will be able to register any walk-ins or not. If yes, then how many.

6.4 HOUSEKEEPING DISCREPANCY REPORT

While keeping a control of all the rooms, you have to exercise a number of checks to eliminate any errors that might have occurred during the day. Consider this –

There was an arrival processed perfectly by you. Somehow, there was an error in placing the whitney slip. The whitney slip was not placed in the correct carrier of the room rack. What will happen? The rack will still show the room as vacant and available for sale.

To avoid this and many other types of errors you have to carry out different types of checks. A housekeeping discrepancy report is also part of the same.

You are stationed at the reception and work from there. Rarely you go and check a room. However, since the housekeeping has to attend to every room, they are the ones who can physically establish the occupancy status of room, i.e. whether it is occupied or not. So the housekeeping department prepares a report on all the rooms stating whether they are occupied or vacant, and if occupied, then by how many guests. The format of the report is as shown below –

Housekeeping Discrepancy Report		Date :
Room number	As per housekeeping	As per reception
101		
102		
103		
104		
105		
–		
–		
–		

Housekeeping Discrepancy Report

As you can see, the report has three columns in it, one is for the room number, one for housekeeping and the third for reception. In the column for housekeeping, the housekeeping personnel writes the status of the room as vacant or occupied against each room as he finds when he visits the room. This report is then sent to the reception. Usually the report is made by the housekeeping department twice in a day i.e. morning and evening, but the exact frequency and timing may differ in different hotels.

Once it is with you at the reception, you will fill in the column meant for reception, from your records. Where will you get the information from? Yes, from your room rack. For every room where you have a whitney slip in the carrier, you will write occupied. Similarly, for every room where there is no whitney slip, you will write vacant. Once this exercise is completed at your end, you will check that the entries in the two columns, i.e. for housekeeping and for reception should tally. If they do not tally and differ for some room, then there is a discrepancy which needs to be checked further. How will you check that? Let us read the solution to these situations.

First let us see what are the situations in which a discrepancy might occur. A discrepancy will occur if one of the columns show a particular room as occupied and the other one shows the same room as vacant. There are, therefore, two such possibilities –

- (a) The room is occupied as per the housekeeping and vacant as per the reception.
- (b) The room is vacant as per the housekeeping and occupied as per the reception.

Since you have to keep control and record of all the sales of the rooms, you have to now check on these discrepancies and rectify them. Let us see how you will go about doing it.

(A) The room is occupied as per the housekeeping and vacant as per you –

Since the housekeeping has checked the room physically and found the room occupied, such a situation can occur when –

- (i) You have taken an arrival in that room, but for some reason or other were unable to place the whitney slip in the rack. Maybe you forgot to do so, or maybe by mistake you have placed it against a different room rack. There could be various reasons for the absence of the whitney slip. In this case you can check with your arrival/departure register for any arrival in that room. Then you can rectify it by typing a fresh whitney slip and place it in the room rack. You could also ask the Front Office cashier to check the bills of that room and rectify the discrepancy.
- (ii) You have removed the whitney slip to show a departure of the guest in the room. In such a case, the Front Office Cashier would still have the bills with that room number and you can rectify the discrepancy after checking with him.
- (iii) The guest has checked-out but retained the room for some time say, a couple of hours. In this case again you can ask the cashier to check his records and he would be able to tell you if the guest has settled his bills earlier than he was to leave the hotel. The lobby manager, usually, is also kept informed when there is such a case of an early check-out.

Any situation other than this, where all your records are correct should immediately be brought in the notice of the reception manager or the lobby manager and their intervention should be sought.

(B) The room is vacant as per the housekeeping and occupied as per you –

Such a situation can occur when –

- (i) You have not removed the whitney slip as part of the departure procedure. This can be checked with the help of the Front Office Cashier, who will tell you after referring to his records, whether the guest has checked out or not. The records at the bell desk can also help you to check the same.
- (ii) There is a scanty baggage guest registered in that room. In that case the housekeeping information could be wrong as they might not find any luggage or any person in the room even when the room is occupied. The guest might have gone out at the time when the housekeeping personnel attended the room. In any case you should check with the Front Office cashier if the guest has settled his bills or not.

For any other situations you must refer to the reception or the lobby manger. Most hotels anyway have the practice of showing the discrepancy report to the concerned manager, after it has been processed by you.

6.5 TALLYING OF ROOM AND INFORMATION RACKS

This is another exercise to keep you records accurate and in order to avoid any discrepancy or confusion. This exercise is carried out in the hotels which practice the whitney system. Do you recall the use of the whitney system?

You know that there are two sets of whitney racks handled by you. One at the reception known as the room rack and has whitney slips arranged in the order of the room number, and the other at the information known as the information or the alphabetical rack, has the whitney slips arranged in the alphabetical order of the names. These should be tallied with each other at least once in every shift, usually in the beginning of each shift. To tally the racks go through the following points –

- (i) Ask a colleague of yours to read one set of racks while you read the other one.
 - (ii) First, from the room rack, you should read aloud the name of the guest and the room number from the room rack, one by one.
 - (iii) The colleague handling the information rack should check whether the whitney slip is present in the information rack or not.
 - (iv) Any missing whitney slip should immediately be typed afresh and placed in the information rack.
 - (v) Next, you should read the room number and the name of the guest from the information rack as you did earlier with the room rack.
 - (vi) This time the colleague checks the presence of the whitney slip in the room rack.
 - (v) If any slip is missing in the room rack and present in the information rack then the slip is taken out from the information rack. This is so because the
-

absence of the slip from the room rack indicates the room is vacant and the guest has already checked-out.

Do you remember that on arrival of every guest you send whitney slips to various departments/sections for their information. They also maintain a whitney rack for their reference. Their racks are also tallied with the room rack at the reception. Since the other sections/departments may be situated elsewhere in the hotel, it is usual to tally racks of these departments over the phone.

Although the tallying of racks can be done at anytime, it is usual to tally the room and the information rack at the reception once in every shift and the racks of other departments with the room rack once in 24 hours, usually in the night.

6.6 KEY CHECK/KEY CONTROL

You handover the keys of the rooms to the guests on their arrival. Normally, whenever any guest is going out of the hotel, or even is out of his room, a guest leaves his keys with you at the reception and may tell you where he would be available if in the hotel or when would he be back if he is going out of the hotel. At the time of his departure or check-out, he hands over the keys back to you.

Sometimes, it may happen that the guest carries the keys with him or her even after the check-out. Or there maybe a skipper. A skipper is a person who leaves the hotel without settling his bills and intimating the reception of his check-out. Or for some other reason there could be a discrepancy in the keys with you. Sometimes it also happens that the keys are kept in the wrong slot.

To keep a strict control over the circulation of keys, a key check is done once every day. The key check is done normally late in the night once you are sure that all the guests have returned to their rooms. How would you do it?

It is a very simple exercise. The keys are checked vis-a-vis the room rack. For all the vacant rooms in the room rack, the keys should be in their respective slots. Similarly, for all the occupied rooms the keys should be with the guests and not in their slots, except the guests gone out. Since most of the guests are in their rooms late in the night, their keys will not be in the slot.

A discrepancy can occur when you find that –

- (a) A key of a occupied room is in the slot, or
- (b) A key of a vacant room is missing from its slot.

In both the cases, you must check your records as well as those of the cashier's. The manager on duty, which is normally a lobby manager, should be immediately informed who will take a decision for further action and might have the room checked.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.1

State true or false –

- (a) Room position indicates the availability of rooms which can be sold to walk-ins.
 - (b) The housekeeping personnel takes information from reception to prepare the housekeeping discrepancy report.
-

- (c) Key check is only done in the morning in the presence of the Front Office Manager.

Fill in the blanks –

- (d) To find the total number of rooms available for the day, add the and and
- (e) If the housekeeping discrepancy report shows no discrepancy, then a room shown as occupied as per housekeeping should show as at the reception.
- (f) The whitney racks of all the sections or departments must tally with the racks.

6.7 VIP REPORT

As you have read earlier, the front desk is not only a source of information for the guests but also for the hotel, other departments and the management. You have already read earlier in this chapter about the night clerk's report which gives an information about the amount of business generated in the day and occupancy statistics of the day.

There is another report which the Information or the Reception staff prepares in the night shift and that is the VIP report. This contains the names of the VIP guests staying in the hotel and expected to arrive in the coming day. Some hotels may also include the names of the guests who are staying complimentary or staying for a long durations. Some large hotels may have different reports for the later two kinds of the guests. The format of the report, however is similar and is like the one given below :

Guest Name	Room No.	Arrival Date	Departure Date	Rate	Reason for rate	Company	Designation
------------	----------	--------------	----------------	------	-----------------	---------	-------------

- VIPs Staying –
- VIPs Expected –
- Complimentary rooms –
- Long staying guests –

This report is then circulated in different departments as per the policy of the hotel. These departments generally include – General Manager, Sales Manager, Lobby Manager, Housekeeper, Accounts Manager, Executive Chef and Security Officer.

Not only the guests staying in the hotel, but also those visiting the hotel for a short period of time may also come to you with queries.

6.8 NIGHT RECEPTIONIST'S ROOM REPORT

Before going into detail about daily statistics calculated in a hotel, you must first know the three basic terms around which the entire statistics in the Front Office revolves. You know that the Front Office deals with the rooms aspect of the hotel

and the guest staying in them. It sells these rooms so as to earn some money. This has to be monitored on a daily basis. This means that the Front Office personnel must know, on a daily basis, that how many rooms are sold to how many guests and what was the business generated. Since you are at the front selling the rooms, at the end of the day you have to physically count these to ascertain the exact number. This again can be done with the help of the whitney racks. First let us see what are these basic terms and their meaning –

ROOM COUNT for a day is the number of rooms occupied on that particular day.

HOUSE COUNT is the number of guests staying in the hotel on that particular day.

ROOM REVENUE for a day is the revenue generated in that particular day. It is the total of all room rates applied on the occupied rooms.

There is usually a systematic method to record and calculate the above. Let us read ahead how it is done.

In the night, at the end of the day a report form has to be filled in with the details of each room. The format of the report is given below. Since it is compiled in the night, it is also known as the 'Night Clerk's Report' or the 'Night Receptionist's Report'.

Hotel XYZ

NIGHT RECEPTIONIST'S ROOM REPORT				Date
Room	Guest	No. of guests	Company	Rate
101				
102				
103				
:				
:				
201				
202				
203				
:				
:				
Auditors Adjustments :				
Room Count :				
House Count :				
Room Revenue :				

NIGHT CLERK'S REPORT

The shown entries are filled in the order of the rooms numbers shown. There could be separate columns for each floor. The actual format will change in different hotels.

You must have noticed a column for auditor's adjustment. After completing the report you will pass it to the night auditor. The night auditor makes some adjustments in the report you give to him. You will read about this in the chapter for night auditor.

After filling in the above report form you have to count all the occupied rooms to get the room count. On counting the number of guests in each room you will get the house count. If you total the applied rate in each room you will get the room revenue generated for the day.

6.9 OCCUPANCY STATISTICS

Above you have read the basic report generated daily by you at the end of each day. This is the basis of calculating the various statistics regarding the rooms, in the hotel. Let us now see what other statistics can be calculated by you.

6.9.1 Occupancy

Occupancy of a hotel is the percentage of its rooms occupied at any given moment of time. Usually it is calculated at the end of the day to find out the occupancy for the day. The formula of calculating the occupancy is as follows –

$$\text{Occupancy} = \frac{\text{Number of occupied rooms}}{\text{Total number of available rooms in the hotel}} \times 100$$

or in other words

$$\text{Occupancy} = \frac{\text{Room count}}{\text{Total rooms}} \times 100$$

Suppose your hotel has 350 rooms which you can sell to the guests. Out of these on a given day only 300 are occupied. Then the occupancy for that day can be calculated as follows –

$$\text{Occupancy} = \frac{300}{350} \times 100 = 85.7\%$$

6.9.2 Double Occupancy

You know a room may be occupied by one or two guests. When it is occupied by one person, it is said to be on single occupancy and when by two persons, it is on double occupancy. In a hotel we may also calculate the percentage of rooms occupied on double occupancy.

$$\text{Occupancy} = \frac{\text{Number of occupied rooms}}{\text{Total number of rooms}} \times 100$$

Suppose, in the previous example, the number of guests staying in the hotel is 400. Then the double occupancy would be

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Double Occupancy} &= \frac{400 - 300}{350} \times 100 \\ &= \frac{100}{350} \times 100 = 28.75\% \end{aligned}$$

6.9.3 Average Room Revenue

You know how to calculate the room revenue generated for a day. You also know that there may be certain discounts given to some guests. Therefore, all rooms will not have the same rate applicable. For management information we also calculate an average room rate applied or average room revenue generated

for a particular date. It is commonly known in its abbreviated form as A.R.R. The simple calculation to obtain this figure is –

$$\text{A.R.R.} = \frac{\text{Total Room Revenue}}{\text{Room Count}}$$

Let us say that in the last example, the room revenue generated was of Rs. 4,80,000 then the A.R.R. would be

$$\text{A.R.R.} = \frac{\text{Rs. 4,80,000.00}}{300} = \text{Rs. 1,600}$$

Practical 6.2

After making the night receptionist room report, you have obtained the following figures:

House Count	=	522
Room Count	=	396
Room Revenue	=	Rs. 6,57,000

Calculate the Occupancy, Double Occupancy, and A.R.R. of your hotel given so that there is a total of 427 rooms in the hotel.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 6.2

State true or false –

- Room count, House count, and Room revenue are the basis of all the room statistics in a hotel.
- The night clerk's report is a systematic method to collect and record the daily data.
- Occupancy can be calculated from the Room revenue.

Fill in the blanks –

- Room count for a day is the number of on that day.
- Total number of guests staying in the hotel is known as count.
- When we divide room revenue with room count, we obtain

6.10 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- To calculate room position,
 - if position is positive, walk-ins may be registered,
 - if position is negative, no walk-in can be registered
- Housekeeping department sends an occupancy report twice in a day, to reconcile the status of the rooms at the reception.
- Room and information racks must be tallied at least once in every shift.
- Whitney racks in other departments are also tallied with the room rack at the reception at least once a day.

- To keep a strict control of keys, a key check is done daily, normally in the night when most of the guests are in their rooms.
- A night receptionist prepares a 'Night Receptionist's Room Report' to find out the House count, Room count, and Room revenue. He also calculates the following statistics –

$$\text{Occupancy} = \frac{\text{Room count}}{\text{Total rooms}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Double occupancy} = \frac{\text{House Count} - \text{Room Count}}{\text{Total number of rooms}} \times 100$$

$$\text{A.R.R.} = \frac{\text{Total room revenue}}{\text{Room count}}$$

6.11 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. State what is a housekeeping discrepancy report and explain how it is useful to you.
2. Explain how would you,
 - (a) Tally the whitney racks
 - (b) Carry out a key check

6.12 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 6.1
 - (a) True
 - (b) False
 - (c) False
 - (d) Vacant rooms, expected departures,
 - (e) Occupied,
 - (f) room.
- 6.2
 - (a) True
 - (b) True
 - (c) False
 - (d) rooms occupied,
 - (e) house,
 - (f) A.R.R./Average room revenue.

7

INFORMATION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

You have read earlier that information is that section of Front Office where a guest can get information about the hotel as also other miscellaneous information about the city, state or country. Also, other departments of the hotel may seek some information about the guest. However, the information about the guest is largely available at the reception and mostly the same staff is available there. This is also true since the reception and information have to work in unison. It is often difficult to separate the activities of these two sections. Usually guests do not even bother to approach these counters separately. Small hotels may not even have a separate section showing as information counter.

You have already read in earlier chapters, how the regular information is circulated to other departments within the hotel. Also as said earlier, it is difficult to separate the activities of reception and information. Some of the activities you have read in chapters on reception can also be carried out in the information counter. This will actually depend on the hotel management. In this chapter you will read about the various tasks specific to the information section.

7.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to –

- Effectively handle guest requests and complaints,
 - Accurately take and deliver messages for guests,
 - Sort and promptly deliver the guest mail,
 - Provide up-to-date information on the hotel and city.
-

7.3 HANDLING GUEST REQUESTS AND COMPLAINTS

A guest staying in your hotel might come to you with various kinds of requests. It is also possible that he may be unhappy with the room or some arrangement and wants something to be done about it, e.g. he might not like the view from his room or he might come to you with a request that his room be changed to a pool facing room. He will also complain to you if he finds that the T.V. in his room is not working properly. How would you attend to such requests and complaints?

One solution is to direct the guest to the concerned person. It is very easy to do so, say if a bulb in his room is not working, you might ask him to contact the maintenance section. Will it be a suitable move?

You can do this but it is not always advisable. In every situation you must use your judgement, asking yourself the above question, and whether the guest request will be promptly attended to, e.g. if a guest wants to order some eatables, you could tell him, 'Sir, please dial no. for Room Service, they will promptly attend to your order.' You would know, in this case, that the room service will, for sure, attend to his direct request. But as in the case of the earlier example of maintenance, you could take down the request and yourself ask the maintenance people to do the job.

Referring for each and every request may result in the guest being directed to different places for his different need. Instead you could note down his request and follow it up yourself, making sure that it is attended to. Let us read here how you go about doing so in a systematic manner.

- (i) Listen to the guest carefully, in an attempt to find out what he needs. Assure him that he shall be attended soon.
- (ii) Note down the guest request and the time the informed you about it, in a register. This register is known as the 'Guest Request Book'. The format of the register is as shown below.

Room	Guest No.	Request Name	Informed Details	Time Person	Remarks/ Follow-up

Guest Request Book

- (iii) Inform the concerned department or section to attend to the guest. Note the name of the person whom you spoke to and the time.
- (iv) At suitable intervals, keep checking with the concerned person or department and find out the progress of the work required to fulfill the request or rectify a fault. Note it down in the register with the time. By doing so, you will keep

yourself informed of the progress and also be able to provide the same to the guest if need be.

- (v) Once the request is attended to, note down the action taken to attend and the time for completion.
- (vi) Inform the guest, if he is not aware of the above.
- (vii) Again check with the guest if he is satisfied with the action taken and the result.

Remember, your work does not end till you get the feedback from the guest and he informs you of his satisfaction. In case he is not satisfied, again follow it up with the concerned person.

Sometimes, the guest may be unhappy about the services provided to him. He may like to speak to you; not because he is angry with you, but he might think you are the right person to complain to and that you will make a note of his grievance. Most of the time he does not expect any rectification, but a verbal apology or an assurance of better services in future will always be welcome. You may log it down at your end for information of others. In such cases listen to the guest attentively showing that you are concerned. Even if you already know about the problem, you must hear it out completely and assure the guest of better services or results in future.

7.4 RECEIVING AND DELIVERING GUESTS' MESSAGES

One of the most important activities at the information is to receive and deliver guest messages.

In all hotels, specially where there are a number of guests staying due to business reasons, there are numerous calls for guests. The calls are normally received at the reception counter where there is no separate telephone exchange.

Wherever there is a separate telephone exchange, the telephone operator first tries to connect it to the room. If there is no answer from the room, the operator connects the call to the information counter. Similarly if the EPABX is situated at the reception/information counter, you should first check if the keys are with you or not. If the keys are not with you, try and contact with the guest in his room. Suppose the keys are with you or there is no answer from the room, then what would you do? You will politely ask the caller for his identity and whether he would like to leave a message. If he wants to leave a message, note it down. Will you remember all the calls and messages for all the guests? Maybe some, but you may not be able to convey an accurate message to the guests, specially in a large hotel. To be sure that the guest receives the message and that too accurately and completely, you must note it down on a message slip. These slips or pads of slips are always kept on the information counter. Message can be noted down on these slips and handed over to the guests.

As you will note while going through the format, there is a provision if somebody has visited to meet the guest. That indicates the same slip can be used in case the guest is not available to meet the visitors.

Hotel Name	
Message Slip	
For (Guest Name)	
Room number	
Mr/Ms.	
- Telephoned	- Will call again
- Visited	- Please call back
- Waiting for you at on	
(date) at..... (time)	
Message	Message Received by

Guest Message Slip

When there is a visitor and wants to leave a message, he might write it himself. Whenever you are taking a message on the phone and writing it down on the slip, you must be very careful in doing so, in order to convey the message clearly. The following points will help you write an accurate message –

- (a) Always listen carefully to whatever the caller has to say.
- (b) Write the message in capital letters. Remember, the guest may not be familiar with your handwriting and it may lead to confusion. When you use capital letters, this confusion is avoided.
- (c) Write the message in exactly the same words as spoken by the caller, i.e. in first person. To the guest it must appear as if the caller has himself written the message or dictated the words to you. Never make an inference or try to explain a point from your side.
- (d) Once you have noted down the message, always read it back to the caller, with the punctuation as well, if possible. In this way you will be able to reconfirm the message with the caller. If there is any rectification to be made, he will check with you then and there. In this way you will make sure that you are passing the correct and complete message.

If you will remember the above points while taking down a message, you will be delivering not only a complete but also a clear message.

The message slips are prepared in duplicate. The original copy is sent to the room through a bell boy, who slips it under the door. Thus the guest will find the message as soon as he enters the room. The duplicate copy is kept in the key slot at the reception. This copy can be handed when the guest comes to the reception to collect his keys. In case the keys are already with him, he will anyway find the message in the room. If he has gone out of the hotel, he might call you to check if you have received any message for him. Then you can also read his messages on the phone to him if he so wishes.

Now let us see how you would deal with the telephone caller in two other situations.

- (a) If the guest has checked out of the hotel. You could simply tell the caller so, and more often he would not like to leave the message. If he still insists, you may take a message and keep it in the await arrival box.
- (b) If the guest has not yet arrived, but you are holding a reservation for him, then also you can inform the caller of the same and also check with him if he would like to leave a message. You should then take the message and keep it in the await arrival box. You should also mark the reservation slip with the word 'message' so that the message can be handed over to the guest when he comes to check-in.

7.5 GUEST MAIL

You have read that a caller or a visitor may leave messages at the information desk. Similarly, you may also receive letters by mail or telexes, faxes for the guests. In fact in a small hotel, the entire mail is delivered at the information or reception desk. In a large hotel, it may be delivered at the information desk, or the Front Office Manager's secretary or even with the General Manager's secretary, depending on the policy of the hotel. In addition there may be telegrams, telexes and faxes also. Telex and fax messages are generally received on the hotel's telex and fax machines. The person handling these machines may direct the messages straight to the person concerned, if it is for somebody in the hotel. The guest messages will be directed to the information counter.

The mail received in the hotel has to be first sorted into hotel mail and guest mail. Some hotels may also like to stamp all the mail with the date and time of receipt, usually the following steps are taken to handle incoming mail –

- (i) Stamp all the letters with date and time of receipt.
- (ii) Sort the mail as for hotel and guest mail.
- (iii) Personal mail for the hotel staff may be sent to the personnel department or to the staff entrance door.
- (iv) Official mail could be sent to various concerned departments. It can also be placed in the slots marked for different departments, near the Front Office Manager's office.
- (v) Arrange the guest mail in alphabetical order of name.
- (vi) Check the mail with the information rack, and if the guest is staying in the hotel, then send to his room.
- (vii) Check the remaining mail with the reservation rack. If the guest is expected to arrive in near future, place the mail in 'await arrival' box. Mark the reservation slip with the word 'MAIL'.
- (viii) If the guest has checked out, redirect it to his forwarding address, if he has left one. How will you check that the mail is for a checked out guest? Usually a guest checking out leaves an address where his mail can be redirected to. This address is known as his forwarding address. This is noted in a forwarding address register and may be referred for a period specified by the guest or as

per the policy of the hotel. You can also check for recently checked out guest from the arrival departure register. Another way of checking for guest histories which are maintained by the guest relations section.

Whenever a guest mail is redirected, the details are always noted down in the mail forwarding address.

- (ix) Rest of the letters are alphabetically arranged in the await arrival box. This await arrival box is checked without the information rack at least once in every shift. This is to make sure that all await arrival messages and mail have been delivered to the guests who have already checked in.
- (x) While delivering registered mail, the signatures of the guest must be taken. A register to keep record of this is maintained at the information desk. A general format for the same is given below –

Date of of Receiving	Post Office Registration Number	Address Arrived from	For (Guest Name)	Signature of Recp. Guest	Date of Delivery

REGISTERED MAIL BOOK

INTEXT QUESTIONS 7.1

State true or false –

- (a) Whenever a guest makes a request to you, you have to keep following it up with the guest.
- (b) If a guest complains about any service in the hotel, you need not bother.
- (c) After taking a message, you must always read it back to the caller.
- (d) The mail in await arrival box is checked with the information racks at least once in each shift.

Fill in the blanks –

- (e) While dealing with guest requests, your work ends only after the job is completed to
- (f) A message must always be written in
- (g) If you receive a letter for a guest arriving next day, you will place the letter in

7.6 PROVIDING INFORMATION TO THE GUEST

As you already know and is evident from the name, the 'Information' section provides basic information to the guest. A guest may seek endless amount of information and

you could go on updating your knowledge and resources for that. Basically you should be well equipped with some information necessary for the guests' stay. Some of the information areas are –

- The hotel facilities and services provided
- The different outlets in the hotel and their intercom/telephone numbers
- The hotel rules, more commonly known as 'House Rules' as applicable to the guest
- Doctors on the panel of the hotel and their telephone numbers, specialisation
- Important business and trade centres
- Popular tourist attractions of the city and around, their location and distance from the hotel
- Various sight-seeing tours of the city and from the city and their rates
- Travel agents and taxi operators
- City map
- Important places of worship and their time
- Distance from the hotel of airports, railway stations and bus terminals
- Schedules of airlines, trains and buses

It is understandable that you will not remember all the things. For quick reference you should have enough literature available like a telephone directory, various time tables, tourist guides, city map, etc. These books and papers will help you provide quick and accurate information to the guest.

Practical 7.1

Collect as much information and information sources about your city, as possible, and which you think any stranger in your city could ask for.

7.7 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

• Guest Request

- Note down in the Guest Request book
- Inform the concerned person of the same or different department/section
- Follow it up with the concerned person/department till done
- Get back to the guest, once the request is fulfilled
- Confirm with guest, whether the job is done to his satisfaction

• If a guest complains about some service.

- listen attentively,
- assure him of better services in future,
- inform the person concerned
- log it down for others' information.

- **Guest Messages**

- Taken on message slips in duplicate,
- written in capital letters for clarity,
- written in first person,
- reconfirm with caller by reading the message back,
- send one copy to room, other in key slot at reception

- **Guest Mail**

- If guest is staying, send it to his room
- If expected, keep in the await arrival box
- If not traced, keep in await arrival box
- Check await arrival box once in every shift
- Provide various information to guest through knowledge and literature like time tables, directory, etc.

7.8 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. How would you deal with guest requests?
2. What points will you keep in mind while noting a message? How many copies of a message slip are prepared and why?
3. Describe the process of handling guest mail.

7.9 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 7.1 (a) False
(b) False
(c) True
(d) True
(e) guest's satisfaction,
(f) first person, (or) capital letters,
(g) await arrival box,
-

8

GUEST RELATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Large hotels, where the volume of business is very high, often have a separate section known as 'Guest Relations'. This section comprises Guest Relations Assistants and Guest Relations Executives who are usually young ladies. Their main objective is to meet and communicate with the hotel guests, specially those considered as VIPs, and assist the hotel in providing them a comfortable stay. It is not enough to meet the guest and take a feedback from him. There are various activities this section does in order to make a guest's stay pleasant and comfortable. In a small hotel, however, the reception may be required to work on some or all of these activities.

In this lesson you will read about the various activities you may be required to perform as a guest relations assistant.

8.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to –

- handle a VIP arrival,
- issue a VIP amenity voucher,
- maintain a guest relations register,
- maintain guest history cards.

8.3 GUEST RELATIONS REGISTER

You have read earlier that a guest relations assistant is supposed to meet different guests, speak to them, find out if they are comfortable and take a feedback from them. In fact the guest relations assistant provides a very personalised service by being in constant touch with the guest and looking after their needs. The guest relations desk, where you will be required to be available, is also in the lobby near the lobby manager's desk.

Some guests might also come across with some problems and requests when they are spoken to, by the guest relations assistant. A guest relations assistant tries, in a number of ways, to keep the guests happy and satisfied. How would you do it? Obviously, you would not remember various needs of different guests. Also, you would like to keep a track of whom you have special made an effort to speak to and the various feedback. For all this, you should maintain a register, which at a glance would give you the above information. This register is known as? "Guest Relations Register" or a "PR Register" (PR is abbreviated form of Public Relations). The format of the register could be as follows –

Guest Name	Room Number	Spoken/Met Date/Time	Feedback	Action Taken

A GUEST RELATIONS ASSISTANT'S CALL REGISTER

You can also note down any special request a guest has made to you. Most of the requests, as you have already read in the chapter on 'Information' can be noted down in the guest request register and you or the information assistant can follow it up. You must remember here that if you have noted any request in the guest request register, you must also keep a follow-up on the matter and not leave it entirely on the information assistant.

Apart from the usual requests, as guest may make at the information counter, there could be some specific tasks you may help the guests with. These would include –

- arranging for postage and mailing/courier (in co-ordination with the bell desk),
- fix appointments for the guests
- book travel tickets/reconfirm tickets
- arrange reservations in a restaurant of the hotel/outside the hotel
- arrange for flowers/bouquets from the florist
- advise on shopping etc.
- advise on sight seeing and other entertainment in the city

The whole idea of guest relations is to give a highly personalised service to the guest and make him feel important and cared for.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.1

State true or false –

- (a) Guests tell their problems only to a Guest Relations Assistant.
- (b) A Guest Relations Assistant can make use of the guest request register placed at the Information counter.

- (c) A Guest Relations Assistant may be required to fix an appointment for a guest.

Fill in the blanks –

- (d) A Guest Relations Assistant provides by meeting various guests and taking care of their needs.
- (e) A Guest Relations Register is also known as a register.

8.4 VIP ARRIVAL

For any hotel, every guest brings business resulting in some revenue. Therefore every guest is important and should be attended with care. However, owing to different designations of the guests arriving, a few are considered and even given a status of a VIP guest. These would include Managing Directors, Chairmen of certain companies and the like. Also specific guests of honour like Ambassadors and famous dignitaries and personalities are considered as VIP guests. The arrival and check-in procedure being the same, a few steps might be taken by the hotel management and executed by you to welcome them on their arrival and make them feel important on arrival and during their stay –

(i) Action Plan

Usually these guests have a room reserved for them in advance. A note regarding their arrival and points to be remembered during their stay may be circulated to various departments. This would include any specific arrangement at the time of their arrival and during their stay.

In some hotels, an action plan may be initiated by the reservation supervisor instead of the guest relations assistant.

(ii) Pre-registration

This includes a pre-printed or already filled in registration card, where the guest has to just sign. This is done in order to save time and botheration of filling the entire card. With some hotels it may be a practice for all the regular guests who make prior reservations, but efforts to do so in case of VIPs are definitely made. Even when the complete details are not available, a registration card is filled in with whatever information the guest relation assistant has.

(iii) Blocking a Room

A room may be blocked for VIP guests, well in advance. You have already learnt how to block a room when going through the chapter on reservations. You as a Guest Relations Assistant has to make sure that a room is blocked and is ready in all respects with all the complimentaries etc., before the guest arrives. It is customary to check the room a little before the arrival of the guest is expected. This is done so that in case of some discrepancy, corrective measure can be taken before the arrival itself.

(iv) Aarti and Garlanding

The hotel might want to welcome these guests in a special way. Performing an *aarti* and garlanding them on their arrival is one of these special ways. In this way the

hotel shows its respect towards them and also makes them feel very special and important.

Aarti and garlanding of guests is performed by only the female staff of the hotel. If a guest relations assistant is not available, as in the case of arrivals in night, any other lady staff member may be requested to substitute.

(v) **Escorting**

Rather than handing over keys to such a guest or calling a bell boy, you should yourself escort the guest to the room. Sometimes if it is not possible, the manager on duty does the escorting. In fact, some of the guests may be escorted by the General Manager of the hotel. The guest is made comfortable and you have to make a note of any other thing he might require immediately.

(vi) **Circulation of Information**

You know that any arrival information is circulated by typing the whitney slips. This generally takes some time before each department becomes aware of the arrival of the guest. In case of a VIP guest you do not wait for the whitney slips. You can inform the concerned departments through telephone for immediate results. The whitney slips, however, do follow as soon as possible.

To make all these arrangements before the arrival of a guest takes place, it is important that the guest relations assistant (GRA) knows about the particular reservation. How would you gather this information? Yes, from the arrival list. You know that every evening, the reservation section sends an arrival list for the next day. You must go through the arrival list whether located at the reception or at the guest relations desk. Also, can keep in constant touch with reservations, who could tell you about any reservation for a VIP guest.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.2

State true or false –

- (a) A Reservation Supervisor may also circulate an action plan.
- (b) A manager may also escort a VIP guest to the room.
- (c) The Guest Relations Assistant gets to know about a VIP arrival when the reception supervisor tells her in the morning.

Fill in the blanks –

- (d) Filling in the details of registration cards before the guest arrives is known as _____
 - (e) A Guest Relations Assistant may welcome a guest by performing _____
 - (f) For immediate circulation of arrival information, the Guest Relations Assistant uses a _____
-

8.5 VIP AMENITIES VOUCHER

Whenever there is a VIP expected or already staying in the hotel, or any guest is to be provided with some special amenities, like flowers or soft drinks etc., which are to be placed in the room and are complimentary, the guest relations assistant issues a written notification to the concerned department. This notification is usually on a pre-printed voucher. This voucher is known as an amenities voucher and is similar to the one shown overleaf:

HOTEL NAME	
VIP AMENITIES VOUCHER	
Voucher No :	Date :
Please send the following complimentaries to room no :	
For (Name of the guest)	
Arriving on(arrival details).....	
- Flowers	- Cookies
- Fruit basket	- Soft drink bar
-(Any other).....	
Authorised by	

This is prepared in duplicate. One copy is sent to the concerned department such as housekeeping for flowers, room service for fruit, cookies and soft drink bar, etc. The second copy is retained in the book for records and future references.

8.6 GUEST HISTORY CARDS

There are a number of guests who arrive and depart from a particular hotel. Most of them, specially those touring frequently, may use the hotel repeatedly. On their repeat visits they expect some kind of familiarity that they are known to the hotel. For you as a staff member in the hotel, it would be quite difficult to keep note of every guest who has visited the hotel for a short time. Even if you do, it might not be possible to share all information with other employees. To keep this information available to the Front Office at any given moment of time, you are required to maintain a 'Guest History Card'. This card carries certain details of the guests which will help you in the registration of the guest as also catering to his various needs during his stay.

In the last section you have read about pre-registration. This is where the guest relations assistant finds the information to fill in the registration card. You can get these details typed on to the registration card and save the guest the trouble of filling a registration card again and again. The guest would also feel important and known to the hotel.

Name :	Nationality :
Designation :	Passport No. :
Company :	Place of Issue :
Address :	Date of Issue :
Date of Birth :	
Phone :	
Remarks : (Likes, Dislikes, Hobbies, any other)	

GUEST HISTORY CARD : (Front)

VISIT DETAILS						
Sl No.	Room Number	Rate	Billing	Arrival	Departure	Remarks

GUEST HISTORY CARD : (reverse)

A guest history card also keeps a track of a guest's visits to the hotel. The room number he stayed, the duration of stay and any specific comments or problems encountered during that stay are all recorded.

One of the most important features of this card is that it carries the various like and dislikes; regular habits of the guest. This is important, because whenever there is a room reserved for him, you can always refer to his guest history and prepare for his likes and dislikes. For example the guest may like to have an extra set of towels. If you already have that noted down, you can provide the amenity to the guest without him asking for it. This will make a guest happy that his presence is being valued by the hotel.

You have seen that a guest history card includes considerable information about the guest. Can you tell, how did this information come there? Well, it is you at the guest relations desk, who is responsible for collecting this information. Everyday, you should go through the registration cards of the checked-in guests. Pickup cards of the guests who already have a guest history. In some hotels, a guest history is opened for every guest checking in.

From the registration cards you have chosen, update the already existing guest histories. For those guest who do not have a history in the hotel, open a new card for each. Thus you shall be updating the already existing, as well as opening new guest

history cards almost every day. Is there any other method by which you can update a guest history card?

Yes, there is. The registration card of a repeat guest can only give you the room number and arrival/departure information of the guest. What about his comments and any specific experience during the stay? You might like to incorporate them if they are important and relevant for future visits of the guest. This can be collected from the Guest Relations Register. You, as a guest relations assistant, keep meeting guests and record important comments. From your register, you can update the guest histories in order to retrieve this information on the guest's future visits.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 8.3

State true or false –

- (a) A VIP amenities voucher is used to have the complimentaries placed in the room.
- (b) While Guest History Cards are opened for some guests, it may not be opened for others.
- (c) A Guest History Card gives you the family history of the guest.
- (d) A Guest History Card is updated only through the registration cards.

Fill in the blanks –

- (e) A Guest History Card tells you the and of a guest.
- (f) A Guest History Card is updated by a

Practical 8.1

Practice making Guest History Cards by noting down relevant information of some people known to you. (Leave the visit information part):

8.7 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Guest Relations Assistant provides a personalised service to the guest by meeting them and taking due care of their various needs, during their stay.
 - A Guest Relations Register, also known as a PR register, is maintained to keep record of important conversations, comments and feedbacks from the guests.
 - A Guest Relations Assistant might be requested by the guest, to help him with his travel arrangements, appointments, etc.
 - To welcome a VIP guest, the Guest Relations Assistant –
 - Circulates an action plan
 - Completes pre-registration formalities
 - Blocks and inspects the room
-

- May perform aarti and garlanding of the guest
- Escorts the guest to the room
- Circulates arrival information on phone
- A Guest Relations Assistant uses a VIP amenities voucher to request for placing the complimentary in the room.
- A Guest History Card is an important tool of a Guest Relations Assistant. It consists of relevant information of the guest and a history of his visits to the hotel. It is constantly updated by the Guest Relations Assistant.

8.8 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What activities will you perform while preparing for the arrival of a VIP guest.
2. What is a Guest History Card and how is it important?

8.9 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 8.1 (a) False (b) True
(c) True (d) Personalised service
(e) PR
- 8.2 (a) True (b) True
(c) False (d) Pre-registration
(e) Aarti & Garlanding (f) telephone.
- 8.3 (a) True (b) True
(c) False (d) False
(e) likes, dislikes (f) Guest Relations Assistant.
-

9

FRONT OFFICE CASH – GUEST BILLING

9.1 INTRODUCTION

You know that a hotel provides various services to its guests against payment of money. For a guest staying in the hotel, this payment is usually settled at the end of his stay or in other words, at the time of his check-out. During his stay, a guest uses numerous services and a track has to be kept for all of them. This is done by maintaining a bill or the 'Guest Folio' as it may be called. This is done at the Front Office Cashier's desk which is adjacent to the reception. Like a reception, this also has lot of drawers and slots to keep various books and bills.

Apart from maintaining the guest bills, there are various other activities carried out by a Front Office Cashier. In this lesson you will read how a guest bill is maintained and settled and then we shall move on the another chapter to discuss other activities of the Front Office Cashier.

9.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to –

- describe the billing cycle,
- open a guest bill,
- keep the guest bill updated,
- settle bills with guest on his check-out.

9.3 THE BILLING PROCEDURE

As you are already aware the Front Office is the first place that a guest comes in contact with on checking-in. It is also the last point when he is leaving the hotel as

he has to settle his bills at the time of check-out. In small hotels the bills are settled at the reception itself. Whenever separate, cash counter is located with the reception counter so as to be easily noticed and accessible to the guest.

The main job of a cashier in a hotel irrespective of its size, is to maintain accurate and updated guest bills and accepting payments for these bills. In small hotels, a receptionist along with his own duties can perform the cashier's job too. But in bigger establishments, a separate cashier is required along with the receptionist for smooth and efficient functioning. Also, in small hotels, a bill book is used with detachable leaves. In each leaf, bill can be maintained for up to seven days and is known as guest weekly bill. In larger hotels the bills may be updated with a machine usually known as NCR and is much faster. The bills in this case are separate leaves and not in a bill book. We shall read more about these when we go on to open a new bill or folio, as it is usually referred as, in the next section.

When a guest registers himself at the reception on arrival, the second copy of the registration card is passed on to the Front Office Cashier. The Cashier opens a guest folio based on the information from the registration card.

During his stay in the hotel, the guest may use numerous services of the hotel from time to time. He may eat in any of the restaurants, bar, or order food and drinks through room service. He may be using the health club or making a number of telephone calls. Every time he uses some service, a bill is raised in his name which he may prefer to settle with the main bill, at the time of checking out. If he wishes to do so, then, he signs these bills as and when they are raised. These bills are then sent to the Front Office Cashier. You, as a cashier, will then charge all his bills into his folio. This is also known as posting the charges on the folio. The room charges are posted every night. If a guest is checking out in the day, the applicable room charges for that day are charged at the time of check-out. Thus, the bill is always updated with each shift posting the charges regularly.

When a guest desires to check-out cashier looks for any pending bill which may be posted at that time. He also checks with specific outlets, particularly with room service and telephones, if there has been any last minute order and the bill is yet to be sent to the cashier. This normally does not take long. By the time the guest actually comes to the cashier to ask for his complete bill, it is ready and immediately presented to the guest for his scrutiny and payment.

9.3.1 Check-in and Check-out Time

A hotel usually displays on the Front Office Cashier's desk, the times for check-in and check-out. These timings are the basis of charging room rates.

Anybody checking in before the check-in time is charged for the previous night, but if a guest has checked-in after the check-in time, he is charged only for the current day.

Similarly, if anybody checks out before the check-out time, he is charged only till the last night, but if he checks-out after the check-out time, he is charged for the following night as well.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.1

State true or false –

- (a) For a guest, the Front Office is also the last point of contact with the hotel.
 - (b) A guest bill may be handled at the reception.
-

- (c) Each time a guest uses any service of the hotel, he has to pay for it then only.
- (d) A guest bill should be kept updated at all times.

Fill in the blanks –

- (e) A guest bill may also be called a guest
- (f) Check-in and check-out time are the basis of charging the
..... to a guest bill..

9.4 THE GUEST BILL OR A FOLIO

You know that the cashier opens a guest bill or folio as soon as guest check-in. There could be three different ways in which a bill can be opened. These are –

- (i) The guest's weekly bill,
- (ii) The bill through the NCR machine,
- (iii) Computerised billing.

9.4.1 The Guest's Weekly Bill

As the name suggests, one copy of the bill is sufficient for seven days of guest's stay and thus has instant reference to every day's transaction at one glance. The format is as below–

HOTEL XYZ				BILL NO.			
Room No. :				Guest Name :			
Registration Card No :							
Arrival Date & Time :							
Number of guests :							
Room Rate charged :							
Date :							
Room Charges							
Restaurant (food)							
Restaurant (beverage)							
Room Service (food)							
Room Service (beverage)							
Laundry							
Telephone							
Telex/Fax							
Paid-out							
Tax on room							
Tax on food							
Tax on beverage							
Daily Total							
Balance b/f (Dr/Cr)							
Total to-date (Dr/Cr)							
Allowances							
Cash/Advance							
Balance c/f (Dr/Cr)							
Billing Instructions :							
Checked by :							
Guest's Signature :							

GUEST'S WEEKLY BILL

You will note that the details from the registration card including the card number are noted at the top. Below it there are eight vertical columns. The column on the extreme left is for different types of transactions possible in the hotel, whereas the other seven columns are for posting the charges for each of the services utilised by the guest on each day. The transaction heads in the right column could vary and will depend on the hotel, e.g. a hotel having two or more restaurants may have separate rows for both the restaurants and alcoholic beverages (The term beverages in the bill refers to alcoholic beverages only as these are taxed separate from the food and soft beverages). This is one part of the bill and consists of all the expenses incurred by the guest and charged to him. In other words we can say that these charges are debited to the guest and hence this part is also known as the debit part. This is added to obtain a daily total.

The other part, which you will observe is below the debit part, consists of allowances given to the guest or any advance paid by the guest. This amount is adjusted against the amount chargeable to the guest. In accounting terms it is credited to the guest and this part is known as the credit part. The difference of the debit and the credit part is noted in the last row, i.e. the balance. If the debit total is greater than the credit total, then it will show a debit balance. If otherwise, it will show a credit balance which can also be denoted by the minus sign '-'. Some hotels may also have two rows to denote the totals and balances, for debit and credit.

During the day whenever a guest uses any facility of the hotel, a voucher or a bill is prepared by the concerned department and then sent to the Front Office Cashier duly signed by the guest. At the end of each day and at the time of checkout of the departure day these transactions are added to the guest folio so as to keep it updated at all times. After posting, the various vouchers are stored in their respective slots so that they can be checked by the night auditor at the end of each day. They are further kept with the cashier to show it to the guest if he so desires. Room rent is debited in the folio at midnight or when the guest is checking out.

Practical 9.1

Mr M. Gupta checks-in and is staying in Room 101 of XYZ Hotel since 5th January 1997 12:00 noon. The room rate is Rs. 1000.00. The following transactions are to be charged to his bill –

January 5, 1997	He had dinner at the restaurant worth Rs.200/-
	He had drinks in the bar worth Rs.100/-
	He paid an advance of Rs.1000/-
January 6, 1997	He had breakfast from Room Service worth Rs.100/-
	He got his suit ironed worth Rs. 20/-

The tax on food is 7%, and on alcoholic beverages, 10%. There is no tax on room charges.

Open his weekly bill and update it till 7.00 p.m on 6th January 1996 with the above transactions and room charges.

As you see, the bill or the folio has two parts. The left side is the debit part and all the transactions charged to the guest are posted on this side. The right side is the credit part and all the allowances, and advance received are posted on this side.

You must have also observed that there is a small box for local telephone calls. At the time of check-in, the meter reading is noted in the 'opening' column. At the time of check-out the meter reading is noted in the 'closing' column. The difference will give the total number of calls made by the guest and he is charged accordingly. Where the guest cannot dial directly from his room, he asks the operator for the connection. In that case there is no need of this box. The telephone operator raises a bill for the telephone call made and sends it to the Front Office Cashier.

For actual working of this NCR machine, you must visit some hotel where this machine is installed and have a look. You can request the Front Office Manager for his permission to do so.

9.4.3 Computerised Billing

In modern times, many hotels have started using computers for their various systems, including guest billing. The exact working of the system depends on the software package being used but the basic billing cycle remains the same.

The Front Office Cashier may or may not be required to open a folio and post charges for other departments. The folio is automatically generated with the check-in. In some computer packages, the various departments can post the charges straight from their desk. Most of the time, even room charges are posted in all the rooms by giving a single command to the computer. The cashier then, just has to collect the vouchers and tally, if all of them have been posted in the computer. He may charge only the missing ones.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.2

State true or false –

- (a) An NCR machine cannot be used in smaller hotels.
- (b) The various vouchers from different outlets are kept with cashier in case the guest asks for them.
- (c) In an NCR machine, the charges can be posted in the guest folio from any restaurant or bar.

Fill in the blanks –

- (d) A guest weekly bill has provision for days.
 - (e) All guest folios have a and a side.
-

9.5 GUEST DEPARTURE

You know that whenever a guest desires to check-out he normally lets the reception know. He might also ask the bell boy to pick-up his luggage. When the guest is checking out, the cashier gets the information from the reception or the bell boy. The guest himself also might call the cashier on phone asking him to keep the bills

ready. The cashier then checks if any more vouchers are to be charged to the guest folio. He also checks with various departments specially room service, coffee shop, telephones and laundry, if there is any pending charges yet to be charged to the main bill. He then keeps the bill ready for the guest to settle it.

Once the guest arrives at the cashier's counter, you will present him the bill. The guest will check the bill and pay you the required amount. Here it is important to know the various modes a guest can pay through –

- (i) A guest can pay the amount in cash.
- (ii) He could use a credit card to pay.
- (iii) He could use traveller's cheques.
- (iv) There could be instructions to send the bill to his company. This should have a prior approval of the hotel management.
- (v) He might have made the stay arrangements through a travel agent and paid him for a package deal. In that case he pays through a travel agency voucher.

After the bills are settled to the satisfaction of the hotel, you can give tell the same to the bell boy about it. He will then complete the departure procedure.

9.6 MODES OF PAYMENT

You know when a guest is checking out, he is presented with a bill at the Front Office Cashier's desk. The guest is allowed to leave the hotel only after he has paid and settled all his bills and the hotel is satisfied with the billing and payment. You have already read what are the different modes by which a guest can settle his bills. In this section you will read about those modes in detail –

The mail received in the hotel has to be first sorted into 'hotel mail' and 'guest mail'. Some hotels may also like to stamp all mail with the date and time of receipt, usually the following steps are taken to handle incoming mail –

(a) Cash

The simplest form of paying any bill is in cash. Therefore, the basic mode for payment is cash. Indian nationals can pay for their bills in Indian Rupees in India. However, according to Government regulations, normally you can not accept Indian Rupees from any foreign national. Therefore they pay in foreign currency like US dollars, British pounds or any other as acceptable by the Government.

(b) Traveller's cheques

Another simple mode of paying a bill is through traveller's cheques. Because of safety reasons, people prefer to carry traveller's cheques of different denominations, rather than cash, which may be stolen. While accepting traveller's cheques, you must request the guest to sign on the space provided on these cheques. These signatures of the guest must tally with those already done earlier.

These traveller's cheques can also be in different currencies. As in cash you have to accept Rupee traveller's cheques from Indian and those of foreign currency from foreign nationals.

(c) Credit cards

A very popular way of paying hotel bills now-a-days is credit cards. As you must be aware these are small, rectangular plastic cards issued by different banking organisations. On one side where the name and logo/trademark of the bank are printed, there is a number embossed known as the number of the card. The card holder's name is also embossed on the same side. On the reverse, there may be some instructions or terms printed. With these instructions, there is a white strip on which are the signatures of the card holder.

When you present the bills to a guest, he may give you his credit card after going through the bill. This means he intends to pay by credit card. Here are some steps, which you should normally follow while accepting payment by credit cards –

- (i) Check whether your hotel accepts the particular bank's credit card or not. If not, regretfully return the card to the guest and request for another card if he has or ask him for payment by any other mode.
- (ii) If you accept the credit card, then check the expiry date of the card. This is also embossed on the credit card on the front side.
- (iii) Check the card with the cancellation bulletin sent to you by the banking organisation, to verify the card. You can accept the card only if the number does not appear in this bulletin.
- (iv) If the card is acceptable in all respects, get the bills signed by the guest.
- (v) Take an imprint of the front side of the card on the chargeslip supplied to you by the banking organisation. The imprint is taken with the help of an imprint machine also supplied by the banking organisation.
- (vi) Fill in the details of the bills as per the format in the chargeslip. Different banking organisations have different formats. A general format could be as follows –

NAME OF THE BANK		Date :	
Card number :			
Card holder's name :			Expiry :
HOTEL NAME & MEMBERSHIP NUMBER		Amount	
Date :	Bill No:	Taxes	
Card holder's signature		Tips	
		Total	

As you have read above, the card number, guest's name, expiry date, and hotel details are printed through the imprint machine. The date, bill no. and the amount columns are then filled in by pen. A charge slip contains of 4 to 5 leaves, which may have carbon paper between them. Some do not have any carbon papers, but have self carboning paper for the chargeslip itself.

- (vii) Get the charge slip signed by the guest.
- (viii) The guest signatures on the charge slip must be the same as on the reverse of the card.
- (ix) Give the first copy of the charge slip to the guest.
- (x) Attach the remaining copies with the bill to be sent to accounts departments for further action.

The above three modes of settling the bills, i.e. cash, traveller's cheques and credit card can collectively also be called as ways for direct settlement.

(d) Letter of Credit

The hotel management may agree to provide credit facilities to certain companies and individuals. Whenever an individual enjoys a credit facility, he will normally carry a letter or a card like a credit card from the hotel.

If a company enjoys credit facility for its employees staying in your hotel, it will normally send a letter stating that the bills for the particular guest may be sent to the company for payment. This letter from the company may be sent earlier while making reservations or the guest may bring it with him. In any case, it is necessary to have this letter before the guest checks out. When you receive such a letter, you must check whether your hotel has extended credit facilities to the particular company or not. If yes, then the guest just signs the bill and goes. The letter is attached to the bill and sent to the accounts department for further action. If the company does not enjoy the credit facility then you must inform the lobby manager, who might decide to inform other senior managers or speak to the guest or the company.

(e) Travel agency voucher

Sometimes the guest, while making a reservation through a travel agent also agrees to pay the travel agent for certain services utilised by him at the hotel. These services normally include the room charges and meals. In such a case the agency issues a voucher to the guest, instructing the hotel that bill for the specified services may be sent to the travel agency. In such a case, the billing instructions are specified at the time of making a reservation. You have to open two bills. One would include the charges which are to be billed to the travel agent as specified. This bill is sent to the travel agent along with the voucher which is collected from the guest. All other charges, not charged to the travel agency, are included in a second bill and the payment is collected directly from the guest through cash, traveller's cheques or credit card. While accepting a travel agency voucher, it is essential to check if the agency enjoys credit facility in the hotel.

(f) Personal cheques

Personal cheques are NOT accepted by any hotel and you have an authority to refuse them. However, in some special cases the management may agree and ask you to accept the cheque for a particular person or visit.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 9.3

State true or false –

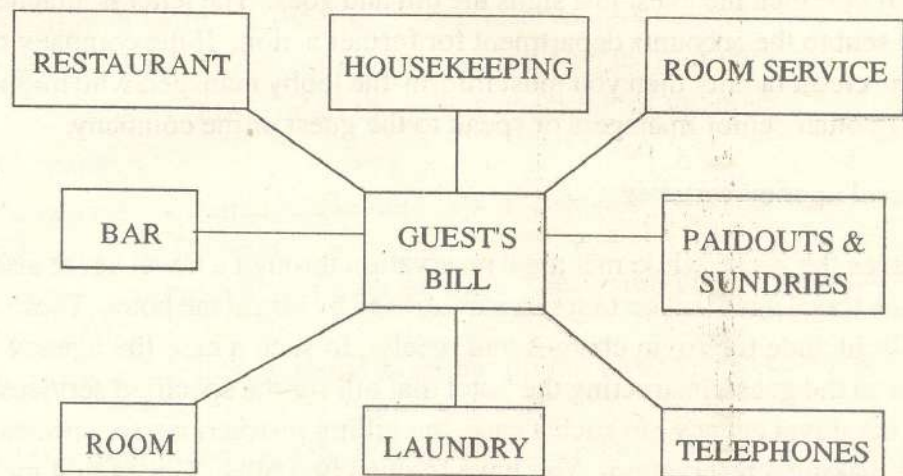
- (a) The cashier prepares the final bill after the guest arrives at his desk to check-out.
- (b) A foreign national can settle his bills only in cash.
- (c) It is necessary for a hotel to accept all credit cards.
- (d) Personal cheques are accepted by all hotels.

Fill in the blanks –

- (e) The three ways of direct settlement of bills are , , and
- (f) While paying by credit card, the guest's signature on the charge-slip must tally with those on the

9.7 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- A Front Office Cashier opens the guest bill or the folio as soon as the guest checks-in.
- Bills for a guest staying in a hotel are sent to the Front Office Cashier for posting into the main folio.



- Smaller hotels prepare a guest weekly bill.
- Larger hotels prepare bills through an NCR machine.
- In modern times, bills can also be prepared through various computer systems.
- At the time of check-out the cashier checks with different outlets for any pending bills.
- A bill can be settled by different modes –
 - Cash
 - Traveller's cheques
 - Credit card

- Letter of credit
- Travel agency voucher
- Personal cheques are not accepted unless approved by the management.

9.8 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What is the billing procedure in hotels?
2. What are the different modes of settling a bill?

9.9 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 9.1 (a) True (b) True
(c) False (d) True
(e) folio, (f) room rate.
- 9.2 (a) False (b) True
(c) False (d) seven
(e) debit, credit.
- 9.3 (a) False (b) False
(c) False (d) False
(e) cash, travellers' cheques, credit card
(f) credit card.

10

FRONT OFFICE CASHIER GENERAL WORK

10.1 INTRODUCTION

You know that a Front Office Cashier keeps record of a guest bills and receives payment from him at the time of check out. But that is not all. There are lot of other activities which are carried out at his desk. In this chapter you will familiarise yourself with these responsibilities which are as important as billing.

10.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to –

- Receive foreign currency from guest and give Indian Rupees in exchange.
- Identify various bills and vouchers sent to you by different departments,
- Make a paid out,
- Process allowances,
- Operate guest safety lockers.

10.3 ENCASHMENT OF FOREIGN CURRENCY

When a guest wants to change foreign currency into Indian currency, they can do so in most of hotels. It is done at the Front Office Cashier's desk.

Who would want to change foreign currency and why? Indian nationals already have Indian currency as Rupees and paise with them. Moreover, they are not allowed to possess or transact in foreign currency. What about the guest from outside India?

You must be well aware by now that hotels do have large number of guests, who come from other nations, staying with them. These guests would have money in currency of their nations or might have changed in US dollars or British pounds which are the universally accepted currencies. When in India, they pay for their room bills in foreign currency. What happens when they go out of the hotel land and want to pay for some purchase or services? These payments outside the hotels are usually accepted only in Indian Rupees. This is so because everybody in India is not allowed to accept payments in foreign currency. Only a few establishments including the hotels are authorised to accept foreign currency. Therefore these foreign nationals are required to possess some Indian currency as well. Where do they get that? There are a few outlets including some hotels and banks which are authorised to provide foreigners with Indian Rupees in exchange of the foreign currency.

This exchange of money can take place with some government regulations and a record is maintained for every exchange taking place. For this purpose, there is a format known as Foreign Currency Encashment Certificate which has to be filled in at the cashier's desk and signed by the guest and the cashier. A general format of the encashment certificate is given below :

HOTEL NAME				
FOREIGN CURRENCY ENCASHMENT CERTIFICATE				
Date :			No :	
Name of the Guest :		Room No :		
Passport No :		Nationality :		
Date of Issue :		Place of Issue :		
Currency Type	Currency/ T.C. No.	Denomination	Exchange Rate	Rupee Value
TOTAL				
Guest signatures			Cashiers signature	

As is evident from the format, each currency note and traveller's cheque is noted down in separate lines and even their numbers are noted. The exchange rate is announced at the Reserve Bank of India everyday. The Rupee value is calculated by multiplying the exchange rate that day, with the denomination.

For example, a guest has a 10 (US dollar) note and wishes to change it to Indian Rupees. He comes to you for the same. You will first ascertain the exchange rate of US dollar, say it is Rs. 36/-, then filling up the above form and taking that note from him, you will return him 36 x 10, i.e. Rs. 360/-.

The original copy of the encashment certificate is given to the guest. The second copy is attached with the traveller's cheques and currency notes received and the third copy remains in the book for records.

You must remember that in a hotel, this facility is provided only to the guests staying in the hotel. Foreign currency thus received is kept in separate envelopes and deposited with the accounts for further action.

10.4 FORMATS

You have read that a bill is raised in every outlet, whenever a service is rendered. The guest then signs it and it is sent to the Front Office Cashier to be posted in the master folio. Here you will familiarise yourself with general formats of certain bills and vouchers you may receive while working at the reception/cashier's desk.

10.4.1 Restaurant Check

This is a bill format. Restaurants and Bars use the same formats for cash sales as well as for credit sales, i.e. for residential guests. Room service also use the same format.

Hotel Name			
Restaurant Name			
Date	Table	No. of persons	Steward
			Rs. P.
Guest Signature : Name : Room No : (Please do not sign if you have paid)			

As you see at the bottom of the check, there is space for guest's signature, name and room number. This is for those guests staying in the hotel and who would like their bills to be collected and charged with the room bill at the Front Officer Cashier. They sign these bills, which are then sent to the Front Officer Cashier for posting into the guest folio.

10.4.2 Telephone Vouchers

You already know that in hotels where the guest can dial directly from their room, there are telephone meters and the calls are charged at the time of check-out. However, where the guests have to ask the operator to connect their call, there is no meter. In the latter case, the telephone operator makes a voucher like the one given below and sends it to the Front Office Cashier. Long distance calls like trunk and STD calls are always made through the operator and a voucher is always made.

HOTEL NAME		TELEPHONE CHARGE VOUCHER		
Date	Room No :	Guest Name :	Rs.	P.
Called no :	Time :	Duration :		
Type of call :				
Remarks				
Operator :				

10.4.3 Miscellaneous Charge Voucher

There could be a number of other services which may have their own formats for billing or may use a general format as follows –

HOTEL NAME		MISCELLANEOUS CHARGE VOUCHER		
Date :	Room No :	Name :		
Description of Service		Amount		
		Rs.	P.	
Prepared by :				

10.4.4 Cash Receipt Voucher

Whenever you visit a commercial establishment and pay some amount of money, you are given a receipt for the money. Similarly, at Front Office Cash, if you receive some money due to various reasons, you are also required to prepare a receipt for the same. You must already be aware of various formats of receipts. Here is a general format –

HOTEL NAME	
RECEIPT	
Date :	No :
Received with thanks from	
of (address/company name)	
a sum of Rupees	
by cash/cheque no. dated for	
the following services rendered	
Rs.	Cashier

INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.1

State true or false –

- (a) If a guest is in a hurry to exchange currency, the encashment certificate can be filled in later.
- (b) Only hotels can change foreign currency into Indian Rupees.
- (c) Restaurants have same bill formats for cash as well as credit sales.
- (d) A miscellaneous charge voucher can be used to raise any type of charge.

Fill in the blanks –

- (e) The foreign currency exchange rate is announced by
- (f) calls are always made through a telephone operator.

10.5 PAID OUTS

Sometimes you have to pay cash on behalf of the guest for the services utilised by him outside the hotel. These could be in the form of taxi fare, postage, payments to travel agency for purchase/reconfirmation of tickets, doctor or medicine etc. These are not regular nor necessary. This payment is known as a 'Paid Out'. It is recorded

in a paid-out voucher which is something like follows –

HOTEL NAME		
Date :	Paid-out :	Room No :
Description	Amount	
	Rs.	P.
Rupees in words		
Prepared by :	Authorised by :	
Signature of the guest :		
Signature of the receiver :		

A paid out is made only when proper authorisation is received from the lobby manager or any other senior manager. A request from the guest is not sufficient. One copy of the paid-out voucher is kept with other billing vouchers of the guest and the amount is posted in the guest bill as it is to be charged while the guest is settling his bills. Depending upon the policy of the hotel, you may also be required to add some service charge to it while posting in the guest folio.

10.6 ALLOWANCES

While dealing in cash you may be required to handle certain allowances. These could be of two types –

- (a) discounts given to the guest after a bill has been raised.
- (b) money paid to the guest as his entitlement.

(a) Discounts

You know whenever the guest utilises some service in the hotel, a bill is raised and charged to his folio. He may be entitled to some discount which was not included due to some error or reason. There could be some other dispute on the charge and the management may decide to waive off the charge in full or in part. In both the cases credit has to be given to the guest and the amount of allowance to be deducted from the bill amount. To keep this on records, an allowance voucher is filled giving proper reason and has to be authorised by your manager or the manager concerned with the bill on which allowance is being passed. One copy of this is kept with other vouchers and bills of the guest.

(b) Money paid to the Guest

Your hotel might have arrangements with different companies to pay a stipulated sum of money to their employees when they come and stay with you. Actually, the company may be required to pay their employees some daily allowance. The company may request the hotel to do so on their behalf. The hotel then receives the

same amount from the company and disburses it to the employees whenever there is one staying in the hotel. This is more popular with the airline crews staying in the hotel. Whenever they stay in a hotel, you have to disburse their daily allowance. Usually it is pre-determined and you can make small envelopes of their allowances. These are handed over to them right after they check-in and their signatures can be taken on an allowance voucher or an allowance sheet.

10.7 SAFETY DEPOSIT LOCKERS

You have read earlier that a hotel provides food, shelter and security to its guests and their belongings. There are different ways in which this is done. One of the security measures taken by the hotels is to provide its in-house guests with safety lockers. These are very similar to the lockers provided at various banks. The only difference is that a hotel extends this facility only to the guests staying in and for the period of their stay. The lockers are also in the custody of the Front Office Cashier. Whenever a guest wants his or her valuables to be kept in the lockers, he gets in touch with you at the Front Office Cash. Here are a few steps which will describe the operation of these lockers –

- (i) On request for a locker and if lockers are available, provide the guest with a locker registration card to fill in. A locker registration card is like the one given below –

As the name suggests, one copy of the bill is sufficient for seven days of a guest's stay and thus has instant reference to every day's transaction at one glance. The format is as below –

HOTEL NAME		
SAFETY DEPOSIT LOCKER		
Date :		
Guest Name :	Room No :	
Arrival date :	Departure date :	
Permanent Address		
.....		
Specimen signatures :		
.....		
Date of Issue :		
Date of Surrender :		
Locker Number :		
Terms and Conditions:		
.....		
Signature of Cashier	Lobby Manager	Guest

The reverse of the card is to record the use of the locker and is as follows :

Date	Time	Signature

- (ii) Find out an empty locker and take out its key.
- (iii) Hand over the key to the guest and note down the locker number on the card.
- (iv) Check the card and tally his signatures with those on registration card.
- (v) Get the card signed by the lobby manager.
- (vi) Normally a locker is operated by two keys (one with you and the other with the guest), insert your key and ask the guest to open the locker with his key.
- (vii) Remove your key and move away from there. Let the guest place his valuables.
- (viii) Ask the guest to lock the locker with his key. You do not need to use your key while locking the locker.
- (ix) Every time the guest wants to operate his locker, ask for his number.
- (x) Take out his card and fill on the reverse, the date and the time of use.
- (xi) Ask the guest to sign. Tally his signatures with specimen signatures on the front of the card.
- (xii) Operate the locker as in step (vii) and (viii).
- (xiii) When the guest wants to surrender the locker, specially at the time of check-out, repeat steps (x), (xi) and (xii).
- (xiv) Take the key from the guest and check if he has emptied the locker.
- (xv) Sign on the card as locker surrendered and place the card for records.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.2

State true or false –

- (a) A discount cannot be given after a bill has been posted.
- (b) You maybe required to pay money to a guest on behalf of his company.
- (c) Safety deposit lockers are always operated in the presence of the lobby manager.
- (d) Every time a guest wants to operate a locker, he must sign on the card and these must tally with the earlier signatures.

Fill in the blanks –

- (e) When you pay the taxi fare for the guest, you have made a
 - (f) Normally a locker is operated by keys.
-

10.8 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- A foreign national can exchange foreign currency into Indian Rupees at the hotel he is staying. To exchange foreign currency –
A Foreign Currency Encashment Certificate is filled.
The rate of exchange is found out from the Reserve Bank of India.
- You should familiarise yourself with formats of a –
 - * Restaurant cheque
 - * Telephone voucher
 - * Miscellaneous charge voucher
 - * Cash receipt voucher,
- A Paid Out refers to the money paid by the hotel cashier to an outside agency, for its services utilised by the guest. For it
 - proper authorisation of a manager is must
 - a paid out voucher is made
 - the sum is charged to the guest folio
- Allowances could be –
 - discounts given to the guest after a bill has been raised.
 - money paid to a guest, as his entitlement, on behalf of his company,
- Safety deposit lockers are available with the cashier for safekeeping of guest valuables,
 - the guest fills in the locker registration card
 - he can use the locker as and when he wishes
 - he surrenders the locker to the cashier on or before his check-out

10.9 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Explain the procedure of exchanging foreign currency into Indian Rupees.
2. Write notes on –
 - (a) Paid outs
 - (b) Allowances
3. Describe the operation of a safety deposit locker system.

10.10 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 10.1 (a) False (b) False
(c) True (d) True
(e) Reserve Bank of India (f) Long distance
- 10.2 (a) False (b) True
(c) False (d) True
(e) paid out (f) two

11

NIGHT AUDITING

11.1 INTRODUCTION

In a hotel there are numerous transactions taking place all the time at various places or outlets. The bill for each service is raised at the outlet itself. For a resident guest, these bills are sent to the Front Office Cashier and charged to his room bill. This means that the bills and vouchers are raised at different places in the hotel and charged to the guest at the Front Desk Cashier. This is done only after the cashier receives these bills. Could any error occur in this procedure?

Well, just in case there is, there should be somebody to ensure that it is rectified. Therefore, these transactions are to be collected and checked by somebody to avoid any confusion later. This can be done by somebody who is dealing with the guest bills. It could be the Front Office Cashier, or a receptionist in small hotels. Large hotels usually employ a separate person or may be more than one, to carry out this checking.

This person is called an auditor who audits all the transaction, checks all the accounts at the end of the day. Since all the business in a hotel carries on till late at night and the auditing can be done only after that, this auditor works in the night and therefore is known as the 'Night Auditor'. In this lesson we are going to read, how he generally operations.

In this lesson you will read about the various activities you may be required to perform as a guest relations assistant.

11.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to –

- understand night auditing,
- recognise the sales summaries of various departments,

- carry out steps involved in night auditing,
- prepare a daily sales summary of the hotel.

11.3 WHY AUDIT IN THE NIGHT?

As you have read, in all hotels there is a need for a separate check of work that the cashiers of various departments have carried out during the day. This is done to eliminate, if any, the errors in the daily transactions. This verifying and checking is generally done at night and is thus called 'Night Auditing'.

At this point you may ask, why is this verification necessary in the night? You are right, it could be done the following day during the regular office hours. But there are reasons to carry out this procedure during the night –

For an immediate and a quick result. Any discrepancy taking place in the day can immediately be rectified before the next day starts. Thus, the confusion does not carry on to the next day and the accounts remain clear. This gives a better start to the next day's work. Also the total business done is calculated during the process and the revenue figures are known to the management when the office opens.

A hotel is one of the few businesses that audits its accounts at the end of each business day. Because a hotel is normally open twenty four hours a day, it is difficult to stop transactions at any given moment. However, there are relatively less transactions by midnight and also the majority of outlets close.

This work requires lot of attention and concentration. In the night, it is comparatively quieter than the day and the auditors can work peacefully without any disturbances.

Night auditing is generally carried out by a staff member from accounts, in the night. He comes late in the night at around 10.00 p.m and works through the night, usually till about 6.00 a.m or till his work is finished. Whereas in large hotels there is a separate team of night auditors as above, in small hotels even the cashier or a Front Office assistant may be entrusted with this responsibility, specially where there is less work at the Front desk or at the cashier's desk at night.

11.4 THE PROCESS OF NIGHT AUDITING

By now, you must have understood that a night auditor checks that every room has been charged accurately or not. To do this he first has to be sure that all the bills and vouchers received from various outlets have been posted into the guest folios. He goes through all the vouchers at the Cashier's desk and if any has not been posted, he charges that to the room. He then makes sure that all the rooms are charged the room rate for the day. After doing this he needs –

11.4.1 A Statement of Charges Posted in the Guest Accounts

This is prepared by the auditor himself. It is also known as the 'Transcript' and is the detail of all the transactions charged at the Front Cashier's desk. Different hotels may have different formats for this. Here is one which will give you a fair idea –

THE TRANSCRIPT

As you see, there are many columns in it. The number of columns will be determined by the number of outlets in a hotel. e.g. there could be two restaurants in a hotel, then there will be different columns for each of them.

In the two columns in the extreme left you will notice the room number and the name of the guest staying. Against them are the previous day's balances, which the night auditor can get from the last transcript he prepared.

Then he notes down the total of charges the guest has been charged with in each outlet.

A subtotal will give the total charges posted in the guest bill on that day. This is determined by adding all the charges in different outlets.

This is added to the previous day's balance to give a total-to-date.

Then the auditor will check if the guest has been given any allowance or if he has paid any deposit. If so, he will note it down in the credit columns.

The difference will give him a new balance of each room. This should be the same as shown on the room bills. This balance will also be carried forward to next day's transcript as opening balance.

If there is any discrepancy, he checks all the postings and rectifies the mistake.

But is that all? No, the auditor has not yet checked if all the vouchers of different outlets have correctly posted or not. To do this he will further need –

11.4.2 The Departmental Sales Summary

Every outlet making a sale in the hotel has to send a sales summary sheet to the night auditor. This is in a similar format like the one shown below –

Bill No.	Room No.	Guest Name	Amount		Total	Remarks
			Credit	Cash		
TOTAL SALES						

Each bill which has been raised at the outlet will feature in this summary. The bills which have been signed by guests and charged at the Front Office Cash will feature the amount in credit, and for those which have been settled at the outlet itself it will be in cash column. These amounts are added together to give total cash and credit sales separately, as you will notice at the bottom of the summary. The credit total will specify the amount being charged to different room bills.

If you refer back to the daily transcript now, you will notice that there also the amounts of each outlet are added to give departmental totals. These must tally with

the total credit sales of each department. If it is not so, the vouchers at the Front Office Cash are checked with the departmental summary to find out which bill has not been received or posted or which one is posted extra. Once this is identified, the auditor notes down the discrepancy and rectifies it in the room bills as well as in the transcript.

11.4.3 The Night Receptionist's Room Report

Apart from the sales summary, the night auditor also requires the night receptionist's room report. You have already read earlier that the Front Office Assistant prepares this report in the night from the room rack. Do you remember the report?

No! well, then you should refer back to it at this point of time. As you will find in this report, the Front Office Assistant has noted down the room rate charged on each room. The total of this report will give you the total room revenue charged for the day. This should tally with the total of room charge column in the auditor's transcript. In case of any discrepancy, the Front Office Assistant and the auditor sit down together to rectify the error.

11.5 NIGHT AUDITOR'S ADJUSTMENTS

You have seen above, how a night auditor checks all the transactions which have taken place in the day. But is that all!?

You know a night receptionist's report is prepared from the room rack. It will contain details of all the guests staying at the time of making the report. What about the guest's who checked out in the day. Have you checked their bills and accounted for them?

All the bills of the checked out guests are kept in a separate envelope for the night auditor. He has to include these also while preparing the transcript. Only then will his transcript tally with the sales summaries of the different outlets.

Regarding the room sales there are two types of charges a night auditor has to add to the night receptionist's report –

- (i) The guests who have checked out and have been charged for the room at the time of check-out. These will not feature in the night receptionist's report and therefore are to be added by the night auditor.
- (ii) The guests who have checked in before the check-in time and have been charged twice, i.e. one for the current day which will feature in the receptionist's report, and another for the previous night which will not feature in the receptionist's report and thus is to be added. This is also known as charging 'RETERNTION'. Do you remember about the Check-in time?

After making all the adjustments and verifying all the bills, all the totals in the 'Transcript' will show correct figures.

11.6 COMPILING SALES SUMMARY OF THE HOTEL

You have read earlier that the total business done by the hotel in the day can also be calculated by the night auditor. Now read how this is done.

You have already seen how the night auditor reconciles the total credit sales in the hotel. He also gets the sales summary of different departments showing the credit and cash sales of the hotel. Once the credit sales are verified, the cash sales of each outlet can be added to give the total of each outlet. In fact, the total sales of each outlet is included in its sales summary. The night auditor after verifying the credit sales, compiles the information to give a daily sales summary of the hotel. In some hotels, the management should like to know the sales not only for the day, but also the total sales in the month till that date and in the year till that date. These are also termed as 'Month-to-date' and 'Year-to-date'. The report, then shows as follows –

SALES SUMMARY			
DATE :	TODAY	MONTH-TO-DATE	YEAR-TO-DATE
Room Sale			
Restaurant			
Bar			
Room Service			
Telephone			
Laundry			
Others			
TOTAL			

To achieve month-to-date and year-to-date figures, the day's sale is added to the last month-to-date and year-to-date figures.

This is the final report a night auditor compiles and hands over one copy to the Lobby Manager and another to the General Manager. There may be a number of other copies distributed as per the policy of the hotel.

11.7 OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NIGHT AUDITOR

The main responsibility of the night auditor is to check that all the credit sale charges have been correctly posted and to arrive at a correct credit sale figure. He also compiles daily sales summary of the hotel. About these you have already read in the previous sections. But this is not all.

The night auditor also verifies all the other activities of the Front Office Cashier.

He checks all the allowance vouchers and whether they are properly authorised and posted or not. In case he finds any discrepancy in authorisation or reason for allowance, he refers them back to the concerned department for explanation.

Similarly, he checks all the paid-outs, if they have been properly authorised and charged or not.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.1

State true or false –

- (a) All the transactions posted in the guest folios are checked in the night.
- (b) night auditor is so called because he works in the night.
- (c) The auditing of the day's transaction is done in the night because the hotel is closed at that time.
- (d) The night auditor posts all the unposted vouchers.

Fill in the blanks –

- (e) A statement of charges posted in the guest folios is known as the
 - (f) A departmental sales summary gives as well as sales figures separately.
 - (g) The night auditor adds the rooms and the rooms charged with to the night receptionist's room report.
 - (h) While compiling a sales summary for the day, the night auditor may also be required to calculate and the sales figures.
-

11.8 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Night auditing is done to eliminate any errors in the daily transactions.
- Night auditing is done by a staff member from the accounts section. In smaller hotels, even the night receptionist may be required to do the job.
- The night auditor –
 - checks if all the vouchers are charged to respective folios
 - checks if all the rooms are marked with room rate
 - prepares a daily 'TRANSCRIPT' and checks the balances of each folio with it
 - obtains 'DEPARTMENTAL SALES SUMMARIES' and checks whether all credit sale transactions have been posted to rooms
 - obtains 'NIGHT RECEPTIONIST'S ROOM REPORT' and reconciles with the daily transcript
 - Adds checked out rooms and retention charges to the Receptionist's report
 - Prepares a daily 'SALES SUMMARY' of the hotel
 - checks all other transactions taking place at the Front Office Cashier's Report

11.9 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. How does the night auditor verify and reconcile the various credit sales and room sales with the guest folios. Explain in detail.
-

11.10 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 11.1 (a) True
- (b) True
- (c) False
- (d) True
- (e) Checked-out, retention
- (f) month-to-date, year-to-date

12

BELL DESK

12.1 INTRODUCTION

A number of times in the previous chapters you must have come across the mention of bell boys. They are used by guests and the Front Office to do errand jobs. Their main duty is to take care of the guest baggage when he comes and leaves and are also available to the guest for small errands as and when the guest may so wish. In the Front Office also their services are utilised in different ways, e.g. circulation of information. In this chapter you shall read in detail about their duties and responsibilities and how they operate.

Like a reception, the bell desk also operates all 24 hours of the day. The staff at the bell desk does so in three shifts. Usually, there are a number of men, termed as bell boys, in one shift. The number is decided by the management depending on the size of the hotel and amount of work performed by them. These bell boys report to a bell captain in each shift. A bell captain is further responsible to the Lobby Manager for all activities at the bell desk.

12.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, you will be able to –

- handle arrival procedure at the bell desk,
- handle departure procedure at the bell desk,
- execute a change of room,
- deliver a mail or message to a guest room,
- page guests in lobby,
- securely handle luggage left by a guest.

12.3 ARRIVAL

The bell desk is located next to the main entrance to the hotel building. From there a bell boy is able to keep a watch on every guest entering the hotel. Thus it is he or the doorman who first come to know of the arrival of a guest with luggage. In fact the doorman always notices an arrival. Whether or not the bell boy has noticed it, the doorman then informs the bell desk, usually through a calling bell, that the services of a bell boy are required. The bell boy then goes out to collect the guest's luggage. He brings and keeps this luggage at the bell desk while the guest completes check-in formalities at the reception.

The bell boy fills in an errand card describing the pieces of luggage. If any luggage is already damaged, he informs the guest about it so that there is no dispute later. A bell boy errand card may be as follows –

HOTEL NAME		ARRIVAL ERRAND CARD	
Date	Name	Room No :	
Luggage description		No. of Pieces	
Suitcase			
Handbags			
.....			
.....			
Remarks			
Time :		Bell boy :	

When a room is allotted to the guest, the bell boy takes the room keys from the reception and escorts the guest to his room with his luggage. Once in the room, he explains to the guest about the room, or, in other words, familiarises the guest with the room. He shows him the location of the electricity switches, how to maintain the desired airconditioning, the refrigerator, the taps, music system etc. and whatever the guest may desire to know. If the guest is escorted by somebody else, like a GRA or a Manager, the bell boy only takes the luggage to the room and leaves the explaining to the person escorting the guest.

12.3.1 Scanty Baggage Arrival

As you have read earlier, the bell boy or the doorman are the first ones to know about the arrival of a guest with the luggage. You also know that there are some guests who check-in the hotel without any baggage. These are termed as Scanty Baggage guests. Do you remember reading about them in an earlier lesson? These guests, they since have minimum or no baggage, usually are missed by the doorman or the bell boy and may be mistaken by them to be a guest who is visiting the hotel or any of its restaurant or bar for a short time.

While a guest is registering himself at the reception, the receptionist usually checks with the bell desk about the status of his baggage, if a bell boy is not accompanying the guest. However, it also becomes the responsibility of the bell boy to keep a watch at the reception. If a guest without baggage appears to be registering, he should immediately inform the receptionist, usually over phone, so that appropriate action may be taken. The guest may be requested to deposit an advance or his credentials may be verified and a check may be maintained on him during his stay in the hotel. The lobby manager must always be informed of this.

Irrespective of whether the guest has any or no luggage, the bell boy must fill in an arrival card. If the guest is a scanty baggage, then he should write 'Scanty Baggage' on it. The lobby manager must also be informed about it.

12.4 DEPARTURE

Once a guest wishes to check-out, he may inform the reception or even the bell desk. If the reception is informed, the receptionist in turn informs the bell desk to get the luggage of the guest. If the bell boy receives the call from the guest directly, he informs the reception and Front Office cashier, so that the bills may be prepared and kept ready. Thereafter, he gets the baggage of the guest from the room to the lobby and keeps it near the bell desk. Again, he makes sure that none of the guest belongings are left behind. On keeping it at the bell desk he sticks the hotel stickers to the baggage.

Only after he gets an approval from the cashier about the bills being settled and from the reception and information that the keys have been received from the guest will the bell boy take the luggage out of the door to be loaded in the car or any other transport. Most hotels use a departure card for this purpose. It is as follows –

Guest Name :	Room No :
Departure date :	
Baggage description :	
Cashier :	Reception :
Information :	
Remarks	
Bell boy :	

The bell boy takes the initials or signatures of the attending cashier and receptionists in the space provided as mark of their approval for departure. Remarks column is usually to note the car number the guest is boarding or any other relevant comment at the time of departure.

12.5 GROUP ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

You have read how a bell boy handles any arrival or departure in case of individual guests. What happens when a group of about 20 or may be 30 or more guests arrive? The arrival and departure procedures are slightly modified so as to avoid confusion. Let us read ahead to know as to how this is done.

12.5.1 Group Arrival

Whenever a group arrives, it does so in a coach. Since the number of guests are more, the number of luggage pieces is also more. It may not be possible for one bell boy to handle the entire luggage. Usually two or three bell boys make a team and work together for this.

- (i) While the group enters the lobby and is served with a welcome drink and the check-in procedure is underway, the bell boys bring all the luggage in the lobby and keep all the pieces in a line.
- (ii) Once the guests are allotted their room numbers and handed over the key, they are requested to identify their luggage.
- (iii) The bell boys tag all the luggage piece and write the respective room numbers on these tags as and when they are identified.
- (iv) The guest is then requested to go to their rooms and are informed that the luggage will follow soon.
- (v) The bell boys take the luggage in trolleys to the marked rooms.
- (vi) While delivering the luggage, the bell boys always check for all the pieces.
- (vii) One arrival card is made for the entire group and all the room numbers written on it.

12.5.2 Group Departure

The departure of a group is always pre-determined. The bell boys are also well informed about the time of departure. Also, it is planned well in advance as to what time the baggage is to be brought down, which is usually half an hour before the departure time. The departure procedure may be described as follows –

- (i) At the time of baggage down (procedure for collecting the baggage from the rooms and bringing it to the lobby), the bell captain checks with the guests if their baggage is packed.
- (ii) As and when he gets information of baggage being packed, he sends a bell boy to collect the same. The bags are collectively kept in the lobby as at the time of arrival.
- (iii) As and when the guests settle their bills and before boarding the bus, they are asked to check their baggage at the bell desk. This is done to make sure that all the baggage has been brought down.
- (iv) Once the cashier indicates the settlement of bill, the bell boys place the luggage in the coach.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.1

State true or false –

- (a) A bell boy can refuse to work for the reception.
- (b) A receptionist usually checks with the bell desk on the baggage status of a guest checking in.
- (c) On departure, the bell boy takes the luggage out only after the guest settles his bill.
- (d) A group baggage is always tagged for identification.
- (e) The departure time of a group is always pre-determined.

Fill in the blanks –

- (f) Either the bell boy or the is the first one to notice an arrival.
 - (g) For guests with less or no luggage, the bell boy writes on the arrival card.
-

12.6 CHANGE OF ROOM

You know that sometimes a guest may be required to change his room, either due to his own wish or when the hotel may request him due to various reasons. This process is initiated at the reception as you have already read in an earlier chapter. However, the role of a bell boy is also significant in this process –

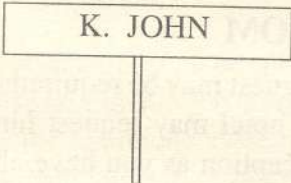
- (i) The reception makes a room change slip and hands it over to the bell boy. Do you remember how a room change slip looks like and how many copies does it have?
 - (ii) The bell boy on receipt of this record checks with the guest if his baggage is packed. If it is not so and still it has to be transferred to the other room, he records it in the slip.
 - (iii) Usually, the baggage is transferred in the presence of a guest, but a guest may also allow or wish this to be done in his absence. The bell boy then picks up the luggage from the guest's room and takes it to the new room. He enters the details in the errand card as you have read in his arrival procedure.
 - (iv) The bell boy makes sure that all the belongings of the guest are transferred to the new room and nothing is left behind. He also tries to place all the belongings in the new room as and where they were placed in the earlier room.
 - (v) If the guest is accompanying him, the bell boy should again explain him about the room as in the arrival procedure.
 - (vi) Finally, he checks with the guest if he is satisfied with the transfer of his luggage and the room.
 - (vii) After doing so, the bell boy first informs the reception of the completion of the work.
 - (viii) Then he circulates the copies of the room change slip to other concerned departments/sections. Do you remember the other departments/sections where the copies of room change slip are circulated?
-

12.7 MESSAGES

You know that messages may be left for the guest in a hotel when he is not in the room. This is done at the information counter where the Front Office Assistant takes down the messages. One copy of the message is given to the bell boy to deliver in the room. Since the guest is not in the room, the bell boy slips the message in the room from below the door.

12.8 PAGING

Sometimes there may be a call for a guest who is not in his room. He may be one of the restaurants or in the lobby or at the swimming pool. The caller may not wish to leave any message and may ask the guest to be located in the hotel. The guests normally informs the reception as to where he would be present. If he is to be located in public areas like the lobby or shopping arcade, the call is transferred to the bell desk. Alternatively the bell boy may be asked to trace the guest in these areas. In both the cases, the bell boy notes down the name of the guest on a board with a long handle beneath it. This is known as the paging board.



K. JOHN

A PAGING BOARD

The name of the guest is written in bold capital letters and big enough in size so as to be easily read from a distance. The bell boy then holds the paging board a little higher than his head and circulates it around, in the specified area. The board also has small bells or soft but distinct music attached to it so as to attract attention. The guest when he sees the board and his name on it, approaches the bell boy who then lowers the board and quietly escorts the guest to the waiting call.

12.9 LEFT LUGGAGE

Sometimes, the guest may check-out of his room wanting to leave his luggage in the hotel for some time. He may ask you to keep it till he collects it after sometime. Can you think of some situations when this can happen? Well, some of these are –

- (a) When the guest checks out in the morning and has to go out in the city or for sightseeing where he cannot take his luggage.
- (b) A guest may be going out of the city for a couple of days. On his return he has to check-in your hotel again. He may not wish to take all of his luggage.

In such cases what do you think should be done? Can you keep the luggage in the hotel?

Yes, the hotels have a provision to keep a guest's luggage on request. This facility is provided to the guests for a limited period of a maximum of one month or as decided by the management. To provide this facility, the hotel has a room to keep such luggage known as the 'Luggage Room' and such luggage is called 'Baggage in

Hold' or simply 'Left Luggage'.

You know that the luggage of the guest is handled by the bell boys on arrival, departure and also on change of room whenever so. Similarly, the responsibility to keep the luggage left by the guest is also with the bell desk. They are the ones who directly control the luggage room. It is constantly kept locked unless some baggage is being kept or removed. The following steps are taken in the process of keeping the left luggage.

- (i) When a guest desires to leave some or all of his baggage in the hotel, the bell captain is informed.
- (ii) The bell captain or the designated bell boy then inspects the luggage thoroughly. It should be securely locked Any damages are notified to the guest.
- (iii) For security reasons, the bell captain has the right to inspect the contents of any baggage. He may not do so with regular and familiar guests. Whenever required, this is done in the presence of the guest.
- (iv) A baggage tag is prepared for each baggage separately. The format of this tag is as given below:

BAGGAGE TAG	HOTEL NAME
TAG NO :	
GUEST NAME :	
LAST ROOM NO :	
DATE :	

BAGGAGE TAG	HOTEL NAME
TAG NO :	
GUEST NAME :	
LAST ROOM NO :	
DATE :	
DESCRIPTION OF BAGGAGE :	
NOTE : <i>Baggage left should be claimed within one month.</i>	

- (v) As you must have observed, the baggage tag has two portions. One portion, i.e. the top one, is tied with or stuck to the luggage piece, while the other one is handed over to the guest.

(vi) The left luggage register is also filled in as given below :

Date	Time	Guest Name	Room No.	Baggage description	Baggage tag no.	Expected dt. of del.	Actual date of del.	Signature of guest	Remarks

Remember, each baggage item has a separate number and a separate record.

- (vii) Once the guest is back to claim his luggage, he shows the luggage tag to the bell captain.
- (viii) The bell captain or the bell boy tallies the number of the tag and the description of the luggage on the guest's portion with those on the baggage and brings out the identified baggage.
- (ix) The luggage is then delivered back to the guest and his signature taken on the register against the entry made earlier. The actual date of delivery is also noted.
- (x) The guest's portion of the tag is then stored with the bell desk for further reference if need be.

12.10 ITEMS AVAILABLE TO THE GUEST AT THE BELL DESK

To facilitate guests with different needs there are a few general items which are available with the bell desk. These items are available to the guests against cash payment or as per the policy of the hotel. These are –

- (a) Postage –
 - Stamps of different values
 - Inland letters
 - Postage envelopes
 - Aerograms
 - Ordinary postcards
 - Picture postcards (may not be priced if the pictures are of the hotel and are unstamped)
 - If a guest wants to mail any letter, parcel, or wants to send any telegram, he can do so at the bell desk.
- (b) City guides and city maps,
- (c) Medicines of common nature like for pains, aches and fever, acidity, etc.
- (d) First-aid box as described in the chapter for first aid.

- (e) Newspapers –
- some large hotels also circulate newspapers daily in the room, free of any charges.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.2

State true or false –

- (a) A room change can be executed only when the guest has packed all his luggage.
(b) The room change slip is circulated by the bell boy and not by the receptionist.
(c) If a guest wants to leave his luggage at the hotel, the bell captain can ask him to open and show the same.

Fill in the blanks –

- (d) A bell boy may be asked to trace a guest in the lobby, with the help of a
(e) A left luggage tag has portions.

12.11 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- Bell boys are used for carrying guest luggage and errand jobs.
 - On Arrival –
 - The bell boy brings the luggage inside the lobby
 - After check-in, takes the baggage to the room
 - When escorting, explains the room to the guest
 - Keeps a watch on all arrivals and informs the reception on scanty baggage.
 - On Departure –
 - Collects the luggage from the room and keeps it in the lobby
 - Only after the Front Office Cashier gives an OK signal, does he carry the luggage out of the lobby.
 - A group arrival/departure is handled by two or three bell boys working together.
 - Change of Room –
 - Collect room change slip from the reception
 - check with the guest if bags are packed
 - shift the luggage to new room
 - if luggage shifted in absence, inform lobby manager and note on the errand card/room change slip
 - Make sure all guest belongings are transferred
 - Inform reception and circulate room change information to concerned departments/sections.
-

- A bell boy may be required to page a guest in the lobby or shopping arcade.
- While keeping left luggage –
 - Inspect the luggage thoroughly
 - Tie baggage tags, give counterfoils to the guest
 - Make entry in the left luggage register
 - Baggage returned to guest on showing the counterfoil.
- There are various necessities available at the bell desk.

12.12 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Describe how would you handle an arrival and a departure at the bell desk.
2. Explain the bell boy's role in shifting a guest from one room to another.
3. What is the procedure for receiving and returning baggage in hold?

12.13 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 12.1 (a) False (b) True
(c) True (d) True
(e) True (f) doorman
(g) Scanty Baggage
- 12.2 (a) False (b) True
(c) True (d) paging board
(e) two

13

TELEPHONES

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Telephones is an integral part of any business. Today it is the primary source of contact and communication. To hotel, it is not only important for its own business, but also for the guests. If you have visited a few hotels, you must have observed that almost all the hotels provide their guest rooms with a telephone extension. All these and other extensions of the hotel are connected to the main line through an EPABX system or a mini telephone exchange. In smaller hotels this can be operated at the reception itself. However, in a large hotel there is a separate section within the front office which deals with the telephone system of the hotel. This is also frequently referred to as the Telephone department. Where separate, the telephones are manned by telephone operators who report to a telephone supervisor in a shift. For repair work or the upkeep of the telephone system in the hotel their are technicians often referred as telephone assistants or linemen. The department is headed by an assistant manager who may also be known as the 'Telephone Manager'.

In this lesson you will read about the activities which take place in a telephone department. You may be required to carry out these activities at the reception itself, where there is no separate telephone department.

13.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to –

- know the importance of a telephone department in a hotel
- efficiently handle an incoming call
- process arrival departure intimation
- connect local as well as long distance calls
- give wake-up calls on request.

13.3 THE FIRST IMPRESSION

We have so often read in earlier lessons that the Front Office is the first point of contact for the guests entering the hotel. The guest takes his first impression of the hotel when he approaches the reception desk. Does the telephone operator also project some similar impression?

Yes, most people might be contacting a hotel for the first time on the telephone and maybe visiting it later. In fact, there are many who never visit the hotel but they do contact the hotel through telephone. People wanting to make reservations for somebody else, or maybe want to inquire about something or somebody in the hotel and of course, there are those calling to speak to your guests staying in the hotel. People may call for different reasons.

For these people, the first point of contact with the hotel is the telephone operator, who receives their call. They gather the impression of the hotel by the manner in which their calls are handled. You could be one of the persons who projects the image of the hotel not only at the reception, in person, but also on the telephone. You do this by way of speaking and what you speak. Therefore it is important that over the telephone you speak in the most courteous manner projecting a friendly voice.

13.4 HANDLING CALLS FROM OUTSIDE THE HOTEL

Whenever somebody wants to call a hotel on telephone, he first gets connected to the telephone exchange. This is so because all outside lines in a hotel are connected to its telephone exchange. In a small hotel where a small EPABX system is installed at the reception itself, the caller first gets connected to the reception. As you have already read, for some this becomes the first contact with the hotel. You have to be extremely polite and courteous on the phone.

While handling call coming from outside the hotel, you must remember the following points—

- (a) You should be extremely polite and courteous.
- (b) You should be very soft spoken. You should not speak too loudly. For this keep your mouth near the mouth piece and speak in a low volume. A loud voice will not only irritate the caller at the other end of the line but might also disturb the people around you.
- (c) Immediately identify yourself by the place where you are stationed, wishing the time of the day, e.g. 'Hotel xyz' goodmorning, how may I help you?
- (d) You should listen carefully to the caller, paying full attention to what he is saying.
- (e) Always reconfirm the callers instructions by repeating it back to him, e.g. if he wants to speak to Mr John in room 203, reconfirm it by asking, 'You want to speak to Mr John, Sir?' And then connect the call to the room.
- (f) Wherever possible, take the identity of the caller and announce it at the desired extension before connecting the call.

- (g) If the desired extension is busy, check with the caller whether he would like to wait or would like to leave a message at the information counter. If the prefers to wait, keep him informed at frequent interval that the extension is busy. This will assure the caller that his call is being attended. Connect the call as soon as the desired extension is free.
- (h) If there is no reply from the room, you must get back to the caller stating that there is no response from the room and that you shall connect the call to the information counter for further assistance.
- (i) Always be prompt in connecting calls. Remember, a person does not like to be kept waiting across the telephone line.

These point should be remembered not only while attending calls from outside the hotel, but also those within the hotel.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 10.1

State true or false –

- (a) Every hotel has a separate telephone department.
- (b) You project an image of the hotel even through a telephone call.
- (c) You should speak loudly over the phone, so that the other person can hear clearly.
- (d) Whenever possible, you should check the identity of the caller before connecting to the desired extension.

Fill in the blanks –

- (e) While receiving a call, the first thing you should do is to identify.....
- (f) The instruction of a guest should be reconfirmed by them.
- (g) If the called extension is busy, you should check with the guest if he would like to

13.5 ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

It is important for the telephones to know who is staying in which room. You already know that information is circulated by the reception as soon as a guest checks-in. This is done in form of whitney slips. Do you remember the whitney system and how it is used at the reception?

Similarly, the telephone department also maintain whitney racks. In larger hotels, they have two sets of whitney racks, one by room number and the other in alphabetical order of names. On receiving whitney slip information, the supervisor immediately announces the new arrival to the other telephone operators. After doing so he/she places the whitney slip in the appropriate whitney rack.

On receiving departure information from the reception, the supervisor removes the relevant whitney slip from the room rack. In the alphabetical rack a line is drawn across the slip carrying the guest's name. This is because there could still be a call for the guest. In case there is a call for a guest after he checks out, the operator scans through the alphabetical rack. On seeing the slip being crossed, they can tell the caller that the guest has already checked out. This slip is retained for one day and destroyed the next day of check-out.

13.6 CONNECTING CALLS

13.6.1 Local Calls

In most of the hotels, for making a local call there is facility of dialing from the room itself. On receiving an arrival intimation, the operator activates the direct dialing facility. In some hotels, this control is also with the Front Office cashier as he notes down the initial reading. Once the direct dialing facility is activated, guest can access an outside line by dialling a general code from the telephone extension in his room which is generally '0' but could be any other also depending on the hotel. Thereafter he can dial any local number. These calls metered and are automatically gets accounted with the cashier. At the time of check-out the cashier notes down the final reading and disconnects the direct dialling facility.

There are also hotels where there is no direct dialling facility as above. Every time the guest wishes to speak to some outside number, he has to contact the telephone operator. The operator then connects him to the desired number. This number is noted down by the operator who also raises a bill for the call and sends the voucher to the cashier.

13.6.2 Long Distance Calls

Long distance calls are always routed through the operator. These days most of the areas are connected through STD, although there could be some requests for booking a trunk calls. These are noted in the long distance call sheet.

While noting down a request for a long distance call, listen carefully and remember to note all the details required. These are –

- (i) The name of the guest and his room number.
 - (ii) The extension where he would like to speak from. It is not necessary that he may speak from his room only. He may be proceeding to a restaurant and would like his call to be connected there.
 - (iii) Name of the city and the number called. You should repeat this to reconfirm.
 - (iv) The name of the person being called, if the guest desires to speak to a particular person.
 - (v) In case of a trunk call booking, check with guest if it has to be ordinary or urgent.
-

Once the call matures, immediately call back the guest and connect the call to his extension. If the guest's extension is busy, do not hesitate to interrupt his ongoing call, but remember to do it very politely, informing him that his particular long distance call is on.

Whenever connecting a long distance call you must note down the duration of the call. With STD calls it is easier now as there are pulse and duration indicators installed in almost all the commercial telephone systems. After the call has ended, you must check with the guest to reconfirm the same mentioning the duration of the call. Raise a bill to be sent to the Front Office cashier as soon as possible so that he can charge it on the guest folio.

13.7 WAKE-UP CALLS

One of the important jobs a telephone operator has to carry out is to give a wake-up call to the guests. For a wake-up call, the guest will tell the operator. On receiving such an instruction from the guest, you should carry out the following steps –

- (i) On receiving a request for a wake-up call, note it down in the wake-up call sheet. A format of the wake-up call sheet is as given below :

Time	Room	Name	Time	Room	Name	Time	Room	Name
4-00			4-30			5-00		

This is only a portion of the wake-up call sheet. In fact there are a number of columns as shown above. One column contains wake-up calls for a particular time. If there is a slight deviation from the marked time then also it can be noted in the same column, e.g. if a guest wants to register a wake-up call at 4-40, then it may be included in the column marked as 4-30. While noting down any wake-up call, the time, room number and the name of the guest must always be noted.

- (ii) Once the guest disconnects the call, call him back in his room to reconfirm the desired time of the wake-up call.
- (iii) At the desired time, call the guest and on getting a response, speak to him in a very courteous manner, Good morning Mr....., this is your wake-up call, the time is

- (iv) If you do not get a response, call again immediately. If still there is no response, try after five minutes.
- (v) In case of continued no response, inform the Lobby Manager.
- (vi) Tick mark against the name on the wake-up call sheet, or cross the note on the sheet signifying that you have given the wake-up call.

13.8 OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TELEPHONE OPERATOR

(a) Complaint handling

You have already read in an earlier lesson how the complaints and requests of a guest is handled at the information counter. Similarly, in a telephone department, you note down all the complaints in a complaint register and follow it up till it is rectified. Do you remember the procedure followed at the information counter?

Once rectified, you must always check with the guest if the corrective measure is to his satisfaction. Most of the complaints registered with you would be regarding faulty telephone extensions, for which you inform the telephone assistants or the linemen who works upon these. However, sometimes you may get some requests or complaints concerned with other departments. In this case, you should inform the department incharge about the same. After doing so you should inform the guest about whom you have passed on the request to, and that his request is being taken care of. You could also connect the guest directly to the person concerned to avoid delay and confusion in communication.

(b) Secrecy

This is one of the most important responsibility. Being a telephone operator, you have access to each and every telephonic conversation taking place in the hotel. However, you should avoid listening to other's conversation, be it between the staff or with a guest. Even if you happen to listen to some conversation, you must maintain a total secrecy about it, i.e. you should not speak about it to anybody else.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 13.2

State true or false –

- (a) Long distance calls are always routed through the operator.
- (b) A long distance call can be connected only to the guest's room.
- (c) When a long distance call matures, you should interrupt the guest if he is talking to somebody else on phone.

Fill in the blanks –

- (d) On receiving arrival information, the supervisor the new arrival.
 - (e) In most hotels, for local calls, there is a direct dialing facility.
-

-
- (f) A wake-up call sheet has sets of three columns for, and
-

13.9 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- The first impression of the hotel is projected not only at the reception but also by the way a telephone call is handled.
- While handling calls, you should –
 - be polite and courteous
 - speak in a soft tone and low volume
 - identify yourself
 - listen carefully to the caller
 - identify the caller
 - reconfirm instructions
 - assure a waiting caller of being attended
 - provide assistance or connect to information counter in case there is no response from the desired extension
 - be prompt in attending calls
- On receiving arrival intimation –
 - announce information to other operators
 - place whitney slips in racks
- On receiving departure intimation –
 - remove whitney slip from room rack
 - cross the name in information rack
 - retain information rack slip for one day
- Hotels have direct dialing facility in the rooms only for local calls and the calls are metered.
- In hotels which do not have direct dialing facility in the rooms, the operator connects the call and raises a bill.
- Long distance calls are always connected and billed by the operator.
- Wake-up calls are noted on a wake-up call sheet and the guest is called back at the desired time.

13.10 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. What points will you keep in mind while handling a telephone call?
 2. How are local and long distance calls handled in a hotel?
-

3. How will you handle a wake-up call?

13.11 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 13.1 (a) False (b) True
(c) False (d) True
(e) yourself (f) repeating
(g) leave a message
- 13.2 (a) True (b) False
(c) False (d) announces
(e) direct dialing (f) time, name, room number
(g) avoid

14

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Till now you have read the regular and routine work which you carry out as a Front Office Assistant. However, there may occur certain mishaps or other situations which require extra care and attention. These have to be dealt very carefully. Here, in this chapter you shall read how to deal with similar instances, which usually do not, but might occur sometimes in your hotel. The important thing to remember is to remain calm and use your intelligence wherever required.

14.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, you will be able to –

- handle a drunk guest,
- handle a situation where damage to hotel property is done by a guest,
- handle a situation where a guest steals hotel property,
- handle lost objects,
- deal with illness or accidents,
- operate during a fire in the hotel,
- deal with situation when a guest dies in the hotel.

14.3 DRUNK GUEST

You know that a hotel usually has a bar and serves alcoholic drinks in the bar, restaurant and the rooms. The guests, consuming alcohol in the hotel are normally decent and well behaved persons. Sometimes though, it may happen that a guest loses his serenity after drinking, may be a bit too much. In that case he starts behaving awkwardly and also, sometimes, starts throwing tantrums, which may lead to the disturbance of other guest as also the peaceful hotel atmosphere. While dealing

with calming such a guest, you have to be extremely diplomatic so as try not to hurt the guest's ego also. While doing so you must always keep the following points in mind –

- (i) Speak to the guest in a very polite manner.
- (ii) Do not try to argue with the guest. This may only aggravate the situation.
- (iii) Try and remove the guest away from the public area, like the bar, restaurant or lobby. You could possibly escort him to a secluded area such as an office or if possible to his room.
- (iv) Once secluded, you can try to pacify him or relax him by reasoning with him.
- (v) If the guest misbehaves and gets unruly, be stern, call the hotel security and let them deal with him.

14.4 DAMAGE TO HOTEL PROPERTY BY GUEST

Sometimes, a guest visiting your hotel, might, intentionally or un-intentionally, damage the hotel property in any of the outlets or in the rooms. Any damage done in the restaurant etc. by a visiting guest is taken care of by the outlet incharge. However, any damage caused by a guest residing in the hotel is brought to your notice at the Front Office. This could be of various nature. He might have broken the room furniture, or any glass, mirror etc., by accident or otherwise. The cost of whatever damage is evaluated and then charged to the guest bill. Usually the guest agrees with the charges and pays for the damage caused by him. In case he objects, you should refer him to your manager.

14.5 THEFT OF HOTEL PROPERTY BY GUEST

The guest is never accused of stealing anything. However, if it is absolutely certain that the guest has taken something with him, a bill is raised and the guest is charged as for other services consumed in the hotel. The guest, recognising that the hotel has taken a note of the theft, either returns the object or quietly pays for it. In this case also, if the guest objects. He should be referred to the manager who then deals with him directly.

14.6 THEFT OF GUEST'S PROPERTY

You know that a hotel provides boarding and lodging to its guests. Apart from these, it also provides basic security to the guests and their belongings. Normally, the hotel takes certain control measures to avoid any theft. Some of these are listed below –

- (a) You at the reception are in constant and direct contact with the guest and have a great responsibility of handling room keys. You should try and associate guests with room numbers. Apart from giving the guest a sense of recognition, this also ensures that you hand over the room keys to the right guest.
 - (b) If a guest reports his key missing, you must immediately inform the manager. The key is thoroughly investigated for and if necessary, the lock may be changed.
-

- (c) If the guest has left the key inside the room, it can be opened by the master key available with the housekeeping floor supervisors, but only after an authorisation slip from you at the reception.
- (d) If a guest is going out of the hotel over the night, the room can be double locked for extra security. This can be done with the grandmaster key available only with the lobby manager.
- (e) You should not disclose the room number of the guest to everybody enquiring about the guest. Instead direct the visitor to call and speak to the guest over the house telephone. You could also take a message from the visitor, if he wishes to leave one.
- (f) Every hotel has safe-deposit locker available with the cashier. You must suggest its use to the guest on check-in.
- (g) Large hotels normally have internal security guards posted at most of the areas including all the floors and corridors.
- (h) If you find any visitor behaving awkwardly to raise suspicion, you must immediately report about him to your superiors.

With these measures, thefts in the hotels are almost nil. However, if some guest reports a theft it should be immediately brought to the notice of your manager and the matter be handed over to security to investigate.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 14.1

State true or false –

- (a) If a drunken guest gets unruly in the lobby, you will beat him up then and there.
- (b) A bathroom mirror broken by guest will be charged to his bill.
- (c) A guest is charged on his bill, if he is suspected to steal any hotel object.
- (d) If a guest has misplaced his room key, he can only enter after maintenance department has changed the lock of his room.

Fill in the blanks –

- (e) The room can be for extra security.
 - (f) In case of theft, inform your or
-

14.7 LOST AND FOUND

Sometimes a guest may misplace or forget any item belonging to him. This may happen with a guest residing in the hotel room or even a visiting guest in the public area. These items are generally found by the hotel staff, usually the housekeeping. Another guest may also, at times, attract your attention to an unclaimed article. Whosoever finds these unclaimed articles either reports to the reception or housekeeping. These items are then collected and stored by the housekeeping departments.

In case the identity of the owner can not be established like with most articles found in public area; the article is kept in the store for a duration of time as specified by the management of the hotel. In case anybody enquires about a missing article, he is asked to describe it. Then you should check with the housekeeping if they have any item of that description. Only after ascertaining the correct description and establishing the correct ownership, the article is returned to the guest.

It may be possible that a guest residing in the hotel may forget some articles in the room while he checks out of the hotel. In that case you would know who these items belong to. These also stored with the housekeeping for a specified duration of time. A letter is then sent to the guest, either to a forwarding address (if he has left one), or to his address mentioned in the registration card. A reply from the guest is then awaited. If there is a response directing the hotel about the articles, the directions are followed.

If no claim is made within the specified duration of time, the authorities exercise their right to dispose off the article as per the hotel policy. It may be given to the staff member who found it or even auctioned to the hotel staff.

14.8 ILLNESS OR ACCIDENTS

In a hotel, it may be possible that somebody becomes ill or gets hurt due to any reason. In such a case what should you do?

Yes, the house doctor is informed and called. A 'house doctor' is the term given to a doctor engaged by the hotel to look after its guest as also the employees. He might be making regular visits to the hotel or maybe available when called. While calling the doctor, he is given a complete description of the patient's condition. The hotel employees are also trained in first-aid to attend and comfort the patient while waiting for the doctor to arrive. You will also come across a lesson on first-aid later in this book.

If there is a delay in the arrival of the house doctor, or if he is not available, then, can you think of some other option? You can always look for a doctor within the resident guests and request his services for immediate control over the situation.

14.9 FIRE IN THE HOTEL

This is a major emergency situation. The most important thing is to remain calm and act fast, take quick decisions. Most hotels train their staff how to act if and when such a situation arises. You at the reception may be the first one to be informed of the fire, big or small, anywhere in the hotel. The first thing is to inform the telephone section immediately. Hotels have a fire alarm system spread over the entire building and can be activated from almost anywhere in the hotel. You must have yourself seen this in large buildings. There are often small round glass panes fitted over red buttons in wall. There is a small hammer hung in the side and in bold letters are written below – 'BREAK GLASS IN CASE OF FIRE'. There are also some fire extinguishers hung at various places.

The telephones, on receiving the information of fire immediately further informs the fire department of the city to summon for fire brigades. It must be noted that the telephone exchange and the reception is always manned in such a situation.

However, some staff member also helps the guest to come out of the building through the stairs case. The elevators are not to be used and the guests should be repeatedly reminded of that. The staff should also check all the corridors, rooms and other affected areas for any person trapped there.

You can also use appropriate fire extinguishers till the fire brigade arrives.

Once the guests are out of the affected area, they should be treated for shock and appropriate first-aid should be administered where needed.

14.10 DEATH IN THE HOTEL

The rarest emergency situation is if a death occurs in the hotel premises or in one of the rooms. The situation is handled in a very discreet manner without raising an alarm. Generally the lobby manager is informed first of this situation. In case you come to know, immediately appraise your lobby manager of the situation. The General Manager and the Security Officer should immediately be contacted and informed. It is they then who assess the situation and supervise the investigation and other procedures that follow. The General Manager may decide to call the police. The office or the residence of the deceased is contacted through the address or phone numbers available with the reception or if some address is found on the person. The body is removed through the staff area and the room is sealed till all the formalities and investigations are completed. Any inquiry in the incident is directed to the lobby manager, Security Officer or General Manager.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 14.2

State true or false –

- Objects found unclaimed are deposited with housekeeping.
- In case of any illness, you can look for a doctor within the guests staying in the hotel.
- While dealing with a fire, use fire extinguishers till the fire brigade arrives.

Fill in the blanks –

- The is called in case of any illness or accident.
- In case if fire, the immediate things to do is to inform the and activate the
- A dead body is always removed through the area.

14.11 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- DRUNKEN GUEST
 - Speak politely
 - Do not argue
 - Escort him away from public area
 - Pacify him

- Call hotel security,
 - **DAMAGE TO HOTEL PROPERTY BY GUEST**
 - The cost of damage is charged to the guest's bill. •
 - **THEFT OF HOTEL PROPERTY BY GUEST**
 - A bill is raised for the stolen property and charged to the guest's bill only when absolutely sure of the act
 - **THEFT OF GUEST PROPERTY**
 - Control Measures
 - Strict key control
 - Missing key immediately reported, lock may be changed
 - Housekeeping opens the door only on receiving and authorisation slip from reception
 - Double lock doors in room
 - Room number not disclosed to everybody
 - Safety deposit vaults
 - Posting of security guards
 - Report suspicious looking people
 - Report theft case to manager and security officer
 - **LOST AND FOUND**
 - Articles found unclaimed deposited with housekeeping
 - Anybody looking for a lost article/claiming an article is made to give a description of the article to the satisfaction of the hotel
 - If the article belongs to a checked-out guest, a letter of information is sent to his address
 - **ILLNESS OR ACCIDENTS**
 - Staff trained in first aid
 - Hotel doctor is contacted
 - If hotel doctor not available, look for a doctor from within the guests
 - **FIRE IN THE HOTEL**
 - Inform telephone department/fire station
 - Activate the fire alarm
 - Remain calm and act fast
 - Reception should constantly be staffed
 - Use fire extinguishers wherever possible
 - Treat guests for shock
 - Administer first aid
-

DEATH IN A HOTEL

- Inform the lobby manager
- Do not raise alarm or attract attention
- Follow your manager's instruction

14.12 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. How will you handle a drunk guest?
2. What are the control measures, a hotel takes to provide security? what would you do if a theft occurs?
3. What will you do in case of fire in the hotel?

14.13 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 12.1 (a) False | (b) True |
| (c) False | (d) False |
| (e) double locked | (f) manager, security officer |
-
- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| 12.2 (a) True | (b) True |
| (c) True | (d) house doctor |
| (e) telephones, fire alarm | (f) staff |
-

15

FIRST AID

15.1 INTRODUCTION

Till now you have studied about the basic knowledge of a Front Office Assistant must have. Apart from this, there are certain other aspects one should be familiar with. First-aid is the most important of them all. As you have read in the chapter for emergency situations, the Front Office staff should be trained to administer First-aid. In fact, most of the hotel staff is trained in this field.

You have already read that in case of any illness or accident in the hotel, the house doctor is called. What happens if he is delayed? For this, you need to know some remedies and maintain some type of medicine box. In this lesson you will study about what to maintain and how to help yourself and your colleagues in case of such emergencies. When you read, you will also come across some examples of common injury and their treatment.

15.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to –

- recognise the need of first aid,
- practice some common rules of first aid,
- maintain a first aid box for your need,
- attend to a victim of a minor accident or injury,
- treat some common injuries.

15.3 WHAT IS FIRST AID

Before starting to practice first aid, you must know about 'what it is' and 'why it is necessary'.

What happens when you cut your finger accidentally with a blade or knife while working? You immediately wash it and apply some ointment on it or stick band-aid on it. After which you can immediately return to your work. This immediate treatment given to a victim of any wound or accident, small or big, is known as 'FIRST AID'.

What happens if you do not treat that wound, however small it may be? It is, quite often, painful and will also hinder your working. Also it will not allow you to concentrate on your work. If not attended on time, it may result in worsening of the injury. Thus you see how important first aid is in your daily life.

Sometimes the wounds or accidents could be of more serious nature. In such cases you may not be able to administer the entire treatment and the services of a doctor is essential. Even then First Aid plays an important role in making the patient comfortable and not allowing the situation to worsen. Sometimes it even saves life.

Thus you can also say that

'First Aid is the immediate treatment given to the victim of an injury, accident or sudden illness before the desired medical help, if necessary, if necessary, reaches him or her'.

It is necessary as it helps in –

- preserving life
- promotion of recovery
- prevention of worsening of the victim's situation

15.4 WHAT TO OBSERVE WHILE GIVING FIRST AID

You have understood, in the previous article, what First Aid is and its importance. Now, you must also make yourself familiar with certain guidelines which you must observe as rules while applying your knowledge to any such situation which requires 'First Aid'.

At the time of applying your knowledge, you must remember that you are not a doctor, You are required to give only the emergency help and call the services of a doctor, if required. While practicing First Aid you must also remain calm, think clearly and act fast and quick. The first rule, also called the 'Golden Rule' of First Aid is, 'Make Haste Slowly'. This implies that you must act and think fast but at the same time do not show any signs of panic and must maintain your cool.

The other rules which should be observed may be listed as follows –

1. Reach the victim quickly.
2. Be calm, methodical and quick. Careless and unnecessary handling might worsen the situation.
3. Identify the damage and attend accordingly.
4. First aid equipment is usually available at the bell desk, use it. A large hotel may also have a 'Medicine Room' or a 'Doctor's Room'.
5. Remove victim to a safe place. You can even take him to one of the empty guest rooms.

6. Unnecessary crowding of people should be avoided. Clear the crowd politely.
7. Make the victim comfortable with soft and encouraging words.
8. If required arrange to send the victim to a doctor or a hospital.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 15.1

Fill in the blanks –

- (a) First aid is the given to the victim of an accident before help reaches him.
- (b) Golden rule of first aid is to 'Make

State true or false –

- (c) First aid does not help in preserving life.
- (d) First aid equipment is only available with doctors.
- (e) You should always speak to the victim in soft and encouraging words.

15.5 FIRST AID BOX

While administering first aid to your colleague, yourself or any of your guests, you will need help of some equipment, medicines and bandages, etc. These should always be readily available. As mentioned earlier, a first-aid box is maintained at the bell desk. However you must make sure that a first-aid box is always maintained with proper contents and should be easily approachable.

Depending on the size of the hotel, the requirements of the first-aid box will vary. Let us try and make a list of contents needed for your first aid box –

1. Clinical thermometer
 2. Sterilised cotton wool
 3. Bandage rolls of different sizes – , 1" ° and 2"
 4. Triangular bandages
 5. Adhesive dressings and plasters (band-aid etc.)
 6. Sterilized gauze
 7. Eye glass
 8. Eye pads
 9. Tweezers
 10. Rubber sheet
 11. Small scissors
 12. Safety pins
 13. Wooden splints
 14. A small glass
 15. Torch or candle with matchbox
 16. Scribbling pad and pencil or pen
-

Apart from these, you will also use some medicines during treatment, let us have a look at them –

1. Tincture iodine
2. Tincture benzoine
3. Potassium permanganate
4. Dettol or Savlon
5. Crocin tablets
6. Aspirin tablets
7. Mercurochromes
8. Antiseptic creams

Apart from whatever has been mentioned above or available in the first aid box or almirah, you can also look around for what is available and may be improvised as a good first aid tool. Sometimes the first aid equipment is not available, then you must use the things around you improvising them to suit your needs. Let us go through some examples –

- (a) For bandage : Old sheets, handkerchief or shirts may be torn into strips to be used as bandages.
- b) For splints : A ruler, a walking stick, an umbrella, a piece of wood, newspapers and magazines rolled up can easily be used as splints. It should be first covered with some cloth so that it does not hurt the patient.
- c) For slings : A cloth bag or a handkerchief made into a triangle can be used as sling to give support to the fractured limb. If none of these things are available, you can tie the broken limb to the unbroken part of the body.
- d) For carrying the victim : To take victim who to the hospital is unable to walk because of his injury we need a stretcher. If it is not immediately available, a table or a chair, a flat board, or even a stool can be used for carrying a patient. If none of these things are available, two people can hold each other's hands across tightly and make a seat. The victim can be seated on this and carried to a doctor.

15.6 YOUR APPROACH TO SITUATION DEMANDING FIRST AID

When you are aware of some situation where a person requires First Aid, first you must know your priorities and the sequence to work. You have already read earlier that you must reach the patient immediately without losing any time. Often you will encounter a panic situation around the victim or patient. You have already read that you must remain calm and also assure the patient with calm and encouraging words.

You must immediately take full control of the situation, however big or small it may be. Thereafter you must proceed in the following order –

(a) **Danger to the patient**

You must make sure that there is no further damage being caused to the patient; e.g. in case of an electric shock, disconnect the electricity; in case of a cut, remove any dangerous or sharp edged material from the area.

(b) **The immediate requirement**

You must ascertain the immediate requirement in order to preserve life. e.g. fresh air is easily accessible; if excessive bleeding is there it should be controlled; if fracture, immobilise the suspected bones; etc.

(c) **Diagnosis**

Your next step would be to identify the nature and extent of injury in further detail. Find out what happened and how. This information will help you in treating the patient and further help the doctor, if required. If conscious, often the patient will himself give you most of the required information. With an unconscious patient, you have to examine him thoroughly and very carefully.

(d) **Management**

After diagnosing the problem then you must proceed with the treatment required. Meanwhile you must remain calm yourself and reassure the patient. Complete attention must be paid to the patient and whatever he says. All his requests must be attended to.

(e) **Removal of Clothing**

Sometimes, when the injury is of a serious nature, it is essential to remove some clothing from the patient's body to expose wounds, etc. It must be done with extreme care with minimum disturbance to the patient. If the clothing has to be cut it should be done so along the seams.

(f) **Disposal**

After you have administered first aid, the victim might be required to be sent to the hospital or home. If to be sent to a hospital, do so in an ambulance or in care of a doctor or nurse. A short note is always advisable indicating the history and treatment given.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 15.2

Fill in the blanks –

- (a) A first aid box should be approachable.
- (b) While diagnosing an unconscious patient, examine him and

State true or false –

- (c) A ruler can be used in place of splints.
 - (d) A dupatta cannot be used as a bandage.
-

15.7 SOME FIRST AID TREATMENT

In the previous articles you read what is first aid and its importance the equipment needed and various rules. Now you are ready to attend to any emergency situation. Although the scope of first aid is very vast, it will generally require your presence of mind and some first aid knowledge. In this portion of the lesson we will go through some common injuries condition requiring First Aid and how do we treat them –

(a) **Bleeding**

- (i) Clean the wound with cotton dipped in antiseptic.
- (ii) Apply antiseptic on the wound.
- (iii) Bandage the area tightly, applying pressure to stop bleeding.

(b) **Burns and Scalds**

- (i) Clean the area gently with clean water.
- (ii) Submerge the burnt area in cool water. You could also put the burnt area under the tap to cool it.
- (iii) Cover the burnt area with clean dry dressing or sheet.
- (iv) Do not apply cotton or any greasy substance on the burnt area.

(c) **Fainting**

- (i) Loosen clothing.
- (ii) Lay the victim flat on his back with feet raised.
- (iii) Apply warmth to his lower limbs and rub the limbs upwards.
- (iv) Give hot, sweet tea to the patient when he is able to drink.

(d) **Shock**

- (i) Make the victim comfortable by laying him down and keeping his legs above the level of his head.
- (ii) Loosen the clothings.
- (iii) Cover the victim with a blanket or a thick cloth.
- (iv) Calm the patient by speaking to him reassuringly.
- (v) Keep the area quiet.
- (vi) Refer to a doctor immediately.

(e) **Sprain**

- (i) Place the limb in a comfortable position.
- (ii) Bandage the affected part firmly. Use a dry bandage.
- (iii) Soak the bandage with cold water and keep it wet.
- (iv) Ask the patient not to move the joint and refer to a doctor.

(f) **Fracture**

- (i) Do not let the patient move.
- (ii) Immobilise the fractured limb providing adequate support by a splint.

Use a padding between the limb and the splint. Splints could be made of wooden sticks or boards, umbrella or like things; even rolled newspapers and magazines could be used. They could be tied using a bandage, a handkerchief or even a rope.

- (iii) Give the victim something hot to drink.
- (iv) Refer to a doctor.

(g) Insect bite

- (i) Remove the insect's sting with the help of a sterile needle. Any needle can be sterilized by heating its tip to free it from germs.
- (ii) Apply soaked soda-carbonate or toothpaste over the inflamed area.

(h) Foreign Object in eye

- (i) Tell the victim not to rub the eye.
- (ii) Check the eye against the light. If the object is visible, remove it with a moist swab or with the corner or a clean handkerchief.
- (iii) If the object is not visible, use water in an eye glass or even in the palm of the victim and ask him to rinse the eye by blinking briskly.
- (iv) If still unsuccessful or the object is embedded in the eye, cover with a soft pad, bandage and refer immediately to the doctor.
- (v) If acid, alkali or any other liquid is suspected, rinse the eye with large quantities of water. Bandage using a soft pad and refer to the doctor immediately.

(i) Object in ear

- (i) If it is an insect, fill the ear with glycerine or warm salt water. This will float the insect and it can be removed easily.
- (ii) If nothing floats up, refer to a doctor.

IN-TEXT QUESTIONS 15.3

Fill in the blanks –

- (a) In case of bleeding is applied to stop it.
- (b) A victim of shock should be made comfortable by laying him down keeping his legs the level of his head.

State true or false –

- (c) You should apply cotton to burns.
 - (d) Wet bandage is used to tie a sprained limb.
 - (e) A rope can be used to tie splints while immobilising a fractured limb.
 - f) If some object has fallen in the eye, the should not be rubbed.
-

15.9 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- FIRST AID is for
- preserving life
 - promotion of recovery
 - prevention of worsening of situation
- Golden rule of first aid
- 'MAKE HASTE SLOWLY' and some other rules
- FIRST AID BOX and its contents
- A must for you
- FIRST AID procedures for
- Bleeding
 - Burns & Scalds
 - Fainting
 - Shock
 - Sprain
 - Fracture
 - Insect bite
 - Foreign Object in the eye
 - Object in the ear

15.9 TERMINAL EXERCISES

1. Think of the possible injuries, wounds, accidents that can occur during your working. Make a list of these and the treatment you shall use for the same.
2. What rules will you observe while practicing FIRST AID.
3. Explain what points will you keep in mind in your approach to a victim requiring immediate attention.

15.10 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 15.1 (a) immediate, treatment, medical, (b) haste, slowly
 (c) False (d) False
 (e) True
- 15.2 (a) easily (b) thoroughly, carefully
 (c) True (d) False
- 15.3 (a) pressure (b) above
 (c) False (d) True
 (f) True

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