Greetings!

Promoting health and safety measures in your operations

Health and safety is a crucial consideration for any working environment as it’s a high priority to keep both guests and staff safe. A healthy and safe working environment has the potential to result in a myriad of benefits in your business operations. These include: reduced financial costs of accidents, boosting the morale of staff and increased productivity, enhanced reputation with clients, not to mention increased staff retention. Therefore, through this article we will highlight some of the health and safety measures you can implement in your operations. These include:

1. **Establish a health and safety committee**

The importance of establishing a healthy and safety committee at a workplace cannot be overstated. In implementing your health and safety policy, you need as many “eyes” and “hands” on the ground as possible and this is where the committee comes in handy. The committee helps in bridging the gap between employees and management by relaying on-site concerns to upper management and consequently informs employees how the concerns will be addressed. Other roles include: helping in development of a training plan, and more importantly raising awareness on health and safety. Typically, it should comprise of members from various departments, and be able to meet consistently.

2. **Develop an emergency response plan**

Staff and guests should always be made aware of correct procedures to follow in case of emergencies. Therefore, all camps/lodges should have a written Emergency Plan with a
dedicated person who is responsible for updating and maintaining the plan. The emergency plan should be made available for every guest rooms and all notice boards. Any provisions made for evacuations relating to guests with special needs should be in place too. The picture below taken during the ecorating reassessment of Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge in July 2019 illustrates a emergency response plan.

3. Document and implement training procedures

All trainings done to staff need to be documented in order to aid in monitoring the refresher dates and also to guide on the future trainings needed based on the specific roles assigned. There should be a description of what is done in training and manuals and training records have to be kept up to date. All training and attendance should be documented.

4. Ensure food safety

Food safety is paramount in every hotel restaurant. To ensure this there must be zero cases of food poisoning or lack of hygiene and cleanliness. Make sure all those who work with food are properly trained and/or sent on a food safety course. They should also have been tested and got a medical certificate for food and beverage handlers from the Ministry of Health.
Also as staff are constantly dealing with food and utensils and potentially customers, it’s really important that they keep washing and sterilizing hands regularly to avoid possible cross contamination.

Finally, there should be proper separation of food/meat to ensure that there are no cases of allergic reactions amongst guests arising from cross contamination during storage. The picture below taken during the ecorating reassessment of Afro Chic Diani in October 2019 illustrates well separated meat using crates.

5. Promote safe working practices

Facilities should ensure that they promote a safe working place for all the employees in all departments. This is because work areas have varying risks ranging from low to high. In the house keeping department for instance, work can involve bending, lifting, and working with hazardous materials. Safe practices must therefore be in place to ensure staff safety. Some of the considerations include:

- Training staff on safe lifting techniques.
- Ensuring all mops, buckets and other cleaning equipment are cleaned and replaced regularly to avoid possible cross contamination.
- Wearing of rubber gloves when handling cleaning solutions.
- Use of caution signs when there are wet floors.
While acknowledging the important role that business owners play in promoting health and safety at the workplace, it is also important that staff are informed on how they can contribute towards this important objective. There’s certainly many ways both big and small in which you can promote health and safety in your operations, but we hope that through this article you have learned a few measures you can implement in a bid to maintain highest health and safety standards.