Covid 19 Response Measures in Hotels

Travel has been on the decline as a result of the pandemic's uncertainty, but experts predict that the stifled demand will eventually dissipate, and the hospitality industry will enjoy a rebound in revenue. But, before things can get going, there are a few key factors that need to be addressed by accommodation facilities, as they are on every traveler's mind. Guest interaction is cited as the most common concern among guests, since hotel safety and security have become increasingly vital in light of the pandemic's devastation.

Since Covid – 19 virus is transmitted mostly by respiratory droplets and person-to-person contact, and that the best recommended protection strategies include maintaining proper hand cleanliness, social distancing, and use of PPE’s such as masks. But do you, as a hotelier, know enough about how to prepare your property and human resource to tackle this invisible threat? To assist you in addressing your guests’ concerns, scientists have recommended a wide range of valuable and practical ideas for each area of a hotel that you can adopt in your operations in order to ensure excellent administration.

Management

Hotel management must have a plan in place to deal with the pandemic, which must be updated on a regular basis, as indicated by relevant authorities. The following are some things to think about:

1. In the event that a staff member becomes ill, procedures should be explicitly given out for them to follow, such as self-isolating amongst others.
2. Staff members must have easy access to facilities cleaning and sanitizing supplies.
3. There must also be procedures in place for cleaning and sanitizing rooms that have been used by infected people.
4. It is necessary to keep a complete record of all activities done to address suspected situations.
5. To ensure that everyone is working towards the same goal, staff members must be given clear instructions on how to communicate the action plan to guests.
6. Keep an up-to-date list of contacts and emergency numbers on hand at all times.
7. Staff must be briefed on all preventative measures as well as the signs and symptoms of Covid-19 on a regular basis.

**Front office**

Employees at the front desk are most likely to be the first point of contact with customers, thus it is critical that they take all required precautions and follow the criteria set forth by management and the government in order to protect themselves. Aside from keeping a safe physical distance and wearing masks at all times, there are a few more things to keep in mind:

1. Staff at the front desk must be kept up to date on all Covid related information so that they can pass it on to visitors. This should incorporate all existing safety precautions, processes, and rules.
2. The front-desk should provide emergency phone numbers for hospitals and health authorities for guests and staff.
3. Even if guests are aware of the importance of respiratory hygiene, social distance, and sanitizing hands and other surfaces, they must be reminded of these on a regular basis.
4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as medical masks and eye protection, face shield, disinfection wipes’ and other items should be available to reception workers in the event of a suspected case of Covid-19.
5. Staff should receive proper training on how to use and dispose of PPE kits.
The picture above is of a signage taken during the ecorating reassessment of Olare Mara Kempinski in October 2020 used to communicate to the guests on social distancing, use of masks and practicing of hand hygiene.

**Food and beverage/service**

To avoid contracting the virus, employees at food and beverage stations, restaurants, and dining rooms must take all preventative steps which include:

1. Handwashing, sanitizing and disinfecting surfaces and frequently used touchpoints are all practices that employees in the food and beverage department must follow on a regular basis.
2. Staff workers, particularly those whose jobs require close contact with customers, must constantly wear a mask to protect themselves and the guests.
3. If water dispensers are used, they must be adequately maintained in terms of regular cleaning and sanitizing of the utensils used as well as the dispenser itself.
4. Guests must be encouraged to use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, preferably placed at the entrance of restaurants, dining rooms etc., before and after their use.
5. At designated recreational places for children, preventive measures must be observed with attendants reporting any signs of infection.

The above picture was taken during the ecorating assessment of Masai Mara Sopa Lodge in June 2021 illustrating a hand sanitizing station at the entrance of the restaurant.
**Housekeeping**

Since they are in direct touch with guests; housekeeping and cleaning personnel are frequently at a higher risk than others. As a result, they must take precautions against Covid-19 and ensure that situation handling in the housekeeping department is done correctly.

1. High touch surfaces such as lifts buttons, handrails, doorknobs, switches and reception must be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis.
2. PPE kits must be provided to employees who may be exposed to chemicals to ensure that negative consequences are minimized.
3. Staff must be properly trained in the use and disposal of disinfectants and personal protective equipment (PPEs) so that all waste is managed in an environmentally sound manner, with no pollution of the air, water, or human health.
4. Any surfaces that have come into contact with sick people should be cleaned and disinfected using a recommended quantities of hygiene solutions.
5. Disposable items must be collected in containers with lids and disposed off as per your hotels action plan for waste management.

Guests and staff safety in hotels is of primary importance in the Covid-era as a large number of travelers look to travel again as following emergence from the lockdowns and other forms of restrictions by different countries. By implementing the above stated measures, guests’ concerns regarding health and safety will have been addressed thus building the much needed confidence.