

## **UNIT 9: SAFETY**

### **ACCIDENTS**

- Accidents: can occur anywhere and at any time and in a hotel, the likelihood of accidents occurring is even higher because of the amount of human traffic that moves through it. These accidents may involve guest or staff.
- All accidents have to be dealt quickly without panic and keeping the interests of the hotel management in mind.
- The housekeeping department is normally responsible for dealing with First Aid and must maintain a first-aid box for dealing with such incidents.
- It also makes sense to maintain first-aid facilities or box in areas more prone to accidents such as the kitchens and the maintenance departments.
- The services of a (house) doctor should be available whenever required.

### **COMMON CAUSES OF ACCIDENTS**

- Falls - these may be due to:
- Objects and equipment left in the corridors, etc.- so, remove potential hazards out of the way. Store idle equipment properly in a safe, designated place.
- Spillage on the floors: wipe up all spills at once.
- Poor floor maintenance procedures: cordon off or segregate the area where floor maintenance is being carried out –such as lobby cleaning in the night shift- and use warning signs. Also, highly polished floors cause slipping.
- Climbing on unsafe ladders: Ensure that the ladder is in good condition and placed safely and securely against the wall.
- Loose carpet threads, banisters, etc: repair these as they occur.
- Unsafe surfaces: avoid climbing on furniture and ledges.
- Over-reaching: Use safety precautions and equipment when reaching high access areas or out-of- reach spots.

- Back Strain: This may be due to incorrect carrying of heavy loads; pushing of heavy loads; overloading of trolleys; etc. Check and maintain trolley equipment, never overload it. Train staff in correct methods of lifting and carrying of heavy articles.
- Cuts and bumps: These occur due to opening of doors, overloading of trolleys, careless handling of sharp material- knives, scissors, broken glass, etc. Dangerous equipment should be stored carefully and used carefully. Wear gloves when handling dangerous waste.
- Burns, scalds, inhalation of gases and fumes: occur when hot liquids are handled without adequate precautions. When using chemicals, work in an open ventilated area, wear protective gloves, etc. Do not mix chemicals and label and store them safely.
- Falling objects: Equipment falling from a height such as ladders and staircases can be very dangerous. So, all equipments used at higher levels should be secured carefully. On staircases keep all equipment near the wall, away from the banister area. Warning signs must be placed on the floor below an area being repaired or cleaned, etc.
- Electric shocks: This is due to use of faulty equipment and unsafe practices when handling any equipment. Turn off the appliances before disconnecting. Do not pull on wires. Use correct fuses and never overload equipment or electrical outlets. Immediately report and repair faulty equipment and follow a regular maintenance schedule.

## PRECAUTIONS TO AVOID ACCIDENTS

- Kitchen floor areas should always be grease free- avoids slipping and fires.
- All staircases, especially fire exit areas, should be free from storage articles- ladders, stools, etc.
- All corridors, corners should be well-lit.
- In all depts. every item should have a designated storage place. Things left around cause accidents.
- Light switches should be located at the entrances for easy accessibility.
- Staff should be instructed and checked to always follow all procedures and safety precautions.
- Staff should also be trained periodically in first-aid procedures and only trained first-aiders should handle an injured person.

## GUEST ACCIDENT PREVENTION

- Guest safety is of great importance for the hotel management and efforts must be made to keep these to a minimum.
- Safety in the bathrooms and & guestrooms: these are more prone to accidents because of the presence of slippery, wet surfaces.
- Keep bathtubs very clean- do not allow build-up of scum (soap) deposits
- Place rubber or anti-slip mats in the bathtub
- Provide grab bars in tubs and shower cubicles
- Keep tiles dry
- Hair dryers should be wall mounted to prevent falling into water in the sinks
- Clear broken glass as quickly as possible
- Windows should be kept locked to avoid falls
- Wipe up all spillages on the floor as quickly as possible
- Place warning signage wherever housekeeping may be working, especially on floor maintenance

## PROCEDURE IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT

- If possible, remove the accident victim from the site of accident as soon as possible to a quiet secluded place. Make him comfortable, use a stretcher in case it is needed.
- Preferably, take someone with you to the accident site and to help in handling the person.
- Call the hotel doctor if the need is felt.
- Handling of the accident victim should preferably be done by a trained first aider till the arrival of a doctor. Never try to move an accident victim who seems to have suffered a fracture- seeing an unnatural angle of the limbs, or if guest is in too much of pain, etc.
- Keep calm, but don't take too much time to decide on any action, time lost may be important.
- Try to protect your establishment against any false allegations later.
- Making a full report when the event is recent and fresh helps here. This record needs to be maintained by management in case of any queries later on or if the guest blames the hotel later on.

## ACCIDENT REPORT FORM OR ACCIDENT BOOK

- Also referred to as the Incident Form should be available at the front desk and should contain the following information:
- Date and time of accident/incident
- Who reported the accident
- Room number of guests
- Site of accident
- Action taken (first-aid and doctor's treatment and if person was removed to hospital
- Names and statements of witnesses
- Your own comments as to the reason of accident and how it could be prevented and what actions can be taken for future prevention of the same.

## SAFETY & SECURITY WITH RESPECT TO HOTELS IN GENERAL

- Every floor should have at least two exits.
- The emergency staircase should connect at least 3-4 outlets in a hotel.
- Directional sign boards (visible) should be placed at each entry and exit point.
- Every guestroom should have a visible emergency exit map or plan behind the door and this should never be concealed with any kind of decoration.
- Fire extinguishers should be placed at all convenient points.
- Water sprinklers and smoke detectors or a well-planned fire plan should be a part of every hotel design.
- Metal detectors or baggage scanners can be placed at the main entrance to prevent entry of unauthorized material.
- Each and every room door should have a 'peephole'/ eye hole for the occupant in a convenient location.
- Every exit area should open into an open area.

## SAFETY & SECURITY WITH RESPECT TO HOTELS IN GENERAL

- Concierge and reception should be located at strategic points- a location from where the receptionist is able to view the movement from the main entrance. For this reason, reception is located between the main entrance and the guest elevators.
- The hotel's parking lot should preferably be adjacent to the main building rather than in the basement. If this is unavoidable, the hotel parking lot should require the guest to cross the lobby and the reception area in order to reach the car park. CCTV surveillance is recommended for the car park area especially if in the basement.
- Valet service should be suggested to single lady guests.
- At the main entry of the hotel a rear-view mirror may be placed in order to keep a check on the vehicles moving in and out of the hotel premises. Also, boom barriers may be installed to prevent unauthorized entry and exit of vehicles.
- After the attack of 26/11, many hotels have started scanning and searching the underneath of cars and the car bonnets and car boot (luggage box at the rear).
- Many hotels follow the policy of not sending their lady service staff- housekeeping and room service – to service rooms if the guest is inside the room.
- A house maid should make sure to place the maid's trolley at the entrance of the room to avoid any unauthorized or unsuspected entry of anyone while busy in cleaning.
- CCTVs should be installed wherever necessary, especially at vulnerable points of the hotel.