Lockdown Procedure for Hospitality Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Lockdown procedures are crucial for hospitality businesses to ensure guest and staff safety during emergencies. These plans should be specific to the establishment's layout and consider potential threats like natural disasters or security breaches. A lockdown procedure helps staff respond quickly and efficiently, minimizing confusion and ensuring everyone knows what steps to take for shelter or evacuation.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Lockdown procedures should be implemented in various situations to ensure guest and staff safety:

- **Security Threats:** This includes situations with a high risk of violence or harm, such as active shooters, robberies, or hostage situations. A lockdown helps secure the area and restrict movement until authorities arrive.
- **Fires:** A lockdown may be necessary to control the spread of flames and smoke and ensure everyone evacuates in an orderly fashion.
- **Natural Disasters:** Depending on the severity, a lockdown might be needed for tornadoes, hurricanes, or earthquakes. This allows staff to secure the building and take shelter in designated areas.
- **Hazardous Materials Spills:** A lockdown can prevent exposure and allow for proper decontamination procedures if a hazardous material is released in the vicinity.

Even though lockdowns are implemented for safety, there can be hazards that arise during them in a hospitality setting:

- While a lockdown controls movement to prevent harm during

emergencies, it can also restrict movement in ways that could hinder escape routes in a fire or during a structural collapse.
- Being confined for a prolonged period, especially with uncertain information about the situation, can lead to anxiety, panic attacks, and claustrophobia for some guests and staff.
- Lockdowns can make it difficult to reach guests or staff experiencing a medical emergency quickly.
- The stress of the situation or underlying tensions between guests or staff could escalate into altercations during a lockdown.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Emergencies can strike unexpectedly. While the goal is always to prevent them, having a well-rehearsed lockdown procedure in place is essential for ensuring guest and staff safety in the face of danger. How to perform a lockdown in a hospitality setting and the key safety procedures involved:

Preparation:

- **Develop a Lockdown Plan:** This plan should outline procedures for different emergencies, communication protocols, designated lockdown areas, and staff roles.
- **Staff Training:** Regularly train staff on the lockdown plan, including practicing drills to ensure everyone understands their roles and responds efficiently.
- **Communication Tools:** Ensure you have functioning communication tools like walkie-talkies or a designated communication channel for staff during a lockdown.

Initiating a Lockdown:

1. **Assess the Threat:** Management needs to assess the situation and determine if a lockdown is necessary.
2. **Trigger the Alarm (if applicable):** If your plan involves an audible lockdown alarm, activate it to signal the emergency.
3. **Announce Lockdown (verbally and visually):** Use clear and

concise messages to announce the lockdown over public address systems and display visual lockdown signs.

4. **Secure the Area:** Depending on the situation, this might involve locking down specific areas or the entire building. Staff should secure entrances and exits to prevent unauthorized entry.
5. **Move Guests and Staff to Designated Lockdown Areas:** Guide guests and staff to pre-determined secure locations based on their current location. These areas should be away from windows, have minimal exits, and offer proper shelter depending on the emergency (fire vs. shooter).
6. I**nstruct Guests and Staff on Lockdown Procedures:** Inform everyone about what to expect during the lockdown, including remaining quiet, staying put, and following further instructions.

Maintaining the Lockdown:

- **Monitor the Situation:** Management or designated staff should continuously monitor the situation and stay updated on developments.
- **Maintain Communication:** Keep guests and staff informed through regular updates using the designated communication channels established in your plan.
- **Account for Everyone:** Once safe to do so, take a headcount to ensure everyone is accounted for.

Additional Safety Procedures:

- **Guests with Disabilities:** The lockdown plan should address the needs of guests with disabilities, ensuring they can be safely assisted to designated lockdown areas.
- **First Aid:** Ensure there are readily available first aid kits in designated lockdown areas.
- **Security Measures:** If the lockdown is due to a security threat, have a plan for cooperating with law enforcement upon their arrival.

FINAL WORD

Remember, the specific lockdown procedures will vary depending on the size and type of hospitality business as well as local regulations. Tailoring your plan to your specific situation and ensuring everyone is familiar with the procedures is crucial.