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OPINION ARTICLE

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A Baker's Dozen of Holiday and Year End Safety & Security Suggestions

Lessons from the Field | A Common Sense Approach to Success in the Hospitality Industry

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4 min read 0 Comments

December 1st of any year marks a number of things for many of us globally, regardless of where we live. The last month of the calendar year is often time for social parties for companies and associations, as well as family gatherings. There are holiday get-togethers for department staffs, retirement celebrations and to mark the end of a (hopefully) successful year.



I like to compare the holiday season with the way a child listens to a favorite story. The pleasure is in the familiar way the story begins, the anticipation of familiar turns it takes, the familiar moments of suspense, and the familiar climax and ending.

Fred Rogers

(1928 – 2003) American educator, Presbyterian Minister, songwriter and TV host of Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, in production from 1968 to 2001.

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Early December should also be a focused time of year for those of us in the hospitality world of food service, accommodations, spas/relaxation centers and beverage service. It is a time of refresher awareness in the care of alcoholic beverage service.

1. The reviews in the training of alcoholic beverages should include of course all bartenders and servers, as they are the front line of guest contact relating to consumption and service. Prudent managers also include training for additional members of staff who might meet a guest or customer who should not be permitted to drive. These staff positions include front desk, bell staff, door attendant and valet parking attendants.
2. Additional attention and consideration should be given to security levels, as they can supply a critical presence and sense of control in sensitive interactions. In recent years, incidents of overflow crowds in clubs or lounges have been cause for concern and your staff should be aware and trained on emergency evacuation. This also means management following up that all exits are clearly marked and clear, and room capacity limits are maintained.
3. While there is often a fine line on the denying a motor vehicle to its owner, there is a clear obligation to not contribute to an unsafe driver on the road who left your establishment. Training should be considered and delivered to address that challenge. Many cities and organizations have no cost or free transportation services available and your staff should be aware of local options.
4. Carefully check all electrical cords, wiring and plugs for decorative lighting or animated characters. Check the cord insulation and determine that connections between plugs and wall receptacles are all safe and in order.
5. During documented inspection tour as your decorations are put in place, check vigilantly on the stability and integrity of doors, windows, stairs, railings, balconies, the base of flag poles or any locations where decorations may be displayed, Check all areas where a rust stains are noticed, as this could be a sign of water leaks or other potential problems.
6. Make sure all decorations, hangings, wreaths, wall décor, garlands, etc. are securely fastened.
7. If you prefer or insist on live decorations in trees or wreaths, confirm with your local fire authority relating to codes and any special handling required for such items that are used indoors.
8. Be prepared for any climate challenges. If you are in a cold climate with snow clearing equipment at your property, coordinate with



temperatures. I know of a number of properties in my career that required additional water, food supplies, blankets, etc and preparation can be important if that is in your forecasts. Verify that you have adequate quantities of (green) treatment chemicals for ice and snowy surface and establish procedure for out-door work with proper clothing for exposed areas protection against freezing temperatures, Limit time of exposure while employees are performing out-door tasks.

9. Check and document the air intake and exhaust systems for the property, ensuring they cannot be blocked. Document a systematic safety test of the boiler or other heating system equipment, pumps, hot water delivery systems, fans, heating pipes, lines, etc. There have been cases of carbon monoxide build-ups in storage areas adjacent to indoor hotel pools that have had serious repercussions for non-attentive owners or managers.
10. Review emergency and communication systems in your community. When was the last time a representative of your property met with local police and/or fire authorities to review communication practices or to double check any special situations they might be facing? This year, many police and fire services are facing severe budget crunches and your sensitivity will be appreciated.
11. Remind cashiers to be especially alert as this is a high season for both increased potential of armed robbery and from fraud artists who attempt to pass counterfeit money or request change for large denominations in busy times that are at times confusing.
12. In a recent column titled SEASONAL SAFETY AND SECURITY REMINDERS, I offered a number of strategies on CRIME PREVENTION for ARMED ROBBERY. The full list is there but they included tips on visibility, on keeping outlet displays free from clutter, on training of staff relating to the potential and several suggestions on staffing and cash management.
13. Finally, if your property is providing a staff Holiday Party sponsored by ownership or management, care must be taken for staff as is provided to guests as outlined in #1-3 mentioned earlier. If you are hosting a holiday party for the staff, be sure there is a designated driver or other transportation alternative if alcoholic beverages are served.

What are you doing at your hotel today?

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Safety & Security

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