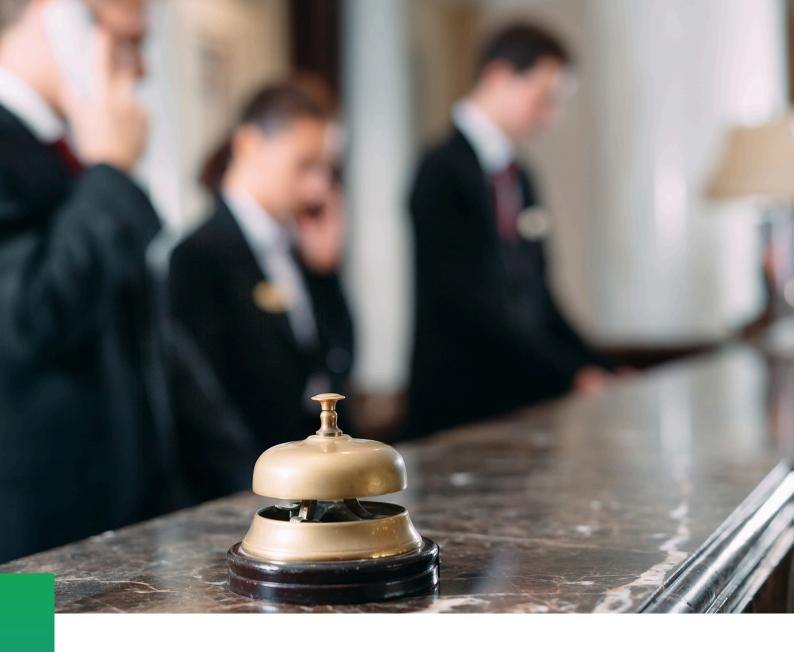
FROM COMPLIANCE AS A TASK TO COMPLIANCE AS A CULTURE

BY DARRAGH MORLEY





INTRODUCTION

Over a four-year period, hospitality venues in England experienced more than <u>6,400 fires</u>, while in the US, during the same timeframe, <u>structural fires in hotels and motels</u> resulted in over 30 civilian fatalities and \$330 million in direct property damage. While these may seem like worst-case scenarios, the financial consequences of non-compliance extend far beyond fire-related incidents. Operational disruptions, lost bookings, and reputational damage can drain revenue far beyond the cost of initial fines or repairs. Compliance goes beyond regulations; it safeguards both lives and the long-term profitability of your business.

Every year, countless hotel guests and employees suffer from slips, trips, and falls—one of the most common and expensive safety risks in the hospitality industry. A single wet floor without proper signage can lead to a serious injury, triggering legal disputes and compensation claims that often reach tens of thousands. In Ireland, the average hotel insurance premium stands at €10,000; requiring hotels to generate €100,000 in profit just to offset the cost.



Food safety violations can escalate quickly, with contaminated food leading to food poisoning outbreaks. Beyond regulatory fines, a single viral complaint on social media can cause devastating reputational damage, deterring future guests. Meanwhile, Legionella bacteria lurking in neglected water systems can trigger Legionnaires' disease outbreaks, leading to guest lawsuits, forced closures, and scrutiny from health authorities.

These aren't just hypothetical dangers—they're real, everyday risks that can cripple operations overnight.

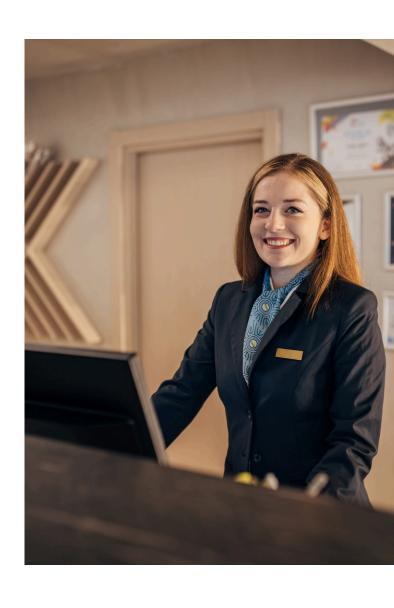
Yet, in many hotels, compliance is often viewed as just another task to complete, a set of rules to follow, reports to submit and inspections to pass. With busy staff juggling countless responsibilities, compliance can sometimes take a back seat. This can result in operational inefficiencies, safety hazards, and even harm the guest experience if it is handled as an afterthought rather than as a core component of operations.

Meeting legal fire safety requirements might keep a hotel in good standing on paper, but is it truly prepared for an emergency? Across the US, compliance varies state by state with different fire codes and OSHA regulations. But the best hotels don't just check boxes, they integrate safety into daily operations, turning compliance from a mandatory obligation into a business advantage.

When staff naturally focus on fire escape routes, emergency communication, and hazard detection, safety becomes second nature. And in a crisis, that muscle memory can mean the difference between a controlled response and a costly disaster.

Fire safety is just one piece of the puzzle —proactive compliance, including food safety, cybersecurity, accessibility, and more isn't just about following rules. It's about protecting guests, staff, and revenue. A single safety incident can lead to lawsuits, fines, and operational disruptions, but perhaps most damaging is the loss of guest trust. A hotel known for lapses in safety risks more than penalties—it jeopardizes bookings, reputation, and long-term profitability.

By incorporating a culture of preparedness into daily operations, hotels don't just avoid risks; they gain a competitive edge. Guests feel safer, staff are more confident, and the business is better positioned to navigate evolving regulations without disruption. In an industry where trust and experience drive revenue, prioritizing compliance isn't just the right thing to do—it is the smart thing to do.





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CREATE A CULTURE OF COMPLIANCE IN YOUR HOTEL

TRAINING CONTINUOUSLY

It is well known that the <u>staff turnover</u> rate in hospitality is higher than other industries. <u>A survey</u> by the American Hotel & Lodging Association showed that more than 75% of US Hotels are short-staffed. Similarly, in the UK, 53% of hospitality managers <u>have reported</u> that their company and staff are suffering, while also noting a decline in the quality of service.

Relying on infrequent or one-off training sessions means that new employees may miss critical information, leaving gaps in knowledge and procedures. Implementing ongoing training through refresher courses, digital modules, and workshops ensures that every team member, regardless of when they were hired, stays informed and capable.



Staff training can be streamlined by:



LEVERAGING DIGITAL RESOURCES

Automate onboarding with videos, written instructions, and recurring digital training modules that staff can complete at their convenience. Maintain a library of resources (videos, guides, checklists) for easy access and ongoing reference.



APPOINTING A COMPLIANCE LEAD

Designate a staff member to oversee onboarding and continuous training efforts. This role allows staff to take ownership while creating accountability and ensuring consistency in knowledge and compliance across the team.



ENCOURAGING PEER-TO-PEER LEARNING

Implement mentorship programs where experienced staff guide new hires, reinforcing best practices. This hands-on approach helps employees learn in real-time and adapt quickly to their roles.

Make safety and compliance training a regular part of staff development, not just a regulatory requirement.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Compliance starts at the top. When leadership actively prioritizes safety and compliance, employees are far more likely to follow suit. A culture of compliance is built when managers and executives demonstrate their commitment, not just by enforcing rules, but by actively participating in training, following safety protocols, and addressing compliance concerns in real-time.

Leaders can reinforce compliance by:

- Attending and engaging in staff training sessions to show its importance.
- Conducting walkthroughs and safety audits alongside employees.
- **Encouraging** open-door reporting of safety concerns and ensuring prompt action.
- Publicly **recognizing** and rewarding compliance champions on the team.

When employees see management taking compliance seriously, they are more likely to embrace it as a core part of their own responsibilities.



SIMPLIFYING PROCESSES

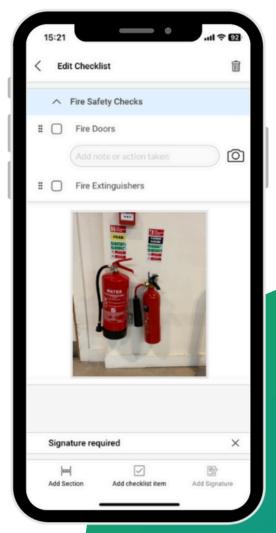
Use technology to streamline compliance tracking, maintenance, and reporting, making it easier for staff to stay on top of requirements.

By using digital tools, you can automate many of the routine tasks involved in tracking safety inspections, managing training progress, and generating reports. This ensures that nothing can slip through the cracks.

Reduce the risk of human error with tools that can:

- Automate tracking of compliance tasks.
- Provide real-time updates on inspections and training progress, ensuring nothing is overlooked.
- Offer easy-to-follow checklists that simplify compliance for all staff.
- Ensure consistent adherence to safety and regulatory standards across all shifts and locations.
- Increase accountability with clear documentation and tracking of compliance activities.





ENCOURAGING ACCOUNTABILITY

A strong culture of compliance relies on every team member understanding their role and taking ownership of their responsibilities. When employees feel accountable, they are more likely to follow safety protocols, complete compliance tasks, and report potential issues before they escalate.

Hotels can improve accountability by:



CLEARLY DEFINING RESPONSIBILITIES

Ensure that every staff member knows what is expected of them in terms of compliance. Provide written guidelines, role-specific checklists, and regular reminders to reinforce expectations.



USING TRANSPARENT TRACKING SYSTEMS

Digital compliance tools like Snapfix can provide visibility into who has completed required tasks and who needs follow-ups. This transparency helps prevent oversights and promotes consistency across shifts.



ENCOURAGING OPEN COMMUNICATION

Create a culture where employees feel comfortable reporting safety concerns or compliance gaps without fear of punishment. Offering anonymous reporting options and regular feedback sessions fosters a culture of accountability.



RECOGNIZING AND REWARDING COMPLIANCE EFFORTS

Acknowledge team members who consistently uphold compliance standards. Whether through verbal praise. incentives. emplovee or recognition programs, positive reinforcement motivates others to take accountability seriously.

By embedding accountability into daily operations, hotels can ensure that compliance is not just a requirement but a shared responsibility embraced by the entire team.



CONDUCTING ROUTINE DRILLS AND AUDITS

Regular safety drills and compliance checks reinforce best practices and identify gaps before issues arise. Even with proper training and streamlined processes, real-world execution is where compliance truly matters. By conducting routine drills and audits, hotels can ensure that staff are prepared to handle emergencies, follow safety protocols, and meet compliance requirements consistently.

Hotels can strengthen compliance through:



SCHEDULED SAFETY DRILLS

Fire evacuations, first-aid response, and security incident simulations help staff react quickly and correctly in real situations. Drills should be conducted regularly and include debriefing sessions to reinforce learning.



ROUTINE COMPLIANCE AUDITS

Regular inspections help identify areas of non-compliance before they become serious problems. This includes checking safety equipment, verifying record-keeping accuracy, and assessing adherence to procedures.



Unannounced evaluations ensure that staff remain vigilant and follow protocols at all times, not just when they know an audit is coming.



TEAM FEEDBACK & IMPROVEMENT PLANS

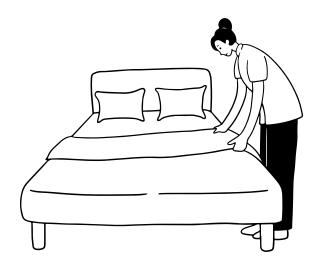
After every drill or audit, gather staff feedback on what went well and where improvements are needed. Use these insights to refine training programs and operational procedures.



LEVERAGING DIGITAL TRACKING TOOLS

Digital audit logs and automated reminders ensure that no required checks are missed, providing real-time insights into compliance status across the property.

By embedding routine drills and audits into daily operations, hotels can proactively address compliance risks, enhance staff preparedness, and maintain a safe, well-regulated environment for both employees and guests.





BUILDING A PROACTIVE CULTURE OF COMPLIANCE

Compliance is a direct investment in your hotel's reputation, guest experience, and bottom line. Safety violations, accessibility gaps, or food safety lapses can lead to fines, legal battles, and even lost bookings as guests take their business elsewhere. On the flip side, a strong compliance culture builds trust, improves productivity, and protects revenue by preventing costly disruptions.

In the following sections, we'll share practical strategies and examples showing how hotels can integrate compliance into key areas to ensure guests are safe, staff are prepared and revenue margins are maximized.

DATA SECURITY

According to the 2024 Travel and Hospitality Technology Innovation Report by Skift, 37% of hospitality executives listed cybersecurity as a top concern for business disruption. Data security should be a priority for hotels, handle sensitive as thev information such as credit card details, personal identification, and booking preferences. Ensuring this data is protected from breaches is critical to maintaining guest trust and avoiding legal and financial consequences.

When it comes to data protection, the EU and US take very different approaches. The EU enforces strict regulations under GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), requiring hotels to obtain explicit guest consent for data collection, provide transparency on how data is used, and ensure secure storage. Non-compliance can result in fines of up to 4% of annual global revenue, making data protection a high-stakes priority.

In contrast, the US has no unified federal data protection law, leaving businesses—including hotels—operating in a patchwork of inconsistent state regulations. While states like California (CCPA) and Colorado (CPA) have introduced stricter rules, most states offer little to no protection for consumer data.

The hospitality industry is particularly vulnerable, as hotels collect vast amounts of sensitive guest information, from credit card details and passport numbers to personal preferences and stay history. Without robust legal safeguards, hotels rely on self-regulation, meaning compliance often varies widely between brands and properties.

This lack of regulation has contributed to major data breaches, including some of the world's well known hotel brands with guest records, including passport numbers and credit card details being exposed. Since there is no federal requirement for hotels to encrypt guest data, many still store it in unencrypted databases, making them prime targets for cybercriminals. Additionally, many hotels share guest data with third-party vendors for marketing, booking, and loyalty programs - often without guests' full awareness or control over how their data is used.

As cyber threats grow and consumer awareness increases, the US hospitality sector faces mounting pressure to adopt stricter security measures voluntarily or risk future government intervention. Regardless of location, prioritizing cybersecurity is essential to safeguarding guest information and maintaining trust.

Hotels can strengthen cybersecurity by:



TRAINING STAFF ON CYBERSECURITY

Educate all employees, especially those handling guest data, on best practices such as creating strong passwords, identifying phishing emails, and properly managing sensitive information.



IMPLEMENTING ACCESS CONTROLS

Restrict access to sensitive guest and financial data based on employee roles to minimize risk.



ENFORCING MULTI - FACTOR AUTHENTICATION (MFA):

Require MFA for all systems that store or process guest data, adding an extra layer of security against unauthorized access.



AUTOMATING COMPLIANCE CHECKS

Regularly update and monitor security protocols to detect vulnerabilities before they become breaches.





FIRE & LIFE SAFETY

According to <u>FEMA</u>, most hotel fires are caused by cooking and are usually contained. However, 18% of nonconfined hotel and motel fires extend beyond the room of origin. Hotels must be prepared to prevent, respond to, and recover from fire-related emergencies to ensure the safety of both guests and staff.





FIRE SAFETY EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

Ensure that all fire safety equipment, such as smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, and sprinklers are regularly inspected and serviced according to local regulations.



STAFF TRAINING & DRILLS

Hold regular fire drills to ensure that all staff know how to respond in an emergency. This should include safe evacuation procedures and the use of firefighting equipment.



CLEAR SIGNAGE & EMERGENCY ROUTES

Keep emergency exits clear and clearly marked. Ensure that lighting is adequate, especially during nighttime or power outages.

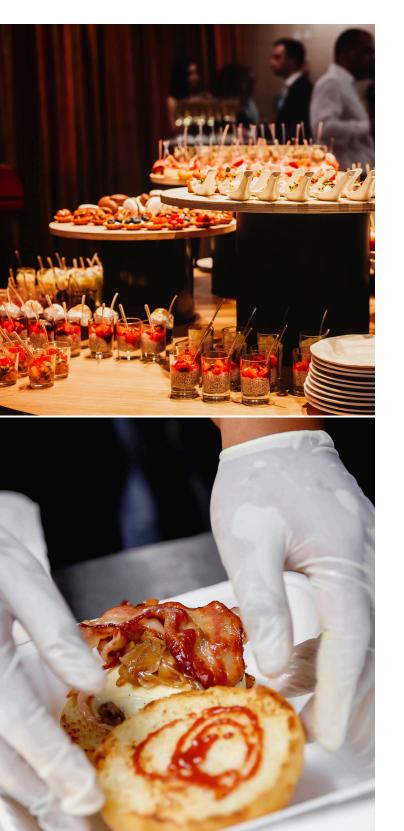


FIRE SAFETY AUDITS

Conduct regular audits of fire safety protocols to ensure compliance with fire codes, and use digital tools to track inspections and maintenance.

FOOD SAFETY & HYGIENE

The <u>CDC</u> estimates that each year roughly 48 million people get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases. More than half of all foodborne illness outbreaks in the United States are associated with restaurants, delis, banquet facilities etc. Incorporating food safety and hygiene into daily routines ensures that staff maintain high standards and avoid risks of contamination or violations.





DAILY TEMPERATURE LOG MAINTENANCE

Require kitchen staff to digitally log the temperature of food in coolers and freezers every morning and evening. This ensures that perishable items are stored at the correct temperature throughout the day.



SANITATION AUDITS AT START OF SHIFTS

Assign the kitchen supervisor to perform a sanitation audit at the start of each shift, checking that all surfaces, utensils, and equipment are properly sanitized. This should be logged on a digital platform for easy tracking.



CROSS-CONTAMINATION PREVENTION

Staff should actively check that raw and cooked foods are separated throughout the day to prevent cross-contamination. Regularly scheduled spot checks can be incorporated into every shift's responsibilities.

ACCESSIBILITY

Research by HGEM showed that 71% of customers say that there isn't currently attention brought enough accessibility in the hospitality industry. Ensuring accessibility compliance is not a one-time check, it's an ongoing commitment that should be integrated into daily hotel operations. A truly accessible hotel doesn't just meet the minimum standards outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or other relevant regional regulations; it actively creates inclusive an environment where accessibility is part of the hotel's culture and operations every day.





DAILY ACCESSIBILITY WALKTHROUGHS

Assign staff at the start of each shift to conduct a quick walkthrough of common guest areas (e.g. lobby, bathrooms, dining areas) to check for any accessibility barriers. This includes ensuring wheelchair ramps are clear, elevators are functioning properly, and signage is easily readable.



MONITOR ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES IN REAL TIME

Set up an automated system that flags accessibility-related tasks. For example, wheelchair-accessible if room's features need to be tested or repaired, the system should automatically assign the task to maintenance and alert the This manager. ensures ongoing accessibility features are always operational.



ACCESSIBILITY FEEDBACK LOOP

Encourage guest feedback on accessibility features and make it easy for guests to report issues. Create a system where any accessibility-related complaints or concerns are immediately logged and tracked to ensure timely resolution.



CROSS-DEPARTMENT COORDINATION

Integrate accessibility into daily maintenance checks, housekeeping tasks, and even guest service routines. For example, housekeeping should check for any accessibility-related issues in guest rooms during daily cleaning, such as ensuring grab bars are secure.



MONITORING SENSORY SPACES

For families with children with additional needs, designate quiet, sensory-friendly spaces within the hotel where guests can retreat if needed. These areas should be equipped with calming lighting, noise-reducing features, and soft furnishings. Train staff to recognize the importance of these spaces and ensure they are always available and maintained for guests who need them.



ENSURE AN ACCESSIBLE DIGITAL EXPERIENCE

Accessibility doesn't start when a guest arrives at the hotel, it begins online. In addition to making booking platforms accessible, hotels should ensure that contact forms, customer service chat features, and digital menus are easy to navigate for all users, including those using assistive technology.



SUPPORT GUESTS WITH INVISIBLE DISABILITIES

Not all disabilities are visible. Conditions such as chronic pain, neurodivergence (e.g. autism, ADHD), or hearing impairments may not be immediately apparent. Train staff to recognize and respond with empathy when guests request accommodations, such as a quieter room, additional time for checkin/out. or written communication instead of verbal instructions. Offering discreet accessibility badges identifiers (upon request) can also help staff provide the appropriate level of support.



CREATE INCLUSIVE POLICIES

Review the hotel's policies regularly to ensure they are inclusive. This includes offering flexible check-in/check-out times for guests with medical conditions, allergy-friendly providing meal options, and ensuring that all areas of the hotel are accessible for individuals with varying mobility or sensory needs.





SETTING THE BAR FOR INCLUSIVE HOSPITALITY: REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES

- Hilton partnered with the Be My Eyes
 <u>app</u> to enhance stays for guests who
 are blind or have low vision, providing
 them with real-time assistance from
 volunteers through video calls. This
 innovative service bridges the gap for
 visually impaired guests, offering them
 an elevated experience and greater
 independence.
- Hyatt collaborates with KultureCity to create sensory-inclusive experiences by training staff to recognize sensory issues and providing guests with sensory kits to help manage overstimulation. This partnership ensures that guests with autism or other sensory sensitivities feel comfortable and supported during their stay.
- Marriott is researching "Room for All" initiatives, a program aimed at creating more inclusive spaces for guests with diverse accessibility needs. This includes implementing customizable room features to ensure that every guest can enjoy a comfortable and personalized experience.

By embedding accessibility checks and processes into day-to-day operations, hotels ensure that accessibility is continually prioritized and integrated into every guest's experience. This proactive approach not only ensures compliance but builds a culture of inclusivity that benefits both guests and employees.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY & LABOR LAWS

Research by labor union <u>Unite Here</u>, has shown that hotel employees have higher rates of occupational injury and sustain more severe injuries than most other service workers. Employee safety and compliance with labor laws should be continuously integrated into daily hotel operations. This involves not only adhering to work-hour regulations but also ensuring the physical and emotional well-being of staff.



DAILY SAFETY WALKTHROUGHS

Managers should walk through staff areas (kitchen, laundry, front desk, etc.) every morning, ensuring that equipment is safe to use, floors are dry, and any hazards are removed immediately.



AUTOMATED LABOR LAW COMPLIANCE REMINDERS

Use scheduling software that automatically notifies both managers and employees of upcoming overtime or shift-hour violations. Incorporate this into the daily task management system.



IMMEDIATE INCIDENT REPORTING

Integrate a system where employees must report any injury or near-miss event immediately through an app like Snapfix. This ensures that issues are addressed right away, not after the fact.



END-OF-SHIFT CHECK-INS

During each shift change, managers should ask staff about any issues related to safety or workload. These check-ins should be documented to ensure follow-up actions are taken.



SUSTAINABILITY & ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

Sustainability is no longer just a trend in the hospitality industry, it's an expectation. According to Booking.com's <u>Sustainable Travel Report</u>, 76% of travelers say they want to travel more sustainably over the coming 12 months. Hotels must integrate environmental compliance into daily operations to reduce their ecological footprint while maintaining high service standards.



DAILY ENERGY & WATER MONITORING

Assign staff to use smart meters to track energy and water consumption across departments. Check daily logs to ensure there are no anomalies, such as water leaks or electricity usage spikes that may indicate malfunctioning equipment.



WASTE MANAGEMENT CHECKS

Housekeeping teams should sort waste at the end of each shift, separating recyclables, compostables, and landfill waste. Incorporate specific bins in common areas and guest rooms for easy recycling participation, and ensure all staff are trained in local waste management policies.



Commit to sourcing eco-friendly products such as biodegradable toiletries and sustainable linens for guest rooms. Where possible, partner with local suppliers for fresh produce in the restaurant. minimizing transportation emissions and promoting local businesses.



GUEST ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

Introduce digital notifications encouraging guests to opt out of daily towel changes or reuse sheets, and offer small incentives like discounts or loyalty points for participation. Use hotel apps to engage guests in energy-saving room settings, such as controlling room temperature remotely.



ECO-CERTIFICATIONS & COMPLIANCE AUDITS

Achieve and maintain eco-certifications like LEED or Green Key, and conduct regular environmental audits to ensure compliance with sustainability standards. Regularly update records of these audits, as well as energy and waste management reports, to ensure ongoing certification status.



GUEST SAFETY & SECURITY

The SAP Concur Global Business Travel <u>Survey</u> showed that more than half of global business travelers have had to change their accommodations because they felt unsafe. Proactive security measures to ensure a safe, secure environment include:



DAILY SECURITY INSPECTIONS

Assign security personnel to inspect all entry points, guest floors, and common areas during each shift. Ensure doors and windows are locked, cameras are functioning, and alarms are tested. NFC tags can be used to ensure that physical walkthroughs are completed.



KEY CARD & ACCESS CONTROL MANAGEMENT

Set up automated systems that notify staff immediately if a guest loses a key card or reports one stolen. Ensure that deactivation happens within minutes, and audit access logs regularly to detect unauthorized attempts to enter restricted areas.





GUEST SAFETY BRIEFING DURING CHECK-IN

Upon check-in, provide guests with a printed or digital card that outlines emergency procedures, including evacuation routes and security contact numbers. Incorporate this information into your mobile app or in-room tablets for easy access during the stay.



SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

Schedule regular checks of all CCTV systems, ensuring they cover high-traffic areas such as entrances, parking lots, and hallways. Regularly test cameras for functionality and monitor for any blind spots or malfunctioning units that need maintenance.





A SAFER FUTURE STARTS WITH DAILY COMMITMENT

A strong culture of compliance doesn't happen overnight, but by making it a daily priority, hotels can create safer, more efficient, and more welcoming environments for both guests and staff. Beyond avoiding fines and legal consequences, a proactive approach to compliance helps protect revenue by preventing costly disruptions. Food safety incidents, data breaches, or fire code violations can lead to expensive lawsuits, reputational harm, and lost bookings. Hotels that prioritize compliance also benefit from lower insurance premiums, improved guest trust, and smoother operations - all of which contribute to long-term financial stability.

When compliance is seamlessly integrated into training, leadership, accountability, and technology, it evolves from a mere task into a pillar of operational excellence. By embracing this proactive mindset, hotels can not only meet industry regulations but also strengthen their reputation, increase guest loyalty, and create a workplace where safety, security, and service excellence thrive.

BUILD A CULTURE OF COMPLIANCE TODAY

Every safe, well-run hotel protects not only guests — but also its reputation and revenue.

With the right tools, compliance moves from a checklist to a competitive advantage.

Snapfix helps hotels:

- Simplify compliance tracking and reporting
- Automate safety and maintenance tasks
- **Ensure** accountability with digital audit trails
- **Empower** teams to uphold safety standards every day

Turn compliance into a strength — not a burden.

Discover how technology can make safety second nature across every shift and department.

Learn more at snapfix.com

START NOW





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