

# RiskTopics

## Hotel industry: Business resumption guidance

The spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) has impacted hotels in a myriad of ways. The industry has experienced temporary closures or significantly reduced occupancy, canceled meetings and banquets, and restricted or closed food and beverage operations. Some locations have had their sites repurposed as housing for first responders, homeless, or overflow for hospitals or medical facilities.

## Introduction

Where any of the above interruptions to normal operating conditions exist, consideration must be given when resuming normal operation. The following guidance can be utilized to help return a hotel facility to normal operations.

## Guidance

### Risk control measures to be considered

- **Local jurisdiction:** Work closely with local, state, or federal agencies having jurisdiction to ensure proper approvals are in place for the reopening of the property. These agencies can include but may not be limited to local health or emergency departments, state emergency management agencies, or federal agencies such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- **Hotel reservations system:** Ensure the reservation system, franchisor, or property management company are notified to begin taking new reservations for guestrooms or meetings.
- **Staff screening:** Create and implement an active screening protocol for employees. Employee wellness checks should be conducted before, during, and after each shift. Checks may include, temperature checks, distributing pertinent information, and ensuring available personal protective equipment (PPE) and hand sanitizer are available.
- **Staff training:** Returning employees should receive refresher safety training on required tasks prior to working. New employees should receive adequate training prior to working. Handwashing practices should be retrained. This may be a good opportunity to implement a stretching program or other safety-related programs.
- **Cleaning and disinfecting:** Ensure a sufficient amount of cleaning and disinfecting products are available to adequately clean the hotel prior to opening. The hotel should be following CDC or health department guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting all surfaces. Disinfecting and cleaning should include all areas (e.g. lobby, guestrooms, public areas, elevator buttons, meeting rooms, entrance doors and handles, kitchens, laundry, swimming pool, and all back of house employee areas). Consider the following items as well:
  - Additional cleaning and disinfecting may be required by the local health department or the CDC if the hotel was used to house first responders or for medical purposes.

- Have employees been trained in the use of the cleaning chemicals?
- Ongoing cleaning and disinfecting protocols should be established after the hotel opens.
- Handwashing practices should also be re-established and strictly followed.
- **Available personal protective equipment:** PPE may have been depleted if the hotel was used to house first responders, for medical purposes or was donated to local first responders. PPE supplies must be replenished to ensure it is available for employee or guest use.
- **Product suppliers:** Contact suppliers to provide necessary products or equipment to properly open the hotel. Supplies may include, but are not limited to; food, beverages, cleaning materials, PPE, and other amenities.
- **Front desk/lobby:** Have hand sanitizer available at the front desk and strategic areas around the hotel for guest and employee use. Post signage informing guests of any CDC guidance, physical distancing requirements, or proactive steps the hotel has taken to prepare the hotel for a safe opening.
- **Laundry:** If the hotel has an in-house laundry, care must be taken to re-energizing equipment. If the laundry is outsourced, the commercial laundry service should be contacted to resume pick-up and delivery.
- **Security and life safety:** Confirm security surveillance cameras are in good operating condition. Consider whether security patrols will be resumed. All life safety systems and alarm systems should be tested or inspected to ensure they are in good operational condition. Test emergency lighting. Conduct an audit of master keys to ensure strict controls going forward.
- **Third-party services:** Have any third-party service providers inspect and test equipment before use. Such equipment includes, but may not be limited to elevators, escalators, and HVAC systems.
- **Water system/swimming pool:** Test and flush the water system for any stagnant water in the pipes. Test the water quality in swimming pool(s), spa(s), or other water features prior to opening to comply with local health codes.
- **Ongoing monitoring of employee and guest wellness:** Protocols should be implemented to monitor the ongoing health of employees. Physical distancing requirements must be followed. Procedures should be implemented for the reporting of potential illnesses (employee or guest) to the appropriate authorities.

## Conclusion

The resumption of the property to normal operations is a primary concern. However, care must be taken to provide both guests and employees a safe and enjoyable environment when they are allowed to return. The above guidance should be used to assist the business work toward the resumption of operations. As always, follow any directives or guidance from the CDC and the local authorities having jurisdiction.

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