STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Hotel Guest Check-In SOP

Document no.	SOP-HTL-003
Revision	1.0
Owner	Front Office Manager
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To check guests in quickly and accurately while verifying identity and payment, and to send every guest to their room with a positive first impression.

2. Scope

Applies to front desk agents checking in individual and group guests at the property. Group event check-in through an event coordinator is outside this SOP.

Definitions

PMS	Property management system. The software used to manage reservations, room status and guest folios.
Pre-authorization	A temporary hold placed on a guest's card to cover the room rate and an estimated amount for incidentals.
Room status	The code in the PMS showing whether a room is vacant clean, inspected, or still occupied or dirty.

3. Responsibilities

Front Desk Agent	Verifies guest identity and reservation details, processes payment, and issues room keys.
Front Office Manager	Approves rate exceptions, resolves overbooking issues, and steps in for VIP arrivals.
Bell Attendant	Assists with luggage and escorts guests to their room when requested.

RACI matrix

Activity	Front Desk Agent	Front Office Manager	Bell Attendant
Verify identity and reservation	R/A	I	-
Authorize payment method	R	A	-
Resolve overbooking or room mismatch	R	A	-
Assist guest with luggage to the room	I	-	R/A

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- PMS terminal
- Key card encoder
- Card payment terminal
- Government ID scanner or reference guide
- Registration card, physical or digital
- Welcome amenity or property map

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Greet the guest** Greet the guest warmly by name if known, using the guest's name from the reservation once identity is confirmed, within the property's target greeting time.	Front Desk Agent	☐
5.2	**Locate the reservation** Search the PMS by name, confirmation number or reservation date to pull up the correct reservation and confirm the dates and room type match what the guest expects.	Front Desk Agent	☐
5.3	**Verify identity** Ask for a government-issued photo ID and confirm the name matches the reservation before proceeding. **Checkpoint:** The name on the ID matches the name on the reservation before check-in continues.	Front Desk Agent	☐
5.4	**Confirm reservation details with the guest** Review the room type, rate, number of nights and any special requests with the guest, and correct anything that does not match before continuing.	Front Desk Agent	☐
5.5	**Authorize the payment method** Take a pre-authorization on the guest's card for the room rate plus an estimated amount for incidentals, or confirm the payment method on file for a prepaid booking. **Warning:** Never check in a guest without a valid payment method authorized, unless the front office manager approves an exception.	Front Desk Agent	☐
5.6	**Confirm room availability and status** Check that the assigned room shows as vacant clean or inspected in the PMS before issuing a key; if it is not ready, offer the guest a wait area or an alternative. **Checkpoint:** The assigned room shows vacant clean or inspected status before a key is issued.	Front Desk Agent	☐
5.7	**Complete the registration card** Have the guest review and sign the registration card, physical or digital, confirming the rate, dates and any policies such as smoking or pet fees.	Front Desk Agent	☐
5.8	**Encode and issue the key** Encode the room key for the correct room and departure date, and test it if the encoder allows, before handing it to the guest.	Front Desk Agent	☐
5.9	**Share property information** Point out the room location, elevator access, breakfast times, Wi-Fi details and any relevant amenities before the guest leaves the desk.	Front Desk Agent	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.10	**Offer luggage and escort assistance** Offer to have a bell attendant assist with luggage and escort the guest to the room, especially for guests with heavy bags or mobility needs.	Bell Attendant	☐
5.11	**Resolve overbooking or upgrades** If the reserved room type is unavailable, offer an upgrade or an alternative solution approved by the front office manager, and document the resolution on the reservation.	Front Office Manager	☐

6. Quality checks

- Guest ID matches the reservation name for every check-in.
- A valid payment method is authorized before a key is issued.
- Room status is vacant clean or inspected before a key is issued.
- Check-in time from arrival at the desk to key issuance meets the property's target.

7. Records

- Signed registration cards
- Payment authorization records in the PMS
- Overbooking resolution notes
- Guest ID verification log where required by the property

8. KPIs

- Average check-in time
- Percentage of check-ins with a valid payment authorization on file
- Guest satisfaction score for check-in
- Overbooking incidents per month

9. Common mistakes

- Issuing a key before confirming the room is vacant clean or inspected.
- Skipping ID verification during a busy arrival rush.
- Forgetting to mention breakfast times or Wi-Fi details.
- Checking in a guest without a valid payment authorization.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Alexa Uskova

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

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