

(5A) INTRODUCTION TO OSHA

The **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)** is an agency of the United States Department of Labor. Congress established the agency under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, which President [Richard M. Nixon](#) signed into law on December 29, 1970.

OSHA's mission is to "assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance."

(5B) SAFETY AWARENESS AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION

Safety awareness should be an ongoing program at all establishments. The management of all establishments should be aware of the laws concerning safe work environments and should be concerned about the safety of their employees. Periodic training should be provided to all staff in order to raise awareness about safety. All employees should be aware of the potential hazards in their respective departments. All heads of departments must ensure that employees follow safe job procedures, correct unsafe conditions immediately, and take adequate time to do the job so that accidents are not caused due to haste. The executive housekeeper should develop a comprehensive list of safety rules to be followed by all housekeeping employees. This can be a part of the 'housekeeping safety manual'.

Basic Guidelines for the prevention of Accidents:

- Always follow instructions when using any cleaning equipment.
- Replace caps on cleaning chemicals immediately and securely after dispensing.
- Label cleaning agents clearly.
- Keep floors clean and dry.
- Place warning and safety signs around the area while cleaning.
- Mark faulty equipment as 'out of order'.
- Dispose of rubbish carefully.

- Never place cigarette butts or sharp objects in the trash bag on the room attendant's carts.
- Open and shut doors carefully.
- Clean away broken glass carefully.

Procedures to follow in case of an accident:

When a guest or employee has met with an accident at the hotel, the procedure followed should be as follows:

- With the help of another person, check if the victim requires any assistance,
- Report the matter immediately to the manager concerned.
- Either administer first aid (if you are trained to do so) or get help from trained personnel.
- Shift the victim immediately to a hospital, if required. If the injury is serious, call an ambulance for the same. Follow all necessary first-aid measures until the ambulance arrives.
- Fill in the accident report form and hand it over to the manager concerned.

(5C) FIRST AID

The initial help or treatment which is given to a casualty for illness or injury before arrival of professional help (ambulance, doctor or qualified person) is called first aid.

Principles of first aid:

A first aider must-

- Act calm
- Be in control
- be talking gently but firm
- be trust building
- be a honest speaker
- be giving correct information
- never leave the casualty alone
- keep reassuring the casualty
- should never allow a child to be separated
- try to arrange transportation to hospital

- inform the police in case of serious accidents
- inform the relatives

Should not-

- touch the wound
- put unclean cloth
- allow blood flow unchecked
- allow people to gather around
- moving the casualty
- remove cloths
- allow patient who has fractured parts to move
- Fail to give artificial respiration
- Fail to remove false teeth, tobacco from the mouth of unconscious casualty
- Try to clean wounds

FEW COMMON SITUATIONS-

- Suffocation
- Asthma
- Burns and scalds
- Choking
- Convulsions(fits)
- Cuts
- Dislocation
- Drowning
- Diabetes
- Electrical shocks
- Eye injury
- Fracture
- Nose bleed
- Snake bite
- Sprain

(5D) DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES

The nature of all emergencies is the same: they are uncontrollable and unforeseen. Thus all properties must be prepared for them and have emergency plans put down in writing. Emergencies may come in any form---earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, bomb threats, and so on. Emergency plans must be a part of SOPs. These procedures must specify:

What procedures are to be followed in case of an emergency?

Who will be responsible----the plan should specify employee duties and placement within the facility during an emergency and after an emergency.

How the procedures will be followed; and

When the specified procedures should be followed---for instance, when should the guests be notified of a bomb threat, or when should the evacuation process be initiated.

Planning for an emergency:

Contingency planning should be done on the following lines:

- Employee Training: Training in emergency procedures is essential to deal with emergencies.
- Emergency Resources: The names and telephone numbers of outside agencies that may be of help during an emergency need to be listed and kept in a prominent, accessible place.
- Emergency Checklists: Each department head should develop a checklist outlining the actions he/she must take in the event of an emergency.

Drills:

Fire emergency drills should be conducted periodically and it should be mandatory for all staff to attend these in shifts. First-aid training and supplies -A thorough training in first-aid procedures, especially cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), should be given to selected employees. All other employees should be trained in at least the basics of first aid. A complete first-aid kit should be maintained at all times.

Transportation and housing: Forward planning should be done for transportation of guests in case their relocation is required in the event of an emergency. Potential relocation sites should be identified.

Contingency Plan review:

The contingency plan should be reviewed by people who are responsible for the prevention of losses.

Dealing with Bomb Threats:

Bomb threats may be delivered in writing or orally, in person or over the telephone. In case of a written threat in the form of a letter, note or telegram, the message and the envelope should be handled carefully and held only at the corners to preserve finger prints and other evidence. Protect the document and the envelope, and hand it over to the general manager. Inform the police of the contents of the note.

If the messenger has left the premises, the employee accepting the note immediately prepare a memorandum listing the circumstances, the time the message was received, any known witnesses, and a detailed description of the messenger.

In case the bomb threat was made orally, as in any employee becoming aware of a bomb threat by overhearing someone make such a threat, the person should immediately convey the information to the general manager in a discreet manner (so as not to alarm the guests). The police should be informed promptly.

Unfortunately, “bomb hoax” telephone calls are a common occurrence. All persons responsible for the management of their building or staff should instruct their telephone operator to report all such calls to them confidentially and immediately. Usually bomb threats come in anonymous telephone calls.

Housekeeping employees may also be a part of the search team looking for unclaimed, unidentified, or unusual foreign objects that could contain a bomb. All housekeeping employees should be aware of the evacuation plans explained in the safety manual of the property and help in evacuation if necessary. In case of an explosion, the employees should help out in the rescue process and provide first-aid as required.

Dealing with terrorism—Steps and Precautions

Good housekeeping not only enhances the ambience of the hotel, it is also reduces the opportunity for placing suspicious items or bags and helps to deal with false alarms and hoaxes. The following tips with regards to housekeeping can help reduce the risk of planting dangerous material on hotel properties:

Limit the installation and use of litter bins around the hotel and ensure that the few installed are checked and cleared regularly. Procure litter bins which have small openings. Use of clear bags of waste disposal provides an easier opportunity for the staff to conduct an initial examination for suspicious items.

Lock unoccupied offices, rooms, and storage cupboards. Have in place an agreed procedure for the management of contractors, their vehicles and waste collection services. The vehicle registration mark of each vehicle and its occupant should be known to security in advance. Set the procedure and train staff to identify and suspicious items. Formulate and maintain contingency plans dealing with bomb threats, suspect enquiries, explosion, structural collapse, and evacuation.

- Planning should incorporate the seven key instructions to most incidents:
- Do not touch suspicious items.
- Move everyone to a safest distance.
- Prevent others from approaching cordoned area.
- Communicate safely to staff, business visitors, and the public.
- Use hand-held radios or mobile phones away from the immediate vicinity of a suspect item.
- Notify the police.
- Ensure that whoever found the item or witnessed the incident is available to brief the police.
- Screening of hand baggage by appropriate mechanical detectors should be carried out for all guests and employees on entrance to the property.
- All types of mails and parcels should be screened by detectors.
- Good quality doors and windows are essential to ensure building security.
- Have close-circuit television (CCTV) systems in place. It is important to remember that CCTVs are effective only if they are properly maintained and monitored.
- Install and maintain sufficient and proper fire-fighting equipment.
- Do not invite strangers to your room.
- Place all valuables in the hotel or motel's safe deposit box.

(5E) FIRE PREVENTION AND FIRE FIGHTING

Fire prevention and fire fighting

Fires may be classified into four groups, based on their source of fuel.

Class A: These are fires with trash, wood, paper or other ordinary combustible materials as their fuel source.

Class B: These are fires with flammable or combustible liquids and gases as their fuel source.

Class C: These are fires involving electric equipment.

Class D: these are fires with certain ignitable metals as the fuel source.

Prevention of fire:

- Fires may be prevented if fire hazards are identified and eliminated. Some unsafe practices that may lead to fires are as follows:
- Guests smoking in bed.
- The hotel not providing sand urns.
- Using high-wattage bulbs in lamps.
- Leaving linen chute doors open.
- Storing rags and cloths with residues of cleaning polish still on them.
- Not unplugging electrical appliances when not in use.
- Using faulty electrical equipment or sockets.
- Leaving magnifying glasses where sun can catch them.

Fire warning systems-

These may be electrically powered manually operated systems, automatic fire detection systems, or a combination of both. The usual components of such systems include:

Fire Alarms: These can be set off by smoke detectors, heat detectors, sprinkler systems, or pull stations. The most common types of fire alarms are the ones operated by pull stations located in corridors, lobbies, and near elevators. The pull alarms are red in colour, with a glass panel that needs to be broken to set off the alarm.

- Sprinkler Systems: These are found in most hotel establishments, especially in corridors and rooms. They are situated on the ceiling and automatically spray water when temperature rises above a certain level.
- Smoke Detectors: These are set off by smoke. The two types of smoke available are photoelectric detectors and ionization detectors. Photoelectric detectors are alarms triggered off when smoke blocks a beam of light emanating from the detector. In the ionization type of smoke detectors, the alarm sounds when the detector senses a shift in electrical conductivity between two plates.

Dealing in case of fire emergency

- Immediately switch on the nearest fire alarms.

- If possible, try to put out the fire with suitable equipment, remembering to direct the extinguishers at the base of the flames. Do not attempt to fight a fire if there is any danger of personal risk.
- Close all the windows and switch off all electrical appliances, including fans and lights.
- Close the door to the affected area and report to your immediate supervisor for instructions.
- Carry out instructions--- for instance, rouse guests in the section and direct them to the nearest fire-escape route. Each guestroom should have the route to the nearest fire escape drawn out and displayed in a place where it is most likely to be seen by the guests.
- Remain at the assembly point until instructed to do otherwise.
- Do not use lifts.

Fire Fighting Equipment-

Staff should be trained in operating the fire-fighting equipment. Types of fire-fighting equipment vary from simple ones such as buckets of sand and water, fire blankets, and hose reels to more complex fire extinguishers. Water buckets should be constantly checked for adequate water levels and sand buckets should be kept dry. Water should not be used in case of fires involving electricity.

Types of fire extinguishers-

Fire extinguishers can be of various types:-

- Dry Powder
- Dry Chemical foam
- Halon/vaporizing Liquid
- Water-gas or soda-acid extinguishers
- Carbon dioxide

Dry powder: These are usually meant for multipurpose use with various types of fire. They contain an extinguishing agent and use a compressed, non-flammable gas as a propellant.

Dry chemical Foam: These are primarily used on flammable liquids, oils, and fats, but may have multipurpose uses.

Halon/Vaporizing Liquid: These contain a gas or a volatile liquid that interrupts the chemical reaction that takes place when fuels burn. This type of extinguisher is often used to protect valuable electrical equipment since they leave no residue

to clean up. Halon extinguishers have a limited range, usually 4-6 feet. The initial application of halon should be made towards the base of fire, continuing even after the flames have been extinguished.

Water-gas or soda-acid extinguishers: These extinguishers contain water and compressed gas and should only be used on class A (wood or paper) fires.

Carbon-dioxide: These extinguishers are most effective on class B and C (liquid and electrical) fires. Since the gas disperses quickly, these extinguishers are only effective from a distance of 3-8 feet. The carbon dioxide is stored as a compressed liquid in the extinguisher; as it expands on release, it cools the surrounding air. Since the fire could re-ignite, continue to apply the agent even after the fire appears to be out.

(5F)SITUATION HANDLING (SICKNESS AND DEATH)

On many occasions, housekeepers find a sick guest on their hands. If the guest is too ill travel home or it is inconvenient for him or her to do so, as in case of an overseas traveler, he/she should be seen by the doctor on call at the hotel or by local doctor. If the medical aid is on the way, the housekeeper may have to administer first aid to the ailing guest. Hotel guests who are ill should be regularly visited by the house keeping staff.

Sometimes, illnesses or accidents lead to death. Staff who encounters such a situation should not touch anything in the room as they might be helpful in establishing the cause of death. The employee should lock the door and inform the executive housekeeper, who in turn conveys the information to the general manager. The police are then informed about the death. The door of the guest room where a death has occurred should be double-locked and sealed until the police have arrived. The staff should assist in any subsequent investigations being carried out by the authorities.

(5G) HANDLING DIFFERENT SITUATIONS

Difficult situations arrives everyday in all the departments specially housekeeping and we should know how to deal with them, mostly the control desk handles a situation, few emergencies like fire, guest accident, aftermath of guest complaint or other problems. In all situations alertness and presence of mind is must. Training difficult situations through role plays, demonstrations will help.

Two situations-

- 1) A depressed guest informing of committing suicide.
- 2) Damage of guest laundry.

END OF CHAPTER