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Operating a business during a pandemic brings about unparalleled challenges and circumstances. Hotel owners and operators, team members, and guests are all experiencing heightened levels of stress and uncertainty, which requires hotels to place an enhanced emphasis on proper health and safety protocols and excellent customer service. Now more than ever, we must all do our part to give our guests and our teams the best possible experiences while also giving them peace of mind.

This guide is designed to provide hotel operators with guidance, strategies, and best practices specific to interacting with guests and other hotel visitors during these unprecedented times. It incorporates the basic tenets of hospitality and service from Wyndham’s Count on Me service culture, with proactive recommendations for preventing, handling and curbing difficult situations to help hotel team members make sound judgments and understand diverse perspectives.

This guide also outlines real-life scenarios – such as potential pushback regarding Wyndham’s recent mask requirement (supported by industry expert recommendations) that all guests and team members wear masks in hotel indoor public spaces to help slow the spread of COVID-19 – and provides suggested responses to such scenarios.

Please make sure you and your team’s leaders familiarize yourselves with the content in this guide, so you can introduce the concepts addressed and regularly reinforce the scenarios and best practices with your teams.

This guide will be updated accordingly as additional information becomes available. Please reference MyPortal for the latest version as well as useful tools and resources to help you manage through and recover from this crisis.
LIVING OUR COUNT ON ME SERVICE CULTURE

Count on Me reminds us to be responsive, respectful and deliver great experiences. When dealing with sensitive situations, it is even more important to practice our service culture behaviors. This section includes general best practices and tips for interacting with guests at all times.

Count on Me Service Pillar

Tips to Help you Be Responsive

Do

• Allow others to explain their situation. Listen and empathize.

• Understand others may have different perspectives and opinions.

• Calmly and professionally attempt to resolve challenging matters.

• When you feel frustrated or that you are not being impactful, politely excuse yourself and ask a hotel leader for help.

Don’t

• Become confrontational with another person.

• Judge or insult others’ points of view.

• Forget to be aware of your body language. Especially now, the eyes say it all.
### Count on Me Service Pillar: Tips to Help you Be Respectful

<table>
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<th>Do</th>
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| • Always greet others with a smile or welcoming gesture in addition to a verbal greeting.  
• Make an extra effort to be friendly when you are wearing a mask.  
• Character is who you are when no one is looking. But in our digital world, cameras are always accessible and video can have substantial implications – someone is always looking. Always lead with kindness.  
• Treat every guest fairly and equally. | • Become confrontational with another person.  
• Judge or insult others’ points of view.  
• Forget to be aware of your body language. Especially now, the eyes say it all. |

### Count on Me Service Pillar: Tips to Help you Deliver Great Experiences

<table>
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| • Prioritize the guest experience. Go above and beyond to make sure every part of their stay is comfortable.  
• Think about the small touches to make guests feel at home. | • Use challenging circumstances to serve as an excuse to allow the guest experience to lack greatness!  
• Assume that every guest will have the same cookie-cutter expectations of the circumstances. |
Given the current health and social environment, individuals may be feeling heightened anxieties and sensitivities. This can easily lead to more confrontational behavior; do what you can to de-escalate situations and put everyone's safety first.

- **Be Proactive:** Examples of things you can do to be prepared and to minimize confrontational interactions.
  - **Have a plan** that outlines how you will react when situations arise. Use your resources, talk to others, talk to local law enforcement about when to involve them and when not to. Formulate a plan that your staff can follow when dealing with difficult/sensitive situations.
  - **Clearly display Count on Us signage** related to masks, social distancing, closed areas, etc., as required by Wyndham’s recently announced health and safety brand standards (effective Sept. 1, 2020). In addition, prominently display any new rules or policies specific to your hotel or required by local ordinances. All signage should be professionally printed and framed where appropriate.
  - **Ensure your hotel and staff follow/understand all policies** as mandated by local laws and Wyndham brand standards
  - **Be mindful and observant of all individuals**
  - **Remind or explain to guests why certain precautions are being taken or are required**
    - Always stay calm and respectful
    - Describe the reason for a rule or policy (e.g., safety for guests and staff)
    - Do not judge differing opinions or points of view
    - If the guest is not satisfied, provide the option to speak to a manager
    - For the safety of team members, do not physically confront unwilling or belligerent guests who do not follow protocols in place
  - **If applicable, refer to your hotel’s specific Safety & Security Guide**
  - **While it is your right to choose to refuse service to a guest refusing to wearing a mask, we encourage you to use that option as a last resort and only when appropriate. Prepare to offer possible alternatives that keep safety, well-being, and security top of mind.**
    - Offer a mask or direct them to where they can get one
    - Respectfully request they stay in their room for the duration of their stay
    - If all else fails, thank the guest and notify hotel management who can determine next best steps and try to find a solution
  - **Watch the Stephen Barth Video - How Should Your Business Handle Anti-Mask Guests** for help when de-escalating a situation [here](#).
  - **Review specific scenarios and possible responses** that will help to de-escalate the situation. Please note if during any guest interaction you feel the situation is not de-escalating ask the guest to please wait and alert your manager.
Scenario

1. Individual is not aware of or not paying attention to the hotel’s policies, and is not wearing a mask or following social distancing protocols.

Things to Consider in Responding

- Kindly greet and point out mask and social distancing signage
- Offer a mask or direct them to where they can get one
- Avoid words like “required, must, mandated” which could be confrontational.

Suggested Responses

**Team Member:** “Hi, I’m *(team member name)* and I see you don’t have your mask on. Please keep your mask on when in our public areas. If you don’t have one, I have some extras at the front desk and can get one for you.”

**Team Member:** “Welcome to our hotel. I notice you do not have your mask on. Do you have one or can I offer you one?”

**Team Member:** “Hi, Wyndham has now adopted wearing masks in public areas as a requirement to help ensure the safety of our staff and other guests. Do you have one you can wear? If so, can I ask you to please wear it while you are in our public areas? I would appreciate it. Thank you so much.”

**Team Member:** “Hi, you may have noticed our signage on the front door requiring masks to be worn while in public areas. Can I ask you to please put yours on now? Thank-you!

**Team Member:** “Welcome to our hotel, you may have noticed all the signage around the hotel asking everyone to keep a minimum of 6’ feet apart and to wear a mask. It is part of our commitment to keeping everyone as safe as possible. We’re calling it “Count on Us” and it is how we are doing our part to help control the spread of the virus.”
Scenario

2. Individual refuses to wear a mask.

“You have no right to force me...You can’t make me wear a mask because the government doesn’t mandate it in this state...What gives you the right?”

Things to Consider in Responding

- Allow others to explain their situation
- Listen and empathize
- Inform them of the Wyndham Hotels & Resorts policy and why it was implemented

Suggested Responses

Team Member: Hello, welcome to the [INSERT NAME OF HOTEL]. I would like to thank you for staying with us. Please note, it is a policy at all Wyndham Hotels & Resorts hotels that we ask you to wear a face covering at all times in the public areas around the property.”

-OR-

“We are taking the steps as recommended by the CDC to protect our guests and employees. We respect your feelings on wearing a mask however we ask that while you are here you avoid the public areas if not wearing a mask.”

Guest: I refuse to wear a face mask

Team Member: Thank you for letting me know. Can you provide a reason as to why you are refusing to wear a mask while in the public areas of the property?

Guest: I do not want to provide a reason. (If guest says due to a disability refer to disability scenario)

Team Member: I understand you do not want to wear a mask, but we have adopted a policy that all team members & guests of the hotel wear a mask in all public areas. This is recommended by the CDC and consistent with the policies of other major hotel & retail companies. Please remember this is only required in the public areas of the hotel. I am happy to provide you with a mask if you do not have one.
**Guest:** I still do not want to wear a mask.

**Team Member:** Again, this is a requirement for all guests & team members who are on property. I have an extra mask that I can provide and when you are in your guest room you are free to remove the mask. Is this an agreeable solution? I am happy to provide you a complimentary mask?

**Guest:** I still do not want to wear a mask.

**Team Member:** Thank you for the information. I will need to speak with my manager. Will you please remain in this general area while I speak with my manager?

- If after hours, “Thank you for your feedback. I will need to involve our manager; can you please remain in this general area while I attempt to get my manager on the phone?”

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**Scenario**

3. Guest or team member refuses to wear a mask because they have a medical reason not to.

**Things to Consider in Responding**

- For team members, offer a face shield instead
- For guests, provide disinfected face shields available for check out
- Otherwise, be empathetic and ask them to stay in their room and avoid public spaces. If the guest needs anything, ask them to please call instead of going to the front desk

**Suggested Responses**

**Team Member:** “Our policy is to require all visitors to wear a mask. Can I provide one to you?”

**Team Member:** If the guest refuses due to a disability or other medical reason, then ask: “Would you be willing to wear a face shield...?”

**Team Member:** If guest refuses to wear a face shield: “If you are unable to wear a mask or face shield then, instead of our policy, I have been instructed to contact my manager who will need to discuss this with you.’

- OR -

**Team Member:** “If you are unable to wear a mask or face shield then, per our policy, we would ask that you stay in your room and avoid public spaces during your stay.”
Scenario

4. Hotel team member refuses to wear a mask (or wear it properly) or he/she refuses to follow social distancing protocols.

Things to Consider in Responding

• Kindly point out mask and social distancing requirements

• Ensure that all team members are educated on the new Face covering brand standard and be prepared to explain it.

  – Brand Standard 100.02.17, “In addition to all uniform requirements, effective August 10, 2020, all associates must wear a mask or face covering at all times when in indoor public areas (including the lobby, elevators, guestroom hallways, meeting and event spaces, restaurant, bar, and fitness center), guestrooms, and additionally as required by applicable law. Associates may be exempt from this requirement when consuming food or beverages, smoking in designated areas, or due to medical conditions. Masks or face coverings must be neutral in appearance and must not contain inappropriate wording or imagery that could be deemed offensive. Hotels must provide masks to associates free of charge where required by applicable law. Associates must also wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as gloves or other items based on his/her role and in adherence with all federal, state or local requirements and guidelines, and/or any more rigorous industry guidelines.”

• Understand any federal, state or local requirements applicable to your hotel and share this information with all team members during morning huddles.

• Respect any requests from employees to be exempted from the mask wearing requirement due to medical conditions but offer face shields to resolve the concern.

• Talk about the importance of mask wearing and social distancing in the morning huddles (which should be socially distanced and held outside, if possible). Educate team members on how COVID-19 can spread and the benefits of following these policies.
• Spend time in each morning huddle to address the latest developments in the pandemic and allow employees to voice concerns and questions.

• Do your research, when a concern is brought to your attention help the employee find the facts, stop misinformation.

• Provide masks to all employees where required by applicable law.

• Even where not required by law, be prepared to have individually wrapped face coverings/masks and/or face shields available for those team members that cannot afford to purchase themselves or forget for that day. Face shields must be disinfected after each use.

• Be prepared to point a team member to the nearest store to purchase one or provide a few links to where they can purchase online.

**Suggested Responses**

**Team Member:** “I understand this is an adjustment, however, you should think of it as part of the uniform.”

**Team Member:** “Customer service is now more than ever super important, even if it is a smile behind the mask.”

**Team Member:** If a team member shows up with a facial covering or mask that you deem inappropriate, “The facial covering/mask is now part of your uniform and it’s important that we make guests feel comfortable and maintain the utmost professionalism. The hotel’s uniform standard says that masks or face coverings must be neutral in appearance and must not contain inappropriate wording or imagery that could be deemed offensive.”

**Team Member:** “If you cannot provide your own facial covering/mask, here you go; I will always keep a few disposable masks to share with those that forget theirs.”

**Team Member:** “Wearing a mask is one way for you to help protect your family as well as other families. By everyone at work wearing a mask you are less likely to bring the virus home to your loved ones.”

**Team Member:** “When you feel you need a break from the mask, step outside and get some fresh air for a few minutes.”

**Team Member:** “I understand you have a medical condition that prevents you from wearing a standard facial covering/mask, have you considered a face shield?”

**Team Member:** “You are making guests feel uncomfortable, may you please step outside and get some fresh air and let’s talk afterwards.”
Scenario

5. Confrontations:

Confrontations among guests stoked by, e.g., wearing/not wearing a mask, failure to social distance, or racial tensions.

Things to Consider in Responding

• Share your plan with all team members so they are prepared.
• Respectfully ask all parties to adjust their tone or request that they step aside and discuss.
• Remind all parties that no one can police someone else’s actions. Note the interaction and commit to sharing it with security or a manager.
• Always attempt to de-escalate confrontational situations – do not engage with aggressive or belligerent behavior.
• Alert proper authorities, as needed.
• Hotels managed by WHR affiliates should also utilize the Wyndham reporting systems as necessary.
• If you suspect a crime is being committed or there is a risk of imminent physical harm – call the police.

Suggested Responses

Team Member: A guest confronts another guest in the lobby; an argument ensues regarding the hotel’s mask policy. Guest Service Representative, with confident body posture, eye contact, and a careful tone, “Hello, my name is NAME. I am here to make sure all of our guests have a great and safe experience here with us at HOTEL NAME. I think that at the end of the day, we all want the same thing here. I understand in these tricky times we are going to find ourselves at an impasse.
It is very normal to have contrary feelings. We are all doing our best in an adverse situation. *MR NAME*, I actually have some spare masks here at the desk. Would you mind masking up for me while you are in public spaces? We are working with policies recommended by the CDC to put our best foot forward, and that is their latest advice. Will you help us make *HOTEL NAME* as safe as possible?”

A room attendant sees two guests coming out of the elevator in a heated debate. The elevator was already occupied, and the woman decided to join an existing party in the elevator. *Room Attendant*, with confident body posture, eye contact, and a careful tone, “Hello. I know some of our new protocols may take some time to get used to, and I am truly sorry for any inconvenience that the “new normal” of the hotel experience might cause. During this time, we are asked to only allow one party in the elevator at a time.”

**REMEMBER:** Do not overthink it. Practice it, hardwire it, and make it automatic. Speak up. Kindly remind. Let go. Know that it is not personal and congratulate yourself for doing the right thing.

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**Scenario**

6. **Guests complaining because services or amenities are not available.**

“No one told me the pool would be closed...My room isn’t being cleaned the way I would expect...Breakfast is not what I expected (or doesn’t exist)”

**Things to Consider in Responding**

- When possible, alert guests in advance of check-in of all changes to the hotel’s amenities and services
- Don’t be afraid to explain things (what is closed and why).
- Offer an alternative without waiting for them to ask.
- Think about the guest and personalize the message based on their stay and possible needs.
- If your F&B offerings are limited, consider partnering with local restaurants that may be willing to provide special vouchers or discounts.
**Suggested Responses**

**Team Member:** “Your frustration is certainly understandable. The health and safety of our guests is very important to us and our local mandates require certain of our public spaces be closed for health and safety reasons.”

**Team Member:** “For the safety of our guests and team members, our default policy is to clean stayover rooms every 3 days to minimize contact. However, if you would like a full room cleaning, we are certainly happy to have your room cleaned today.”

**Team Member:** “We are using cleaning chemicals registered with the EPA and taking all steps to ensure proper cleaning and disinfecting of each guestroom.”

**Team Member:** “We apologize that we are unable to serve our regular complimentary breakfast at this time. Our local mandates only allow for individually wrapped or packaged items. I would be happy recommend a few breakfast restaurants, such as...”

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**Scenario**

7. **Quarantining Guests**

   Guests let you know they are coming to quarantine at your hotel or asking you to explain your state’s quarantine requirements.

**Things to Consider in Responding**

- Ensure all staff is educated on quarantining and whether your state has any quarantine requirement for travelers.
- Communicate with a manager to advise of any guests that are using the hotel to quarantine.
- Have resources available for team members to share with guests either at check-in or placed in the room prior to arrival (e.g., local doctors, restaurants that deliver, and pharmacies). Include phone number and address/directions.
• Consult with your manager regarding the policy’s
• Refer to Front Desk Count on Us checklist:
  • Can I quarantine here?
    – If a guests discovers they may have COVID-19 while here at the hotel, then we have a defined process to assist them during that time.
    – Consult with manager for detailed steps. We recommend reviewing the Pandemic Operations guide: Guest suspected of having or confirmed to have COVID-19
  • What are you doing to support social distancing throughout your hotel?
    – Social distancing signage is place in public areas and in vending/sundry areas.
    – All public space furniture is a minimum of six feet apart.
    – We encourage one-way guest flow with marked entrances and exits.
  • Are there any local or state ordnances/restrictions that I need to be aware of?
    – Consult with manager to identify local information related to COVID-19 protocol.
  • Are your area restaurants, shopping and attractions open for business?
    – Identify hours and business practices of local restaurants, shopping and attractions.
    – Provide the guest with local shopping and dining options.
    – Provide information on Door Dash, Grub Hub or other service that can deliver. (Wyndham Rewards members receive free delivery from DoorDash)
  • Where is the nearest 24 hour pharmacy and/or walk-in clinic?
    – Identify nearest pharmacy option and provide the guest with local pharmacy and clinic options.
  • Are there any COVID-19 testing sites nearby?
    – Identify nearest testing site and provide the guest with local health and COVID-19 related facilities.
• Create a list of hospitals, pharmacies, and restaurants with delivery to be provided to the guest at check in or placed in the room prior to arrival.
• Set a schedule for picking up trash and used linen without entering the guest room.
• Provide the guest with bags for used linen and terry.

Suggested Responses

Front Desk Employee: “Thank you for letting us know about your situation. I am sorry you have to quarantine. We are happy to provide you accommodations during this stressful time.”

Front Desk Employee: “During your stay with us we would appreciate your assistance in protecting our guests and employees by remaining in your room. We will provide you with bags for your used linen and will schedule a collection time with our housekeeping staff.”

Front Desk Employee: “For any needs during your stay we invite you call the front desk for assistance.”

Team Member: “In your room we will provide the phone numbers for the closest hospital, pharmacy and restaurants offering delivery service.”
Scenario

8. Refusing service to a guest

Things to Consider in Responding

• If a guest is adamant that he/she will not comply with the mask policy (and has NOT indicated a medical reason why he/she cannot wear a mask): offer to re-schedule their stay for a date far in the future when these policies might be relaxed or walk them to another hotel in your market.

• It is recommended to be aware of brands/hotels in your market that do not require face masks (if applicable)

• Always let them know what is in it for them, what will you do for them.

Suggested Responses

Guest: “You cannot require me to wear a mask and I am unwilling to stay in my room or accommodate your alternate requests.”

Hotels in a state, county or city that does not mandate the wearing of masks in indoor commercial spaces:

Team Member: “Thank you for sharing your concerns with us regarding our mask policy. It seems we have exhausted all attempts to find an acceptable alternative for you. I am happy to cancel your reservation(s) at no cost to you and help you find other accommodations”

Team Member: “We appreciate your perspective greatly, our responsibility is not just to you, but all our guests and hotel team members. We also have brand requirements we are required to follow. If you are unwilling to comply with our policy on wearing masks we are happy to cancel your reservation with no fee.”

Hotels in a state, county or city that does require the wearing of masks in indoor commercial spaces:

Team Member: “Thank you for expressing your concerns about wearing a mask. Our (county, city or state) has a mandatory mask mandate/ordinance in place that is also consistent with our hotel’s policy. We are responsible for complying with and enforcing this mandate within our business. If you are unwilling to comply with wearing a mask we are happy to cancel your reservation with no fee”.
It is important that all hotel staff become familiar with strategies for stepping up service to help handle sensitive conversations and to de-escalate confrontations, so do not make this a one-time conversation with your staff. Utilize resources like the ones below to continue to keep this top of mind and to help your staff to feel confident in handling difficult conversations.

- Ensure you and your teams have completed all mandatory, Count on Us training which includes helpful service behavior checklists. Trainings must be completed by Sept. 1, 2020.

- Watch the Stephen Barth video to learn more about how to handle anti-mask guests here.

- Consider logging/tracking customer service cases to ensure a follow-up takes place.

- How Do I Say That? Skills to Speak Up When It Matters Most here.

- Refer to existing Count on Me Service Culture materials.

- Complete the new AHLA COVID-19 cleaning and safety training course module, offering guidance to hotels for reducing tension and promoting a safe environment while maintaining the spirit of hospitality throughout all interactions. The course is available in English through Wyndham University and in Spanish here.
As a hotel operator, you are solely responsible for ensuring that all areas of your hotel, including the pool and kitchen, are secured and maintained in compliance with all applicable laws, codes and regulations, and that you display all signage required by such laws. You are also responsible for adhering to Wyndham’s health and safety brand standards, which can be reviewed in detail on the Brand Standards Portal. Please note, if you are an employee of a hotel managed by a subsidiary of WHR, your actions with regard to the substantive matter involved in this training should still be guided first and foremost by Wyndham’s Business Principles, policies, standard operating procedures and the trainings received directly from WHR.

The information provided herein should not be construed as legal advice or opinions on any specific facts or circumstances; you should consult with an attorney or other advisor regarding requirements specific to your hotel. Remember: executive orders governing the operation of hotels vary by state, county and municipality. Monitor the websites of your local government’s health department and executive offices for the most up to date information. For additional assistance and questions, contact your Wyndham operations representative.

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