

# The role of the front office



A security program is most effective when all employees participate in the hotel's security efforts. Front office staff play a particularly important role. Front desk agent, door attendants, bellpersons, and parking attendants have the opportunity to observe all persons entering or departing the premises. Suspicious activities or circumstances involving a guest or visitor should be reported to the hotel's security department or a designated staff member. Several procedures front desk agents should use to protect guests and property have already been mentioned.

For example, front desk agents should never give keys, room numbers, messages, or mail to anyone requesting them without first requiring appropriate identification. Similarly, the front desk agent should not announce an arriving guest's room number. Guest's may be further protected if the front office prohibits staff members from providing guest information to callers or visitors. Generally, front desk agent should not mention guest room numbers. People calling guest's at the hotel should be directly connected to the appropriate guestroom without being informed of the room number.

Conversely, someone asking for a specific room number over the telephone should never be connected until the caller identifies whom he or she is calling and the hotel employee verifies the identity of the person in the room requested. A person inquiring at the front desk about a guest may be asked to use the house phones so that they connect only to the hotel operator. The caller can then be properly screened to provide additional security. Front office staff may also inform guest's of personal precautions they may take.

For example, front desk agents may suggest that guests hide and secure any valuables left in their cars. Bellpersons accompanying the guest to a room generally provide instructions on the operation of in-room equipment. The bellpersons may also review any decals or notices in the room relating to guest security. This should always include emergency evacuation paths and procedures. The front office may provide the guests with flyers containing safety tips, such as the example shown in exhibit 6. 5.