

Spa & Wellness

The Running Late Standard

Five steps for a guest who is late for a treatment. Telling them about the shorter time before they undress costs far less than telling them on the couch.

Who
Spa receptionists, therapists and the spa supervisor

When
Any guest not checked in by their advised arrival time

You need
Spa diary, room and mobile numbers, the late-arrival rule in writing

Measured by Guest called within 5 minutes · New end time told before the guest changes · Lateness and reason logged on the booking

1 Call ahead

When a guest is not checked in five minutes after the advised arrival time, call the room, then the mobile. Don't ask why; give the time still available and, if the diary allows, a later slot.

"Mrs Haddad, it's Sofia from the spa. Your massage is at three. Shall we hold it, or move you to five?"

Common mistake Waiting until the treatment time to call. By then the choice has gone, and the guest walks in to bad news.

2 Check the diary

Before the guest arrives, see whether the therapist and room are free after the slot. If they are, give the full treatment and finish late. Shorten it only when the next guest would otherwise wait.

"Amira is free after you, so you'll still have the full sixty minutes."

Common mistake Shortening by reflex. The rule says the spa may end on time, the team reads it as must, and the next room sits empty.

3 Tell them first

Say the new end time at the desk, before the robe and locker, with the exact minutes left. Offer a choice: a shorter treatment now, or the full one later today or tomorrow if the diary allows.

"You'll have forty-five minutes, ending at four as planned. Or I can give you the full hour at six. Which suits you?"

Common mistake Leaving the therapist to break the news on the couch. The guest spends the whole massage counting minutes.

4 Keep it calm

Never rush the guest through changing or skip the health form; a hurried form is a risk. Walk them to the room at a normal pace. The therapist reshapes the sequence so the treatment keeps a proper ending.

"Take your time changing. Amira will shape the treatment so you still have a proper finish."

Common mistake Cutting the last ten minutes off the routine. A massage with no ending feels shorter than it actually was.

5 Charge and log

Charge as the written rule says and state the amount before the bill is signed. If the spa caused any of the delay, adjust it before the guest has to ask. Log the minutes late and why on the booking.

"Arrived 15:15 for 15:00. Given 45 min, charged per policy. Advise arriving 30 min early next time."

Common mistake Waiving the charge for one guest and not the next. A kind exception becomes a rule nobody can apply fairly.

Your Late Arrival Rule

The rule has to be the same at the desk, on the phone and in the confirmation. Write your spa's answers here, so nobody makes it up on the day.

Up to 10 minutes late

What we offer _____

What we charge _____

Who can decide otherwise _____

The words we say _____

10 to 20 minutes late

What we offer _____

What we charge _____

Who can decide otherwise _____

The words we say _____

Over 20 minutes late

What we offer _____

What we charge _____

Who can decide otherwise _____

The words we say _____

How to use this with your team

Fill it in with the spa manager at one briefing and read it aloud daily for a week. Check the booking confirmation uses the same words, then pin the card beside the spa diary. The supervisor checks the log on Fridays.

Part of the DolceVita Standards Library: free operating standards for every department of the hotel, at dolcevitahospitality.com/free-resources.