

GUEST RELATIONS · OPERATING STANDARD 112

The Presence Standard

WHO

Everyone a guest can see or hear, checked by their supervisor

WHEN

Every shift, face to face, on the phone and in writing, in every department

YOU NEED

A clean uniform in your size, polished shoes, name badge, notepad, the day's brief

TIME TO TRAIN

45 minutes, with a mirror check and three role-plays

What this standard achieves

Every person a guest meets, from the front office to the engineer in the corridor, looks ready, greets first, speaks plainly, listens so nothing has to be said twice, and never leaves the guest with a bare no. The guest meets one hotel in every department, and every other standard in the library builds on this one.

Measured by

01 Uniform, shoes, badge and grooming checked at every line-up

02 Eye contact with every guest within ten metres

03 Every guest within three metres greeted first, by you

04 Waiting guests acknowledged within ten seconds

05 Guest's name used at least once when it is known

06 No slang, codes or hotel jargon heard by a guest

07 No guest asked to repeat a request

08 Unknown answers brought back within five minutes, or a time given

09 Every no comes with at least one alternative

10 No private conversation, phone or food in guest view

11 Voice kept calm with an upset guest; supervisor called if abusive

12 Every conversation closed with thanks and, where known, the name

PHASE 1

Ready before the first guest

STEPS 1–5

- 01** Put on a clean, pressed uniform in your size: every button done, no stains or loose threads, sleeves and hems at the right length. Keep a spare shirt or top at work for the day something spills.
- 02** Wear the shoes your department sets out: closed, polished and quiet on hard floors, with plain dark socks or neutral tights. Trainers or sandals only where the hotel issues them, as at the gym or on the beach.
- 03** Pin your name badge on the left, at chest height and straight, with your first name readable from two metres. If the badge shows the languages you speak, keep them current. A badge on a pocket or under a cardigan tells the guest nothing.
- 04** Check your grooming: hair clean and off the face, nails short and clean, jewellery and make-up within the hotel's policy, fragrance light or none, breath fresh. Wash and dry your hands before the shift and after every break.
- 05** At the line-up, learn the day: arrivals and VIPs by name, groups and events, what is open and until when, what is closed, the weather. The supervisor looks at each person, head to shoes, and sends back anyone not ready.

PHASE 2

Posture and first contact

STEPS 6-12

06 Stand ready where guests can see you: upright, weight on both feet, hands at your sides or loosely in front. No leaning on desks or walls, no folded arms, no hands in pockets, no sitting in guest view unless your post is a seated one.

07 Leave your personal phone, food and chewing gum in the locker. In guest view you do not check messages, eat, drink or chew, even when the area looks empty.

08 Smile and meet the eyes of every guest within ten metres, even while you work. Within three metres, stop what you are doing and greet them first, with the time of day. The smile starts when you see the guest, not when they reach you.

"Good afternoon. May I help you find something?"

09 Every line in quotes, here and in every standard of the library, is an example. Say it in your own words and your own voice, so it sounds like you and never like a script read aloud.

10 If you work out of sight most of the day (maintenance, security, housekeeping, drivers), stop and step aside when a guest passes, greet them, and let them go first through doors and into the lift. Keep tools, ladders and trolleys out of their way.

11 Follow the guest's lead on a handshake, touch and distance. Offer your hand only if the guest offers theirs; some guests do not shake hands with someone of the other sex, and the choice is theirs. Keep about an arm's length.

12 Notice what the guest will need before they ask: an umbrella when it rains, a door held for full hands, water on a hot day, directions for someone reading the signs. Offer it once, then let the guest decide.

"It's started to rain. May I give you an umbrella for the walk?"

PHASE 3

Speak clearly

STEPS 13–18

- 13 Speak in full sentences and plain words. No slang, no hotel codes or jargon ("OOO", "the PMS", "a walk-in"), no phrases left half-finished. Say "of course" or "with pleasure" where you might say "no problem".

"Of course. I'll have it sent to your room within ten minutes."

- 14 Match your pace and volume to the guest: slower and simpler for someone speaking a second language, quieter in the spa and late at night. Speak to a child at their eye level and in their words.

- 15 Speak the guest's language if you can hold a real conversation in it. If you cannot, say so at once in a language you share and bring a colleague who can. Never guess at an answer to a question you half understood.

"My German isn't good enough for this, I'm afraid. One moment, please: my colleague Lukas speaks it."

- 16 Use the guest's name once you know it: title and surname, at the greeting, at the farewell and once in between where it fits. First name only if the guest asks. Never call a name across a lobby, a restaurant or a pool.

"Good morning, Mr Okafor. Did you sleep well?"

- 17 On the phone, answer within three rings with the department and your first name, and smile as you speak: the guest hears it. Put a caller on hold only after asking, and come back within 30 seconds.

"Good evening, front office, Karim speaking. How may I help you?"

- 18 Write as you speak: full sentences, plain words, no abbreviations or codes, the guest's title and name spelled exactly as the profile gives them. Read every message once before it leaves.

- 19 When a guest speaks, stop what you are doing, face them and let them finish. Do not interrupt, finish their sentence for them, or start typing before they have told you what they need.

- 20 Write the request down as you hear it: name, room, what and when. Repeat the key details back in one sentence, so the guest knows you have it and never has to say it twice.

"So that's a table for four tomorrow at 20:00, by the window. I'll confirm it within ten minutes."

- 21 If something is unclear, ask one precise question instead of guessing, and write the answer down. Ask each question once: a second colleague never asks it again.

"Would you like it brought to your room, or to the pool?"

- 22 If the guest is on the phone, with children or distracted, wait a step back without hovering, and confirm the request when they turn to you. Never sigh, tap the desk or walk away mid-request.

- 23 Know the hotel beyond your department: the hours of every restaurant, bar, the spa, gym and pool; wifi; check-out time; transfer and parking prices; where lifts, toilets and exits are. Learn one new answer each shift.

- 24 If you do not know, never say "I don't know" or "that's not my department". Find out yourself and come back within five minutes, or give a time if it takes longer. Come back at that time, even if the answer has not changed.

"Let me find out for you now. I'll be back with the answer in five minutes."

- 25 Own what you hear: the request is yours until you have handed it, in person or by phone, to the colleague who will do it, with the guest's name and the time promised, and you have checked it was done.

- 26 Never refuse a request without an alternative. Say first what you can do, then what you cannot, and offer at least one other way to give the guest what they wanted.

"The terrace is full at eight, but I can hold a window table inside, or the terrace at 21:30."

- 27 Before you say no, try: call the department, ask your supervisor, check another outlet, another day or another time. A no is said only after you have tried, and you tell the guest what you tried.

- 28 When a rule or the law decides (an age limit, a dress code, a pool closed at night), give the reason in one sentence, without blaming the guest, a colleague or "the management", and offer what you can.

"The pool closes at 20:00 because there's no lifeguard after that. I can have towels and water ready for you at 7:00."

PHASE 6

When it gets difficult

STEPS 29–34

- 29 With an upset guest, keep your voice lower and slower than theirs, your face calm and your hands still. Let them finish, then say what you understood before anything else.

"I understand, Ms Haddad. You waited forty minutes, and nobody told you why."

- 30 If other guests can hear, offer a quieter place: a seat away from the desk, a corner of the lounge, an office. Stay with the guest; never pass them to someone else mid-sentence.

"Would you like to sit down over here, where we can talk properly?"

- 31 Never argue, defend yourself or blame a colleague, another department or the system. Apologise once, sincerely, then say what you will do and by when. The Recovery Standard holds the full complaint procedure.

- 32 If a guest shouts, insults or threatens, stay polite and call your supervisor at once; call security if anyone is at risk. Never answer in the same tone, never touch the guest, and never walk away without a word.

- 33 When several guests are waiting, acknowledge each one within ten seconds with eye contact and a word, even while you serve someone else. Then serve them in the order they came.

"Good afternoon. I'll be with you in just a moment."

- 34 In an emergency (an alarm, an injury, a power cut), speak slowly and clearly, give one instruction at a time, and stay with the guests until your supervisor or the emergency team takes over.

"Please follow me to the exit, calmly. Leave your bags where they are."

PHASE 7

Colleagues in front of guests

STEPS 35–39

- 35 When a guest comes within three metres, end any conversation with a colleague at once and turn to the guest. No private talk in guest view: no plans for the evening, no rotas, no complaints about the shift.
- 36 Speak to a colleague in front of a guest in a low voice and in few words, in a language the guest understands where you can. Never laugh or comment between you in a language the guest cannot follow.
- 37 Never discuss a guest, a complaint or a colleague in a public area or a lift, and never say a room number aloud where others can hear. Keep radio earpieces in, the volume low, and names off the radio unless needed.
- 38 Never correct, criticise or contradict a colleague in front of a guest. Help quietly where the guest cannot see; any feedback waits until the guest has gone and is given in private.
- 39 When you hand a guest to a colleague, introduce the guest by name and say what they need, in front of them, so the guest does not repeat it and is not asked the same question twice.

"Mr Novak, this is Elena from the spa. Elena, Mr Novak would like a massage this afternoon, around 16:00."

PHASE 8

A sincere farewell

STEPS 40–42

- 40 Before the guest leaves you, ask once whether there is anything else, and give them a moment to think before you close.

"Is there anything else I can do for you, Mrs Tanaka?"

- 41 Thank the guest by name and close with something that fits them, not a stock phrase: their dinner, their flight, the walk they are about to take. A guest leaving with luggage hears an invitation to come back.

"Thank you, Mr Al-Harbi. Enjoy the old town: the light is lovely at this hour."

- 42 Let the guest leave first: hold the door, wait until the lift doors close, let them hang up first on the phone. Keep your attention on them until they have gone, then turn back to your work.

What to record

Appearance

- ☐ Uniform clean, pressed, in the right size
- ☐ Shoes polished, as the department sets
- ☐ Name badge on the left, straight, readable
- ☐ Hair, nails, jewellery within policy
- ☐ Hands clean, fragrance light or none

Body language

- ☐ Upright, not leaning, hands out of pockets
- ☐ Eye contact within ten metres
- ☐ Greets first within three metres
- ☐ Gives way to guests at doors and lifts

Speech

- ☐ Full sentences, no slang or jargon
- ☐ Pace and volume suited to the guest
- ☐ Name used: title and surname
- ☐ Phone answered within three rings

Listening and knowledge

- ☐ Guest allowed to finish, not interrupted
- ☐ Request written down and repeated back
- ☐ Questions on other outlets answered
- ☐ Unknown answer back within five minutes

Under pressure

- ☐ An alternative offered with every no
- ☐ Voice calm and lower than the guest's
- ☐ Waiting guests acknowledged in ten seconds
- ☐ Supervisor called if a guest is abusive

Colleagues and farewell

- ☐ No private talk or phone in guest view
- ☐ No guest details said in public areas
- ☐ Handover by name; guest never repeats
- ☐ Thanks by name; the guest leaves first

When the situation changes

You don't speak the guest's language

Say so at once in a language you share, and bring a colleague who speaks it or the hotel's interpreter line. Write times, prices and names down so nothing depends on an accent.

The guest asks to be called by first name

Use the first name from then on, and note the preference in the guest profile so every department does the same. Your manner stays as it was.

The guest prefers not to be named

Use "sir" or "madam" in public and never say the room number aloud. Tell the front office manager, so the request reaches every department the same day.

You are on a ladder or carrying a load

Make it safe first, then make eye contact and greet. If you cannot stop, say so and say who will help: "I'll be with you as soon as this is secure." Never leave a guest unanswered.

Your uniform is stained mid-shift

Change into the spare before you go back into guest view. Tell your supervisor, so someone covers your post for those minutes.

A guest complains about a colleague

Listen, thank the guest, and neither agree nor defend the colleague in detail. Pass it to your supervisor the same shift; the colleague hears it in private.

A guest asks your view on a sensitive topic

Stay polite and give no opinion on politics, religion or other guests. Bring the conversation back to the guest's stay or the place they are visiting.

The mistake was yours

Say so plainly, apologise once, and say what you are doing about it and by when. Do not explain who else was involved.

Common mistakes

MISTAKE

Finishing a conversation with a colleague while a guest waits. The guest feels like an interruption before a word is said.

MISTAKE

Saying "I don't know" or "that's not my department". The guest learns that nobody at the hotel will take the request.

MISTAKE

Asking the guest to repeat a request a colleague already took. The guest has now explained it twice and wonders who else did not listen.

MISTAKE

Using the guest's name in every sentence. It sounds scripted, and a name said loudly in a busy lobby is no longer private.

MISTAKE

Saying no and stopping there. The guest goes elsewhere for what one phone call to another department could have arranged.

MISTAKE

Meeting a raised voice with a raised voice, or with folded arms and silence. From then on the complaint is about you.

Check your team

After training (45 minutes, with a mirror check and three role-plays), each person answers these without the sheet.

- 01 At what distance do you make eye contact with a guest, and at what distance do you greet first?
- 02 Which five points of your appearance do you check before the first guest?
- 03 Name three hotel words a guest should never hear, and what you say instead.
- 04 How do you use a guest's name, and when do you keep it to yourself?
- 05 A guest asks something you don't know. What do you say, and when do you come back?
- 06 What must come with every no?
- 07 Name three things colleagues never do in front of a guest.
- 08 How do you speak to a guest who is shouting at you?

Say This, Not That

Seven phrases heard in hotels every day, the words to use instead, and why. Every line is an example: say it in your own words.

Instead of	Say	Why
"No problem."	"Of course." or "With pleasure."	There was no problem to begin with.
"I don't know."	"Let me find out for you now."	The guest hears a promise, not a gap.
"That's not my department."	"I'll arrange that for you."	A request belongs to whoever hears it.
"We can't do that."	"What I can do is..."	The alternative comes first.
"Hi guys!"	"Good evening. Welcome back."	A greeting that suits every guest.
"Room 412, right?" (aloud)	"May I have your name, please?"	Room numbers stay private.
"Calm down."	"I understand. Let's put this right."	Nobody calms down when told to.

How to use this with your team

Read one row at each line-up, Monday to Sunday, and ask one person to say it their own way. Supervisors listen for the left column during the week and repeat that row at the next briefing.

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