

Front Office

The Bill Query Standard

Five steps for the moment a guest questions a charge. Most queried lines turn out to be posting errors, so the first job is to check the record, not explain it.

Who	When	You need
Front desk agents and night auditors, with the duty manager	Any time a guest questions a charge, during the stay or at checkout	The folio, the outlet's signed vouchers, your own adjustment limit

Measured by Answered, or a time given, within 2 minutes · Voucher checked before any reply · Every adjustment logged with a reason

1 Step aside

Take the conversation away from the queue, to the end of the desk or a seat in the lobby. Turn the folio so the guest can read it, and ask which line they are asking about.

"Let's look at it together, Mr Okafor. Which line is it?"

Common mistake Discussing the bill across a full desk. Every guest in the queue hears an argument about money.

2 Check the source

Pull the original voucher or the outlet record before saying anything about the charge: time, signature, room number, items. If the outlet is closed, call its manager or the night auditor.

"Give me two minutes to find the original from the restaurant, and I'll show you exactly what was charged."

Common mistake Defending the charge from the screen. The system shows what was posted, not what happened.

3 Show the record

Put the voucher in front of the guest. If the signature or the room number is not theirs, remove the charge at once. If it is theirs, go through the items line by line, once, calmly.

"This is Tuesday's lunch at 13:20, signed to your room. Would you like me to go through the items?"

Common mistake Repeating the same explanation more firmly. After one clear look, the next move is a decision, not more talk.

4 Decide within limits

Know your adjustment limit before the shift starts. Within it, decide on the spot; above it, the duty manager comes to the desk within five minutes. Never promise to look into it and email later.

"That's within what I can approve, Ms Rossi. I've removed it, and here is your corrected bill."

Common mistake "I need to check with my manager," then fifteen minutes out of sight. The guest misses the car.

5 Fix the cause

Log every adjustment with the amount, the outlet and the reason. If the same outlet posts two wrong charges in a week, send the log to its manager and to the financial controller that day.

"€42 removed, room 412, pool bar: wrong room number on the voucher. Second this week. Sent to F&B."

Common mistake Correcting the bill and moving on. The same voucher error lands on another guest's bill on Saturday.

Six Charges Guests Query Most

Where disputed lines usually come from, and what to check before saying a word. Most turn out to be posting errors.

The charge	Check first	What usually happened
Minibar	Housekeeping's count sheet	Item moved or counted twice
Restaurant or bar	The signed voucher	Wrong room number on the voucher
Spa treatment	Booking and cancellation time	Late cancellation fee never explained
Telephone or wifi	The rate and its package	Charged though included in the rate
Card pre-authorisation	The card terminal history	A hold on the card, not a charge
Room rate	The booking confirmation	Rate code changed when the booking was entered

How to use this with your team

Take one row per briefing for six days. Ask the agent on shift where that record is kept and time how long it takes to find; anything over two minutes is a filing problem to fix this week.

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