

Front Office

The Key Standard

Five steps for issuing and replacing room keys. A spare key handed over without a check opens a guest's room to whoever asked for it politely.

Who	When	You need
Front desk and night agents, checked by the duty manager	Every key issued after check-in, at the desk or by phone	Key encoder, the guest profile with ID on file, the key log
Measured by ID or two booking details checked every time · Room number never said aloud · Lost keys cancelled within 1 minute		

1 Ask, then check

For any key not issued at check-in, ask for the name and check identity: photo ID against the profile, or two booking details only the guest would know. Do it even when you think you recognise them.

"Of course. May I see an ID, or could you confirm your departure date and the name on the booking?"

Common mistake Skipping the check for a confident guest in a bathrobe. Confidence is exactly what someone without a key would use.

2 Withhold the number

If someone asks for a key by room number, ask for the name first and check it. Never say a room number aloud or confirm one to a caller; write it inside the key folder.

"Could I have the name the room is booked under, please?"

Common mistake "Room 412? Here you are." Anyone who overheard that number in the lift can now open the door.

3 Second names

Give a key to a second person only if they are named on the booking or the registered guest authorises it in person or from the room phone. Note the name, the time and who authorised it.

"Second key for Mr Haddad, authorised by Mrs Laurent from the room phone, 21:10. ID seen."

Common mistake Handing a key to a "husband" who isn't on the booking. The guest's privacy depended on that one question.

4 Cancel the lost

When a key is reported lost, cancel every key for the room on the encoder within one minute, then cut new ones. If it was lost outside the hotel, tell security on duty and note the time.

"I've cancelled the old keys, so the lost one no longer opens your room. Here are two new ones."

Common mistake Cutting a new key without cancelling the old one. The lost key still opens the door tonight.

5 Log every key

Write every key issued after check-in in the key log: room, name, ID seen, reason, time and your initials. The duty manager reads the log at the end of each night and asks about anything unusual.

"412, Mrs Laurent, passport seen, key lost at the pool, 2 new keys, old ones cancelled, 15:40, MR."

Common mistake Logging only lost keys. The pattern that matters is three replacement keys to one room in one evening.

Our Key Rules

Who may receive a key in your hotel, and on what proof. Fill it in once with the duty managers, so the night agent never has to decide alone.

A guest at the desk

Proof we accept _____

Who may approve _____

What we say _____

What we write in the log ____

A caller asking for a key

Proof we accept _____

Who may approve _____

What we say _____

What we write in the log ____

A second guest or visitor

Proof we accept _____

Who may approve _____

What we say _____

What we write in the log ____

How to use this with your team

Agree the rules with security and the front office manager, then brief one block a day. On the fourth day, the duty manager asks each agent for a key without ID and listens to the answer.

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