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Greetings!

Precautionary measures for accommodations in containing the spread of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic had had devastating effects on the tourism and hospitality industry, due to travel restrictions implemented by governments to contain the spread of the virus. As the economies re-emerge from the "lockdowns", building consumer confidence is one of the most crucial hurdles for any business including in the tourism industry. Travelers in the Covid era want to feel safe when they travel to view enchanting wildlife in our destinations, not to mention when they stay in accommodations such as camps and lodges.

Therefore this week we will highlight some of the precautionary measures that hotel managers and staff can implement to ensure guest and employee health and safety. This is due to the fact that the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads more easily than the virus that causes seasonal influenza, and this makes the disease more deadly. These measures include:

Record Keeping

You should maintain records that will help you trace who has been in contact with any infected individuals that have been to your property. Review and implement a record keeping process to maintain records of guest and staff movement. This is especially important if someone in your hotel has been confirmed to have the virus.

Use disinfectants for cleaning

Switch to and use disinfectant products that have been pre-approved for use against emerging viral pathogens. Disinfectants should be applied during routine cleaning of guestrooms, public spaces and meeting rooms.

Continuous disinfecting of public spaces

Public spaces and the front desk need to be cleaned frequently. If possible, provide disposable disinfectant wipes to front-of-house staff to disinfect surfaces between guests. High touch areas in public spaces like tables in the lobby area. Pens at the front desk and room keys and key cards should also be cleaned with disinfectant.

Staff trainings and signage use

Train hotel staff and post signage to remind guests and workers to wash hands with soap and warm water frequently, for at least 20 seconds each time. If possible, provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol in all guest contact areas and to all staff. In addition, staff should be advised not to touch their faces and to practice "social distancing" by standing at least three feet away from guests and other workers.

Staff sensitization on COVID – 19

Educate staff on the most common signs and symptoms of coronavirus infection, which are fever, dry cough, and shortness of breath. Symptoms typically occur 1-14 days after exposure, though a proportion of people who are infected don't have symptoms.

Training on use of disinfectants among the staff

Train housekeeping staff to use the disinfectants safely and correctly. Staff should wear gloves when cleaning. Many of these cleaning products need to remain on hard surfaces for several minutes in order to work. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper use to get the most virus killing protection. Schedule and perform routine cleaning and disinfection of all contact surfaces in public areas guestrooms, television remote controls, toilet flush handles, door handles, water faucet handles, and flooring.

Use disinfectants for laundry activities

Linens may become contaminated with the virus, so it is also important to add disinfectant when washing laundry. Bed scarfs and bed spreads should be washed more frequently.

Constant communication with county health department

Consult with the local and county health departments to determine appropriate actions if a guest or worker presents symptoms of COVID-19 disease, as well as how to respond if asked to quarantine guests. Public health officials have the legal authority to implement control measures to prevent the spread of communicable disease, such as isolation and quarantine, travel restrictions, and medical treatment.

These are just some of the measures you can implement in your operations. We also urge you to refer to the health and safety protocols issued by the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, as you reopen your business. The tourism industry has demonstrated resilience over the years, and we are optimistic that we will bounce back from this pandemic!