

National Safety Announcement Tough Questions

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- **According to United Here, a majority of housekeepers have experienced harassment. How does the hotel industry respond to that? Do hotels have a sexual harassment problem? What does your data show? Why don't you have more data on that?**

Sexual harassment is a nationwide problem. Our industry is proactively addressing it. We care deeply about the safety and security of our employees, as well as our guests.

It's frustrating to me that we don't have reliable data and that's because of a few things. First, we know the reporting is different with each company, with different reporting structures, different categories and we also know there is underreporting around this issue. So it is frustrating. But what we do know is that even one incident is something we need to act on. That's what today's bold announcement does: we know our employees who already have these devices say they feel safer.

- **It seems like the hotels don't care about worker safety.**

That's not true. The hotel industry is highly committed to be part of the solution. Protecting our employees—as well the millions of guests who stay in American hotel rooms each day—is critically important to our industry. Hotels have been investing in employee and guest safety for decades. We work with safety experts to continuously update protocols and procedures that keep both employees and guests safe.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but we are all committed to protecting our workers and our guests, and we are proud of the efforts we have made.

- **Why is the hotel industry so far behind on this issue?**

Actually, the safety and security of our employees and guests have always been paramount for the hotel industry. The hotel industry develops and continually reviews policies, procedures and technologies that promote a safe environment. Indeed, when it comes to the issue of sexual harassment we are one of the first – and perhaps only industry – to address this proactively.

Last year, AHLA created a task force to examine current procedures and recommend industry practices, including identifying and further developing emerging technology solutions that enable employees to call quickly for help in case of emergency. In July, our Hotel Safety Summit brought together a cross-section of industry leaders and elected officials to advance these conversations.

No industry is immune to having to deal with sexual harassment issues, but we will continue to work, day in and day out, so America's hotels are secure places for everyone.

- **Don't you want your workers to feel safe?**

Absolutely. We're proud of the hotel industry's efforts to protect employees and guests, but we also recognize that there is more to do. For anyone who has traveled, you know that every hotel is different. The end goal is always the same – to keep our guests and employees safe – but the approach may be different. There is no one-size-fits-all solution.

- **What advice would you give to a woman who works as a housekeeper and is concerned about her safety on the job?**

I would want her to know – and hope that she already knows – that we care deeply about her as a person, and that her safety and security is a priority for us. Her employer wants not only to protect her but also to do all it can to help her feel safe on the job. I would also want her to know that we are always trying to get better. I hope she feels comfortable talking to us about what's working, and what isn't. Safety is a never-ending challenge, and we need to continuously evaluate what we're doing and update that accordingly and her input is a very valuable contribution to that continuing effort.

- **Why don't you just tell guests to behave/keep their pants on? Isn't this just a guest problem?**

Of course, we believe guests (and workers) should be held to a high standard of conduct. We expect workers and guests to be treated with respect. Unfortunately, people do not always act the way they are supposed to act, and that's what today's announcement is about – protecting workers from that unwelcome behavior. But we all share a role in creating a safe environment in hotels and that includes guests too.

- **Are you mandating that all hotel provide panic buttons?**

No, the major hotel brands are proactively committing to provide ESDs. AHLA is here today as a voice of the hotel industry, and the platform through which these hoteliers have come together and advance safety and security for our employees and guests. Hotels take every complaint very seriously and on a case-by-case basis. If a property decides to ban a guest from one of their properties based on complaints, we support its decisions.

- **Why not just mandate devices for everyone?**

As we have said before, very few hotels are alike and there is wide range of differences between a 70-floor downtown hotel, a 10,000-acre resort and a roadside inn, so we cannot have a one-size-fits-all approach. Each company will need to make a determination based on structures of their hotel and their employees who serve in those hotels. Our hope is that over time, every hotel in our membership will adopt some part of, or all of, the 5-Star Promise. Our members recognize the need to act and some will move faster than others.

- **Are you anticipating false alarms? Devices going off by accident?**

With all new procedures that get put into place there is always a learning curve. But we are erring on the side of safety and have confidence in our employees and programs.

- **What is the line where customers should be banned from properties for harassment? Should there be a blacklist?**

Hotels take every complaint very seriously and on a case-by-case basis. If a property decides to ban a guest from one of their properties based on complaints, we support its decisions.

- **How much does a panic button cost?**

They vary in cost, as there is a wide range of technologies being explored, ranging from a button that emits a loud noise, to hard-wired and GPS focused tools that provide locations of the hotel worker. So there's not really a one-size-fits-all answer for cost.

- **These devices aren't expensive. Why don't you just get them for everyone? What's the problem?**

As I mentioned, there's a wide range of tools being looked at, and we are ensuring the best and most effective fit for each property. So the costs will vary. But we are working with various vendors so that we can do this as cost-effective as possible.

- **How much money has been invested in this initiative?**

While we have not quantified a comprehensive industry number, it's safe to say it is in the tens of millions of dollars.

- **Isn't it true that some hotels can't afford to do this / are too cheap to spend this money?**

Whether you're a large property or small bed & breakfast, all hotels share a commitment to the safety and security of their employees and guests. And hotels make significant investments in this area. Exactly how that looks like will vary from hotel to hotel.

Employee safety devices are not a substitute for protocols, procedures and training related to safety and security. What they CAN do is provide an added layer of security.

When hotels implement a new safety technology, they must also consider the policies and procedures that accompany it. This includes training employees on how to use the device, determining what happens when a device is deployed and the proper response, and training the security team to implement the system. We've learned from hotels that have already implemented these technologies that employees need continuous education and training to understand how the technology works, how it's being used, and how it benefits them. Simply handing out employee safety devices to everyone is not enough – we must approach safety and security more holistically.

- **Do you think it's right that employees are buying their own safety devices because their employers won't provide them?**

I haven't heard that. But I do know that many people, regardless of where they work or what they do, are concerned about their personal safety at work. What I also know is that in the hotel industry, employees for good reason feel safe at work when the property has the right protocols, procedures and technologies in place, the employee understands what to do if there's a problem, and the response system works properly.

- **Why is the timeline so far down the road? 2020 is a long time from now -- Why is this taking so long to implement?**

Each AHLA member company commit to providing employee safety devices to U.S. hotel companies by 2020. ESDs are already deployed or in the process of being deployed in hotels in several markets, including New York, DC, Chicago and Seattle. And, many hotel companies were already in the process of proactively providing safety devices.

The hotel industry is segmented and diverse. We have large 70-floor urban hotels, mixed-use properties, 10,000-acre resorts, small rural roadside inns, and everything in between. There are structural differences in building design and layout, construction materials and Wi-Fi network capabilities. Every hotel property is different. There is no plug-and-play system on the market to meet the industry's security and safety needs.

Safety and security require more than simply handing everyone an employee safety device. You need to physically install and test the system, and you need to consider the policies and procedures that accompany it. This includes training employees on how to use the device, determining what happens when a device is deployed and the proper response, and training the security team to implement the system. Employees need continuous education and training to understand how the technology works, how it's being used and how it benefits them.

The hotel industry is working aggressively and proactively to advance employee and guest safety. We want to make sure we get the right system in place for each property, and that if a device is activated, it works properly.

- **The Seattle ordinance seems like it makes the workplace safer. Why would you oppose it?**

The hotel industry takes any allegation of sexual harassment or misconduct extremely seriously. And we are not opposed to providing workers with safety devices. AHLA opposed the Seattle ordinance for several reasons. As we stated in court, we believe that the law violates the due process rights of our guests and places hotel employees in the role of law enforcement, without proper training. While the Seattle initiative was passed under the guise of employee safety, it included several regulations that had nothing to do with safety. But to be clear, our challenges were not about safety devices. In our view, Seattle labor leaders focused on advancing their own agenda at the expense of rank-and-file employees, and the city missed an opportunity to meaningfully improve worker safety.

- **The hotel industry has said panic buttons don't work / aren't effective. If that's the case, then why are you getting them?**

The hotel industry is not opposed to employee safety devices. We want everyone who steps foot inside a hotel to be safe and feel safe. Our challenge is that we are a dynamic industry, where every hotel looks a little bit different, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

Every hotel has policies, procedures and precautions to keep employees safe. It's important to remember that an employee safety device is the last line of defense. We don't ever want to get to a point that someone needs to press the button. We want to prevent the problem in the first place, and that means having the right policies, procedures and precautions in place. But, if you ever do have to press the button, you want it to work. That means going beyond simply handing out employee safety devices. It requires ongoing training for employees on how to use the devices, determining what the response should look like, and training the security team to respond when a device is activated. And what works for one property may not make sense for the next one. No

matter what technologies are being used, hotels are focused on a holistic approach to safety.

- **What is your position on mandatory arbitration clauses as it relates to allegations of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace? If an employee says they are a victim of sexual harassment/assault, will you force them into mandatory arbitration?**

Different brands have different agreements with workers which govern how complaints are handled, and you are seeing these changing all the time. It is governed on a company by company, or even an individual property by individual property basis.

- **Most hotels are franchises. If this is only being implemented at corporate-owned and managed properties, does that mean that the vast majority of hotels won't give employees panic buttons?**

What is really happening today is a first phase. Safety and security are an ongoing effort and continuing to work with the franchisees is an important part of moving this forward. As you see from these individual commitments announced today, this is currently being addressed with the franchise community and we are providing related standards and advice to those franchisees, with many having already deployed these devices as well.

- **If you are really all about the workers, why aren't you partnering with the unions on this? Why aren't there any workers here?**

This is an industry-wide initiative, and we look forward to their input and working with them in the coming weeks and months as we both share a strong commitment and responsibility to keeping our employees safe. This announcement was made with direct input of the workers and would think that anyone who believes in worker safety would appreciate our commitment to this cause.

Every industry should be looking at themselves right now and asking what more can we do to make our employees feel safe. As a people-centric culture and building on our legacy to continuously adapt to changing needs and new cultural dynamics, we are taking a significant proactive effort to reach far beyond what the union can do and go beyond their reach into the thousands upon thousands of hotels around the country.

Indeed, we look forward to working with the union on this in the coming weeks and months as we both share a strong commitment --and responsibility-- to keeping our employees safe and we can't imagine our union doing anything but applauding the industry's unprecedented effort.

- **What is prompting this? Why now?**

For us, we see it as the evolution of a long-standing priority to our employees and keeping them safe. The dynamics have changed, cultural expectations have changed, and technology has changed. So we are aiming to be proactive. We are proud of our record and our ongoing efforts to enhance worker safety. As we have said before, it is a top priority. But that said, every industry should be looking at themselves and asking what more we can do. That is what we are doing.

- **As we are two blocks from the Trump hotel. Will they be providing safety devices?**

To the best of my knowledge, they have not formally signed on yet. But today is our kickoff announcement and companies have been signing on as recently as this week. What I can tell you is we hope this will become the standard across the board and I hope every member company will adopt some of – or all of – the five pillars in our 5-Star Promise. We have had remarkable momentum and commitments and pledges to be a part of this initiative and we expect the sign ups to continue.

- **What hotels are not participating?**

Today is our kickoff announcement and companies have been signing on as recently as this week. What I can tell you is we hope this will become the standard across the board and I hope every member company will adopt some of – or all of – the five pillars in our 5-Star Promise. We have had remarkable momentum and commitments and pledges to be a part of this initiative and we expect the sign ups to continue.

This is a first step and we have had remarkable momentum and commitments and pledges to be a part of this initiative keep have been received as recently as just a few days ago.

- **There have been leaked documents where the industry has referred to these devices as a “fig leaf” for the unions?**

There are a number of reasons that propelled us to today’s bold comprehensive effort. This is an evolution of a long-standing priority to our employees and keeping them safe. Those documents are two years old. Since then, the dynamics have changed; cultural expectations have changed and technology has changed.

What we want to do is be proactive in our efforts and reach as many employees as we can. A peace meal approach, while well-intentioned is simply not an effective or

efficient way to reach the majority of our employees. The five-star promise allows us to give our employees peace of mind. We have an obligation to do so.

This effort has been part of the evolution of a long-standing priority to our employees and keeping them safe. We believe the 5-Star Promise allows us to give our employees some peace of mind. We have an obligation to do that.

- **Is this just reacting to the ordinances in Long Beach?**

This has been part of the evolution of a long-standing priority to our employees and keeping them safe. The dynamics have changed, cultural expectations have changed, and technology has changed. But what we want to do is to be proactive. We see that an ad hoc approach might be well intended, it is simply not an effective or efficient way to reach the majority of our employees. We believe this initiative will give a peace of mind to those employees.

- **We are approaching the anniversary of the shooting in Las Vegas. Has that had an impact on your safety measures?**

Of course we are constantly learning and updating procedures. Our industry came together in the immediate aftermath of that tragic event to assess and update policies and procedures, strengthening work with law enforcement and continuing to enhance our safety measures.