CHOICE HOTELS OWNERS COUNCIL

From the Desk of Dave Peterson, Technology Chair

How to Protect Your Hotel's Data

One recommended way to cybersecure your hotel's and patron's data is to ensure that you are PCI Compliant.

"Ultimately, the responsibility for a breach falls back on the individual hotel and not the franchise, so it is important that each entity take responsibility," says Mark Cline, Vice President of Sales, Netsurion.

PCI Compliance starts with the three-step process below:

1. **Assess your PCI Compliance status and requirements**
2. **Complete questionnaire based on security framework and credit card data risk**
3. **Submission of an official report to the bank and credit card companies**

Focusing on these five areas will help keep customer and credit card data secure:

1. **Secure your passwords:** According to Verizon, more than 80% of data breaches involved stolen or weak passwords. Every individual dealing with customer data should have the ability to set their password and be prompted to change at least every quarter. Passwords should be required to have a combination of special characters, upper and lower-case letters, and numbers.
2. **Conduct regular training and assign a dedicated PCI Compliance officer:** Holding training sessions keeps security at top of mind for employees. Training is

available on the PCI Security Standards Council website depending on your hotel's needs. In addition to training, it can be helpful to assign one staff member to take charge of all tasks related to PCI Compliance so important deadlines don't slip through the cracks.

3. **Ensure your technology and vendors are compliant:** Not every P2PE solution is PCI DSS validated. Any third party that is handling your customer's information including reservation systems, POS systems, and property management systems, should be compliant. Be sure to verify your solutions with the PCI Security Standards Council

4. **Eliminate unnecessary data:** Purge any unnecessary digital or hard copy records that include customer information or credit card data that are not essential for business. The more data you store can make your hotel more vulnerable to a data breach.

5. **Review:** Your hotel should regularly review its processes and watch for updates to be made to PCI DSS. When those updates are available, ensure that you are taking the proper steps to remain compliant.

Need help with PCI Compliance? Netsurion is here for you.

We've been helping hoteliers with PCI Compliance since its inception by providing affordable managed network security solutions that make compliance easy and efficient. Learn how to simplify the process and be audit-ready at all times, while still focusing on your business. Take 5 minutes to learn which of the 12 requirements you need to spend extra attention on to gain compliance.

Read the full article here.

Sources:

Statista
Verizon DBIR 2017
PCI Security Standards