

## COVID-19 ISSUES

COVID-19 has created new challenges for lodging businesses both at the property and online. There are many platforms available for guests to express concerns about their stay online. Responding to these online reviews from guests has become a critical part of business operations for lodging properties of all sizes.

Following is a list of potential crises of all scales that a property may experience regarding COVID-19. The crises are categorized into six main categories. Please note this is not an exhaustive list of every crisis that could ever occur, but the six categories should cover most pandemic related issues.

Please feel free to use the language provided verbatim, or tailor the language to your specific situation.

### COVID-19 ISSUES INCLUDED

- Social-distancing practices
- Mask-related issue
- Cleaning/sanitation standards, procedures
- New rules, regulations, and practices due to COVID
- Staff members test positive
- Outbreak

#### Goal

To avoid the spread of the coronavirus

#### Strategies

- Reinforce emphasis on health and safety
- Be transparent
- Err on side of caution

#### Notes:

- For responses, use “we” when responding on behalf of the hotel and when providing general contact information
- Use “I” in responses if the message is coming from a specific staff member (e.g. General Manager, Guest Relations Manager, etc.)

## Social-Distancing Practices

### Situation

- Customer refusing to comply to social-distancing practices or stay out of blocked off areas
- Customer notices poor social-distancing practices by employee

### Your Action

- Make sure social distancing signage is visible and legible. Review brand guidelines for confronting guests.
- Remind staff proper social distancing guidelines.

### Your Response

“The health and safety of our guests and staff is our No. 1 priority, which is why we are dedicated to following proper social distancing. We are sorry to hear that [a guest, our staff] failed in this regard. We will worker harder to make sure that doesn’t happen again.”

## Mask-Related Issue

### Situation

- Customer is not wearing a mask
- Employee fails to wear a mask or wears mask inadequately/incorrectly

### Your Action

- Make sure mask signage is visible and legible, and have free masks at the front desk for guests.
- Review brand guidelines for confronting guests.
- Remind staff how to properly wear masks.

### Your Response

“The health and safety of our guests and staff is our No. 1 priority, which is we are dedicated to following the mask mandate. We are sorry that [a guest, an employee] failed to follow the rules properly. We will worker harder to make sure that doesn’t happen again.”

## Cleaning/Sanitation Standards

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### Situation

Cleaning/sanitation standards, procedures

### Your Action

- Look into the situation and discuss with housekeeping/ cleaning staff.

### Your Response

“Thank you for bringing this to our attention. The health and safety of our guests is our No. 1 priority. We will speak to our staff to make sure that all of our enhanced cleaning and sanitization procedures are properly followed.”

## New Rules, Regulations, & Practices

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### Situation

New rules, regulations, and practices due to COVID-19

### Your Response

Website and e-newsletter message:

“Due to the new [federal, state, county, city] COVID-19 guidelines, we will be [closing the patio, closing outside seating, limiting capacity, etc.], effective [DATE]. Meanwhile, we will continue to enforce our strict hygiene measures to ensure that our staff and customers are safe. We are looking forward to operating at our normal capacity again. Thank you for your understanding.”

## Staff Member Tests Positive

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### Situation

Staff member tests positive

### Your Action

- Sick staff member should stay home and not return to work until they meet all the qualifications to end home-isolation, as dictated by CDC. Inform fellow workers of their possible exposure to COVID-19 but maintain confidentiality.

### Your Response

“Recently, [NUMBER] of our staff members tested positive for COVID-19 [outside of the workplace]. [That employee/Those employees][, who do not interact with guests,] immediately informed their supervisor and subsequently self-quarantined. We are increasing our already strict safety and hygiene measures, including an extensive cleaning and disinfecting of the entire property, per guidelines from the CDC. The safety of our guests and employees is our No. 1 priority, and we will continue to [have all staff wear masks, offer digital check-ins, require 24-vacancies of rooms between guest departures, decrease occupancy rates, etc.]”

## Outbreak (Situation 1)

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### Situation

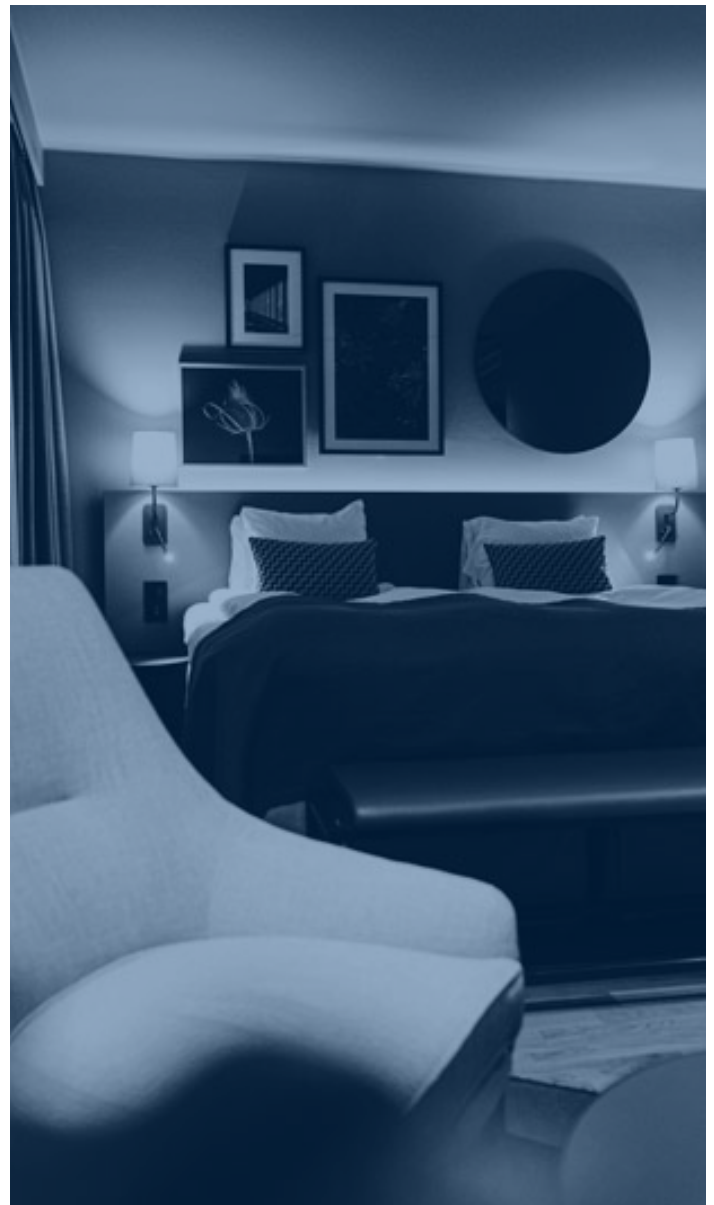
Outbreak (two or more guests)

### Your Action

- Inform staff, do deep clean, temporarily close (property, floors or rooms) as necessary.

### Your Response

“Recently, [NUMBER] of our guests tested positive for COVID-19. Those guests stayed on [DATES]. We are increasing our already strict safety and hygiene measures, including an extensive cleaning and disinfecting of the entire property, per guidelines from the CDC[, and we plan to close temporarily]. The safety of our guests and employees is our No. 1 priority, and we will continue to [have all staff wear masks, offer digital check-ins, require 24-vacancies of rooms between guest departures, decrease occupancy rates, etc.]”



## Outbreak (Situation 2)

### Situation

Guest claims they contracted coronavirus during their stay

### Your Action

- Inform staff, confirm the guest actually did stay, investigate if other guests or staff had a positive case (to the extent that you can), do a deep clean of their room (if another guest is currently in the room, then move them)

### Your Response

#### Hotel can confirm the guest stayed:

“Thank you for bringing this to our attention. The health and safety of our guests is our No. 1 priority, and we are very sorry to hear about your positive case. [We have not had other guests or staff members report a positive case, so we are hoping this is an isolated situation. Regardless,] We will be conducting an investigation and performing extensive cleaning and sanitizing of the property. In the meantime, please accept a [refund of your stay, reward points, a room upgrade for your next stay, etc.]. [Unfortunately, our policies do not allow for refunds.]”

- For social media: “Recently, a guest tested positive for COVID-19. They stayed on [DATES]. We are increasing our already strict safety and hygiene measures, including an extensive cleaning and disinfecting of the entire property, per guidelines from the CDC[, and we plan to close temporarily]. The safety of our guests and employees is our No. 1 priority, and we will continue to [have all staff wear masks, offer digital check-ins, require 24-vacancies of rooms between guest departures, decrease occupancy rates, etc.]”

#### Hotel can confirm guest did not stay or cannot confirm that they stayed:

“Thank you for bringing this to our attention. The health and safety of our guests is our No. 1 priority, and we are very sorry to hear about your positive case. We will be conducting an investigation and performing extensive cleaning and sanitizing of the property. If you can please provide us with documentation of your stay, such as a receipt or email confirmation, we can provide you a [refund on the room, rewards points, a room upgrade for your next stay, etc.]. [Unfortunately, our policies do not allow for refunds.]”

This tool kit was created in partnership with Revelation PR, Advertising & Social Media for the Wisconsin Hotel & Lodging Association.



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