

# Front Desk Manager



# Check-in

Check-in procedure involves all stages from the arrival of a guest to the issuance of the room key to the guest. In case of manual or semi-automated operation systems, the process begins when the guest arrive at a hotel and are greeted by the front office staff, subsequent to which they complete the registration formalities, and finally the guests are assigned rooms and the room key is issued by the front office personnel. In a fully automated system, the same activity is performed automatically by self-service terminals located in the hotel lobby, which look like ATM machines.

## Self-service terminals

Leading hotels such as Hilton, Marriott, Fairmont, and Starwood have self-service for guest check-in and check-out. A guest-operated front desk processing station is all contained in an upright stand-alone housing. The housing contains a touch-screen and a keyboard for the guests to enter their input information, and a signature pad in the upper portion. The housing front face contains a credit card swipe device for scanning a credit, debit, or brand card, a slot for dispensing a receipt from a printer inside the housing, and a key slot for dispensing a key card, generated by a key-making device within the housing.

Some terminals also contain a slot for accepting various currency denominations and a slot for dispensing currency change. The processing station is connected by a network data cable to a property management system (PMS) at the hotel.

It caters to guests who want a fast, seamless transit through the hotel lobby. In one quick, efficient process, the machine assigns a room in accordance to the guest preference, dispenses the room key, and provides the loyalty card numbers to the guests. The guests just have to use their credit / debit / charge card.

Guests can review their reservation details - name, room type, bed type, smoking preference, check-out date, hotel loyalty card number, and payment card information - before accepting a transaction. If the requested room is not available, a list of alternative rooms is shown.

These rooms match the guest's requests as closely as possible and have the same room rate.

At the end of their stay, guests can review their folio and check-out promptly in the same way.



## Check-in Procedures in Manual or Semi-Automated Hotels

The check-in procedure varies for guests with confirmed reservation and guest who walk-in. It may take a specialised form in case of VIPs, groups, crews, scanty baggage guests, and foreigners. In this section we will cover check-in procedures of guests with different status:

- Guests with confirmed reservation
- VIPs
- Groups / Crews (Domestic and international)
- Walk-in guests
- Foreign nationals

## 1.1. Guests with Confirmed Reservation

The procedure for the check-in of guests with confirmed reservation involves the following steps:

- When the guests arrive at the hotel, the front office staff should welcome them and ask them if they have a confirmed reservation.
- If the guests have a confirmed reservation, the front office agent should check the day's arrival list to confirm the reservation status for guests.
- Once the reservation status of a guest has been confirmed, the front office agent should give the pre-filled GRC to the guest to verify details.
- When the guest has signed the GRC, the front office agent should check all the details have been filled in, including the billing instructions.
- The front office agent should check the availability of rooms as per the guest's preference and allot the room accordingly.
- The front office agent should issue the room keys to the guest and authorise a bellboy to escort the guest and carry the guest luggage to the room. The bell captain will fill the information in the arrival arrant card and lobby control sheet.



## **Front office tasks for the check-in of guests with confirmed reservation**

**Greet the guest as per the time of the day and ask if the guest has a confirmed reservation**

**Check the day's arrival list and verify the guest registration status**

**Ask the guest to verify the details in the pre-filled GRC**

**Check the GRC returned by the guest for completeness.  
Depending on the availability of the rooms,  
all other room as per the preference of the guest**

**Establish the mode of settlement of bills.  
Assign the room keys**

**Call the bellboy to escort the guest  
and carry the luggage to the allotted room**

**Wish the guest an enjoyable stay  
and update the front office records**

## 1.2. VIP Guests

Very important persons (VIPs) include head of states, ministers, senior media personnel, sports personnel, film stars, rock stars, travel writers, top executives of corporate houses, CEOs of large business houses, senior defence personnel, and famous public figures. They get special treatment and attention from the hotel staff due to their VIP status. The check-in process of VIPs may start with their arrival at the airport.

The role of the hotel in welcoming political VIPs at airport is minimal due to security reasons. In the case of corporate heads of business houses, the hotel representative may receive them at the airport and escort them to the hotel room. The registration process may be carried out during their transfer from the airport to the hotel or in the hotel room.

### **The check-in procedure of VIP guests involves the following steps:**

- The hotel may arrange for the pick-up of a VIP guest from the airport. Depending on the status of the VIP, the pick-up vehicle may vary from a luxury car to a limousine.
- When the guest arrives at the hotel, the front office staff should give him/her a traditional welcome - tea, juice, fruits etc. The General Manager (GM) of the hotel and the Front Office Manager (FOM) should also be present to welcome the VIP.
- The registration formalities are mostly completed in advance by an authorised representative of the VIP. Otherwise, they can be completed in the guest room over a welcome drink.
- The GM or FOM should escort the VIP to his/her room.

- The front office should send the arrival notification slip and any special instruction of the VIP to all the concerned departments.

## Front office tasks for the check-in of VIP guests

**Arrange for the pick-up of the VIP from the airport**

**Welcome the guest traditionally on arrival in the hotel lobby.**  
The front office manager or the general manager  
of the hotel should receive the VIP personally.

**Registration formalities should be carried in the  
guest room over a welcome drink or  
by an authorised representative during the airport transfer.**

**Room is pre-allotted to the VIP.**  
In case of political VIPs, the same is done in accordance  
with the advice of security in-charge of the VIP.

**Call a bellboy to take the luggage  
of the VIP to his/her room.**

**Update the front office records and send  
the VIPs-in-house list to all concerned departments.**

## 1.3. Domestic and International Groups or Crews

The check-in procedure for a group or crew requires specialised preregistration activity as a group contains a large number of people who have to be registered at the same time. The following preregistration activities are required for the check-in of a group or crew.

Front office tasks for the check-in of groups and crews preregistration activities and check-in procedures:

- The front office should prepare a group list, containing details of each guest in the group.

The list should contain details such as name, address, purpose of visit, duration of stay, meal preference (vegetarian / non-vegetarian), passport details, and any specific instruction regarding the location of the room.

• After ascertaining the type and the number of rooms required, the front office should block rooms for the group, preferably on the same floor.

• The front office should prepare a rooming list, which should contain the names of the group members and their corresponding room numbers.

• The front office should arrange keys according to the room numbers and place them in an envelope to be handed over to the group leader.

• Based on the information received from the group leader or airport representative, the front office should fill GRCs for group members and arrange them alphabetically.

• The front office should arrange the appropriate number of bellboys for carrying the group's luggage to their rooms.

The front office should coordinate with the group leader or airport representative. Once the group arrives at the hotel, the following steps are involved in the check-in:

- When the luggage vehicle arrives at the portico, bellboys should handle the guest luggage tags as per the rooming list. Then they should transfer the luggage to the respective rooms using luggage trolleys.
- The front office agent should escort the group leader to the reception desk to complete the registration formalities. The receptionist should hand over the room keys and the registration forms of all the members to the leader, who can get the GRCs signed by the group members and distribute the room keys.
- Meanwhile, the front office should organise welcome drinks for the group members in the pre-scheduled area.
- Once the group leader hands over the signed registration cards to the front desk, he guests may proceed to their respective rooms.
- The office agent should ask the group leader about the group's activities, meal schedules, wake-up calls, and other requirements, and make a note of the same.
- The front office cashier should prepare a master folio for the group, and individual folios for each member of the group after the mode of payment is settled.
- The front desk should distribute copies of the rooming list of the group to the different departments - housekeeping, telephone exchange, and room service - to inform them about the arrival of the group.

## Preregistration activities

Prepare the group list, containing details of each guest on the group

Book rooms, preferably on the same floor

Prepare room list

Arrange room keys according to the rooming list and place them in an envelope

Fill GRCs for group members as per information received from the group leader

Arrange welcome drink for the group members

Keep enough bellboys to handle the luggage

## Check-in procedure

Keep in touch with group leader  
before the group's arrival

On the group's arrival, send bellboys  
to handle the luggage of the guests

Handover the GRCs and room keys  
to the group leaders, who will get the GRCs  
signed by group members and distribute the keys

Serve the welcome drink  
to all the group members in an appropriate place

Receive the signed GRCs from the group  
leader and check if the same are complete

Guests proceed to their rooms and the front office  
circles the rooming list of the group to all departments

## **2.Check-in Procedure in Fully Automated Hotels**

In fully automated hotels, guests can register themselves at self-check-in terminal without the intervention of hotel employees. By installing self-service terminals, hotels reduce the waiting time for check-in thus offer a superior customer service experience to the guests. This also gives the hotel staff more opportunity to look after hospitality needs of the guests. Self-check-in terminals are an outcome of the advancement of technology and "do-it-yourself" competency in guests. A self-check-in terminal is similar to an interactive ATM machine, which may be located at the airport or. At a convenient place in the hotel lobby.

The use of such machines reduces manpower requirements. The check-in procedure is described below. Guests with confirmed reservations can check-in without any assistance from the hotel staff, simply by operating the self-check-in terminal and using their credit cards. The terminal assigns rooms to the guests and dispenses the room keys. It also sends arrival notifications to the other departments instantaneously. The efficiency of front desk is increased with the use of such terminals as they reduce the load on front office agents. However, some customers may fell the lack of human touch in using self-check-in terminals.

### **Check-in procedure at self-service terminals**

A guest with confirmed reservation goes to the self-check-in terminal

The guest inputs the necessary information

**Depending on the availability of rooms, the terminal allots the room as per guest preference or suggests alternatives**

**The guest accepts the reservation and swipes his/her credit card**

**The terminal dispenses a receipt and issues the room key**

**The terminal updates the front office records and sends arrival notification to the concerned departments**