

What you need to know: Hotel cleanliness and hygiene programs

May 1, 2020

In an effort to reassure both employees and travelers that they are doing what they can to protect them against COVID-19, hotels are implementing new and improved cleanliness and hygiene processes.

This report summarizes what hotel companies around the world are doing and planning.

While each chain may be taking its own approach to cleanliness and hygiene, organizations like the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA), with its Safe Stay Advisory Council, may help to establish common standards across the industry.¹ AHLA wants to set health and safety best practices and protocols, which hotels should meet or exceed. So far 17 hotel companies have joined the Council: Accor, Aimbridge Hospitality, Best Western, Choice Hotels, G6 Hospitality, Hilton, Hyatt, IHG, Loews Hotels, Marriott, My Place Hotels, Noble Investment Group, Omni Hotels & Resorts, Red Lion Hotels, Red Roof and Wyndham.

Major global chains

Accor launches cleaning certification

Accor has partnered with inspection and certification specialist Bureau Veritas to launch a certification scheme to reassure customers and employees that appropriate standards and cleaning protocols are in place as COVID-19 restrictions are eased.² Accor has involved doctors, epidemiologists, hotel owners and trade associations in the project. The French ministries of tourism, health and labor will validate details of the scheme.

The standards will apply to all Accor properties and will be outlined in an operational guide enabling hotels to rigorously apply the health and safety recommendations of authorities.

Best Western launches We Care Clean

Best Western initially responded to COVID-19 with upgraded cleaning and a move to hands-free check-in using its mobile concierge and texting. It also removed room amenities – decorative pillows, laundry bags, amenity trays, pens and notepads. At breakfast there are more pre-packaged options and fewer bulk dispensers.

On April 30, the company announced a more stringent program based on guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Health Canada.³

We Care Clean expands upon the I Care Clean program Best Western launched in 2012. New protocols include: upgraded sanitization measures, including staff waiting 24-72 hours to enter guestrooms after checkout-out; minimizing guest and employee contact through streamlined check-in/out; social

¹ [Business Travel News](#), April 27, 2020

² [Travel Weekly](#), April 17, 2020

³ [Business Travel News](#), April 30, 2020

distancing measures; wellness best practices; and removal of all brochures, magazines and papers. Sanitizing stations or wipes will be available throughout hotels. Unnecessary items will continue to be removed from guestrooms. Breakfast offerings have now been enhanced with “Grab & Go” and pre-plated food and beverage options. Public amenities – fitness centers, swimming pools and meeting rooms – will be more intensively cleaned and monitored.

Best Western will update the program regularly, based on the latest standards and recommendations by government agencies and industry groups.

Choice Hotels improves cleaning

Choice Hotels has made guest health and safety a priority at its independently-owned and operated franchised hotels. To this end, it has:⁴

- Shared enhanced cleaning, sanitation and disinfecting protocols with hotel owners. Training is available from cleaning supplies vendors
- Changed its food and beverage service, increasing pre-packaged offerings
- Activated response teams offering round-the-clock guidance and support to hotels
- Committed to providing hotels with the latest information and training from supplies and health authorities
- Advised guests that services and amenities on offer may change in accordance with local conditions

Hilton working on CleanStay program

Hilton is collaborating with Reckitt Benckiser, maker of Lysol and Dettol cleaning products, on a new hotel sanitization program for its global portfolio.⁵ The Hilton CleanStay with Lysol Protection program also includes advice from the Mayo Clinic’s Infection Prevention and Control team. Hilton will launch new cleaning and disinfection protocols in June.

The CleanStay program may include hotel brand standards for a Hilton CleanStay room seal, extra disinfection for 10 high-touch areas (light switches, door handles, TV remotes), removing stationery, digitalizing guest directories, extra cleaning and social distancing in gym facilities, increased cleaning of public areas, disinfectant wipes in high-traffic areas, contactless check-in (at participating hotels) and new disinfection technologies, such as electrostatic sprays and ultraviolet light.

Hyatt introducing GBAC STAR accreditation globally

Hyatt has made a new sanitization and safety promise to enhance employee and guest “safety and peace of mind.”⁶ Under its new program – Global Care & Cleanliness Commitment – Hyatt is from May introducing the Global Bio-risk Advisory Council (GBAC) STAR accreditation process for its more than 900 hotels around the world.

GBAC is a division of ISSA, the global cleaning industry association. GBAC STAR is a cleaning, disinfection and infectious disease prevention program.

⁴ [Choice Hotels](#)

⁵ [Business Travel News](#), April 27, 2020

⁶ [Business Travel News](#), April 29, 2020

By September, Hyatt will have at least one person at each hotel trained as a hygiene manager. They will ensure the hotel sticks to new operational guidance and protocols currently under development. These may include staff certification and training, more frequent cleaning with hospital-grade disinfectant, enhanced food safety, hand sanitizer stations, enhanced air quality, personal protective equipment for employees, and social distancing guidance in public areas.

IHG looking after health, safety and well-being

IHG remains in contact with global organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and relevant authorities, for country-specific needs, to ensure its COVID-19 response is relevant.

As well as meeting local health and safety laws, IHG expects hotels to follow its best practices and guidelines, which it has now supplemented with additional COVID-19 cleanliness guidance, training and information. It's introduced response teams to provide round-the-clock assistance to hotels and increased the frequency of cleaning of public areas and high-touch points in guest rooms. IHG has advised all hotels on cleaning products and protocols to deal with COVID-19. It's also reviewing its food and beverage service.

Marriott launches Cleanliness Council

Launched in April, the Marriott Global Cleanliness Council will develop new hospitality standards to minimize risk and enhance safety for staff and guests.⁷ It's seeking internal contributions from experts in housekeeping, engineering, food safety, occupational health and employee well-being. Outside experts are providing advice on food safety, public health and infectious diseases.

In the coming months, Marriott is introducing new sanitation technologies, including electrostatic sprayers using disinfectants recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization. This will enhance the cleaning of guest rooms, lobbies, gyms and other public areas. Marriott is also testing the use of ultraviolet light to sanitize guest keys and employee devices. It's already using hospital-grade disinfectant for more-frequent cleaning and placing disinfecting wipes in guest rooms.

Marriott is installing signage to remind guests about social distancing and removing furniture in communal areas. It also offers contactless options for check-in/out, room access, requests and room service. Marriott may add partitions at front desks and will provide employees with masks and gloves.

Radisson Hotel Group managing the pandemic

Radisson has informed all hotels about essential preparatory and prevention measures.⁸ These include hygiene measures, such as increased cleaning and sanitizing frequency, and guidelines on handling suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 or quarantine lockdowns. These are adjusted in line with recommendations and guidelines issued by local governments and health authorities. At some hotels, guests are warned to expect some disruption to food service, pools, fitness centers and other amenities.

⁷ [Business Travel News](#), April 21, 2020

⁸ [Radisson Hotels](#), April 20, 2020

Wyndham provides information and guidance

Wyndham has provided all hotels in its global network with guidelines and information from organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), detailing how to identify COVID-19 symptoms and how to mitigate its transmission⁹. Wyndham has also partnered with third parties, such as hygiene technology company Ecolab, so that all hotels can access cleaning and disinfecting supplies. It's also offering training to help hotels achieve the highest standards of cleanliness, disinfection and hygiene.

Other global chains

Kempinski introduces white glove service

Luxury chain Kempinski Hotels has introduced "white glove service" to boost confidence post-COVID-19.¹⁰ As hotels reopen, they will adopt this new service standard to ensure they align with regional health and safety regulations as they evolve. A 50-page document advises staff to carry gloves during all guest interactions and details compliance with government regulations on masks. Kempinski is also introducing masks and hand sanitizer as guestroom amenities. All furniture in public areas has been rearranged to adhere to social distancing rules.

Regional chains

Anantara develops Stay with Peace of Mind

Anantara, which operates a portfolio of 41 hotels across Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe, is implementing new health and hygiene measures to reassure travelers.¹¹ A Health & Safety committee made up of senior executives and industry experts is developing the "Stay with Peace of Mind" program, building on existing health and safety measures.

Every Anantara property will have a "Guest Guardian," who is responsible for ensuring hotels comply with guidelines based on advice from organizations like hygiene companies Ecolab and Diversey. All hotels will continue to comply with local government and World Health Organization guidelines on health and safety.

All hotels are implementing enhanced levels of sanitation, using Environmental Protection Agency-approved disinfectants in public areas, fitness centers and pools, and in guestrooms. Enhanced hygiene measures will include use of electrostatic spray technology, hand sanitizers and hotel key card disinfection.

Hotels will also ensure social distancing is adopted during fitness and wellness activities, when dining and shopping within the hotel.

Anantara is also working with Siam Ocean Technology to introduce heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) with high performance air filtration.

⁹ [Hospitality Net](#), April 14, 2020

¹⁰ [Breaking Travel News](#), April 30, 2020

¹¹ [Luxury Travel Advisor](#), April 23, 2020

NH Hotels introducing hygiene assessment seal

Madrid-based NH Hotel Group is collaborating with inspection company SGS on a project to formalize health precautions.¹² New processes, including changes to hygiene and disinfection protocols, staff training and monitoring and control of the new measures, will be introduced to ensure each hotel qualifies for an assessment seal. The NH Collection Barbizon Palace hotel in Amsterdam and the NH Nacional in Madrid will be the first hotels to be certified to the new health standards.

Scandic Hotels increases cleaning and hygiene

Nordic hotel chain Scandic Hotels has put in place procedures, plans and routines to ensure guests feel safe when staying at one of its properties.¹³ Hotels follow guidelines and recommendations from local authorities. It has provided all properties with information about COVID-19 and management instructions. It has increased cleaning and hygiene protocols, regularly disinfecting high-touch points, such as door handles, card terminals and elevator buttons. Disinfectant dispensers are available in all public areas.

Alternative accommodation

Airbnb enhances cleaning protocol

Airbnb has launched the Enhanced Cleaning Initiative, a standardized protocol for cleaning and sanitization. It developed the protocol for hosts using guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's published standards, experts including a former U.S. Surgeon General, and companies in hospitality and medical hygiene, such as Ecolab, a supplier of water, hygiene and infection prevention solutions and services.

From May, hosts can take part in a learning and certification program. This will include information on COVID-19 prevention and approved disinfectants. It also recommends hosts wait 24-hours before entering a property after a guest's departure. Listings enrolled in the new cleaning program will be available for stays as soon as enhanced cleaning is completed. Hosts unable to commit to the new protocols can opt into Booking Buffer, which creates a 72-hour vacancy period between stays.

Note

The COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving, and the situation is changing on almost an hourly basis. The information presented in this report represents the latest view as of May 1, 2020.

¹² [Hotels Mag](#), April 28, 2020

¹³ [Scandic Hotels](#)