



Small Business  
Competitiveness

## GUESTHOUSE AND SMALL HOTEL MANAGEMENT GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE

*ILO - ASEAN Small Business Competitiveness*

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# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
About C-BED .....	1
Guesthouses .....	1
The Guesthouse Management Package .....	1
How to Use The Good Practice Guide .....	2
<b>1. Good Management and Systems.....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1. Systems.....	5
1.2. How-to Guide .....	6
1.3. Maintaining Appearances .....	8
<b>2. Marketing .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3. Budgeting .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4. Problem Solving and Developing Loyal Employees .....</b>	<b>27</b>
4.1. Problem Solving.....	27
4.2. Developing Loyal Employees.....	30
<b>5. Improving Service.....</b>	<b>34</b>
5.1. Continual Improvement .....	34
5.2. System: Good Reception Service.....	37
5.3. Good Housekeeping:.....	48
5.4. Meal Service .....	54
<b>6. Safety and Health .....</b>	<b>58</b>
6.1. Occupational Safety and Health (OSH):.....	58

# Introductions

# Introduction

## About C-BED

Community-Based Enterprise Development (C-BED) is a low cost, innovative training programme designed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to support skills development and empowerment in local communities for improvements in livelihoods, productivity and working conditions.

As an approach to training, C-BED is unique in that the programme is built around peer-to-peer, activity based learning methods with no role for teachers, experts, or external consultants specialised in the skill area. Instead, C-BED participants work together through a series of activities and discussions guided only by simple step-by-step instructions in the training manual. New knowledge, skills and competencies are developed through the interactions between participants and sharing of existing local knowledge and experience. In this way the programme is a low cost, sustainable option for any organization or community.

The C-BED programme is structured around two core training packages designed to develop competencies for business start-up and operation through a focus on marketing, financial management, and action planning. These are the C-BED for Aspiring Entrepreneurs and C-BED for Small Business Operators. Additionally, a growing suite of tools to strengthen business competencies and enhance skills for specific sectors is in continual development. These packages can be implemented as either stand-alone trainings or integrated in modular format into existing programmes.

## Guesthouses

Guesthouses are a type of lodging and accommodation for tourists, both local and international in their various destinations. Good guesthouse management ensures the provision of clean, safe and comfortable accommodation that satisfies the needs of their guests. Good guesthouses and lodging are an important part of a tourist destination.

## The Guesthouse Management Package

### **The Training:**

The guesthouse management packages should be used to help aspiring and current guesthouse managers and owners improve the management of their guesthouses. It focuses on key management principles to build on from what participants already know from managing their guesthouses and helps them to learn more. It can also build on from the learning in other C-BED tools namely SBO or AE. Participants bring

experience to share and leave with a priority action plan (at least 3 actions to introduce improvements to their business). At the end of the training participants will have:

- Enhanced and advanced existing knowledge on guesthouse management
- Strengthened critical competences to analyse aspects of guesthouse management
- Affirmed the potential of enterprise development
- Identified steps and actions to improve their guesthouses
- Decided on actions for the future
- Where applicable, started planning effective collaborations and associations

### **The Good Practice Guide (GPG):**

This GPG is designed to help all guesthouse managers improve their businesses. Those who take part in the training day will be introduced to and become familiar with the GPG on the day. However, those who have not attended the training can also use the GPG. The GPG contains a number of practical tools, tips and exercises to help guesthouse managers and owners.

## **How to Use The Good Practice Guide**



Good practice tools



Exercise



Case studies



Definitions



Tips



Extra information for you to take note of





# Good Management and Systems

# 1. Good Management and Systems

**OBJECTIVES:**

Gives an overview of good management and systems in a guesthouse  
Includes a number of tools and checklists

**TRAINING GUIDE:**

This section was covered in session 2

What would happen in your guesthouse if you took time off work? Putting in place good management systems can help your guesthouse run smoothly and see what practices work best. Involving your staff in creating and using systems will encourage them to buy into the method and help them work more effectively. This section provides a template for you to brainstorm on systems in each area of your guesthouse. The rest of the good practice guide goes into further detail on systems for the functional areas of your guesthouse.

## 1.1. Systems

A management system is a step-by-step set of processes and procedures for your business. It is used to help you run day-to-day activities smoothly and meet your business goals. Benefits of using systems include:

- Using your resources more efficiently;
- Happier guests as you consistently have the same standards and quality;
- Staff understand clearly what they are expected to do;
- Staff need less supervision and improves their skills.

## 1.2. How-to Guide

Use the management systems checklist to keep track of what systems you have, what systems you need and areas for improvement.



### **To fill in the checklist:**

- List systems in each area of your guesthouse.
- Identify systems you either have, don't have or which need improvement.
- Identify who will work on the system and make sure they understand their role.
- Rank the systems you identified by importance.
- Set actions with deadlines to create or improve your systems.

**Table 1.2: Systems checklist**

	System	Yes/No/Needs improvement	Who is responsible	Action (date)
Guesthouse area				
Health and safety				
Housekeeping and maintenance				
Accounting and finance				
Problem solving				
Improving service				
Staff relations				
Other areas (reservations, front office, food and beverage)				

## 1.3. Maintaining Appearances

Maintaining and improving the appearance of your guesthouse creates a good first impression for your guests and contributes to their enjoyment during their stay. This section provides information on systems you can use to keep up the appearance of the exterior and interior of your guesthouse

### What systems?

- Maintenance systems to keep your guesthouse in a good state of repair
- Housekeeping systems to ensure all areas outside and inside are cleaned regularly

### Standard consistency systems

To give your guests a good first impression of your guesthouse, it is important that the outside and entrance are consistently well maintained. The guest rooms and common areas also need to be of a good standard so your guests feel comfortable and at home.

You can keep up a consistent level of quality, style and cleanliness by creating systems for your different maintenance and housekeeping activities. Involving staff in the development and use of your systems will encourage them to follow your plan and improve your standards.



### TIPS

Keep a maintenance request logbook that includes:

- Details of the maintenance request
- Date the request was made
- Date maintenance was completed

### Improvement systems

- To help your guesthouse grow and attract new customers, it is important to continually improve your quality and service standards
- Look at the quality and services offered by your competitors and listen your guests' feedback to target areas for improvement
- Maintain a list of possible improvements you could make them and when you would like to make them



## STANDARD CONSISTENCY AND IMPROVEMENT

- Owner or staff walk around the guesthouse once a week and check if anything needs to be repaired or could be improved
- Owner or staff check guest rooms when guests check-out to see if anything is broken or damaged
- Decide what needs immediate action, consideration, or no action
- Make a list of items to check regularly (use the following and your findings as a starting point)

**Table 1.3.1: Maintenance and housekeeping checklist**

Front garden: plants tidy and watered

Front stairs clean and swept

Light bulbs entrance and hallway all work

Check napkins and tablecloths clean

✓

**Table 1.3.2: Improvement ideas checklist**

Add safe deposit boxes in rooms

Add hair dryers to rooms

Mirrors in bathrooms

Lay bathrobes on beds

Provide soap in rooms

Date

**Marketing**

## 2. Marketing

### OBJECTIVES:

- Give an overview of how to set prices
- Includes a number of survey tools and checklists

### TRAINING GUIDE:

This section was covered in session 3

Charging the right price will allow you to attract guests, and your guesthouse to make a profit. Therefore, pricing is an essential part of marketing. To set your prices you need to know your costs and know how much guests are willing to pay. Budgeting goes hand-in-hand with this process and will be covered in the next section.

This section provides some good practice tools on how to set room prices.



### ESTABLISHING PRICE

**Table 2.1: How to set your price**  
**Tool 1**

#### 1. Know your room costs

Type of cost	Example	Action
<b>Direct</b>	Cleaning, maintenance, supplies, labour	Calculate total direct cost each month
<b>Overhead/ fixed</b>	Rent, utilities, sales and marketing, insurance, debt repayment	Calculate total overhead cost each month
		Allocate a % of overhead costs to rooms in proportion to the size of your room income compared to food and beverages and other services
<b>Total</b>	Direct plus overhead costs	Work out total costs per month/day (divide costs by number of months/day)
		Work out total costs for each room (divide total costs per month/day by number of rooms)

#### 2. Know how much guests will pay



**Ask your guests**

Ask guests what they are willing to pay
Quote a price to potential guests, if they are price resistant find an acceptable price
Call competitors to find out about their room rates
Check competitors advertisements and online postings

**Check the competition****3. Make your prices attractive: Use a price management strategy to attract more guests****Offer the same price in all your sales channels**

Give special offers e.g. buy two nights get a third free

**Offer lower prices in off-season**

Offer package rates e.g. bed and breakfast

**Offer group discounts**

Offer add-ons e.g. upgrades, discounts on bike rentals

**MARKET SURVEY****Table 2.2: Market survey results****Tool 2**

Similar accommodation &lt;1km from your business

Similar accommodation &lt;5km from your business

Similar accommodation close to rail/bus/airports

Smaller accommodation &lt;5km from your business

Average price from customer survey

Price		
Single room	Twin room	Extra bed



## CUSTOMER SURVEYS

Table 2.3: Customer survey questions

Tool 3

1	What is the nature of your visit? (Please select one)	Business	Holiday	Other
2	What is your length of stay? (Days)	1-2	2-5	>5
3	What type of accommodation do you seek? (Please select one)	Budget	Comfortable	Luxury

### During a typical stay:

4	What is your room occupation? (Please select one)	Single	Double	Triple
5	Would like breakfast included in the room price?	Yes	No	
6	Do you order meals from the hotel?	Yes	No	
7	Do you order alcoholic beverages?	Yes	No	

### Activities during a typical stay:

8	How do you spend your time on a visit? (Please select one or more)	Adventure tourism	Attending business functions	Relax near beach or swimming pool	Visit sites of culture and history	Other
9	Do you organize your own activities?	Yes	No			
10	Do you purchase package tours?	Yes	No			

### Payment

11	Do you book hotels in advance of travel?	Yes				No	
12	If you book in advance, which website do you use? (Please select more than one)	Hotel website	Hotel.com	Booking.com	Agoda.com	Travel agent	Other
13	How do you make your payment if booking in advance?	Credit card	Debit card		PayPal	Bank transfer	Cash
14	What is preferred method of payment? (Please select one)	Cash			Bank Card		Other

### Price

15	How much are you willing to pay or the following room types? (Insert price range as shown in example)	Single room (Please select one)	10-15	16-25	>25
		Twin room (Please select one)	15-20	21-30	>30
		Extra bed (Please select one)	5-10	11-15	>15

16	What determines your choice of selecting accommodation?	Price	Customer rating/review	Expert rating/ review	Accuracy of advertised information	Photos of the accommodation
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## PRICING

**Table 2.4: Pricing chart**

**Tool 4**

Low season			
Rate range	Single room	Twin room	Extra bed
Public rates			
Walk-ins			
Own website			
Advance purchase			
Long staying guests			
Package 1			
Package 2			
Package 3			
Package 4			
Confidential rates			
Online travel agents			
Travel agents			
Tour operators groups			
Regular customers special discounts			
Colder season supplement:			
High season supplement			
Peak season and special holiday supplement			





# Budgeting

### 3. Budgeting

#### OBJECTIVES:

- Give an overview of how to keep record of guesthouse expenses and income
- Includes a number of tools and checklists

#### ACTIVITY BOOK:

This section was covered in session 4

A budget is a tool to keep track of your spending (costs) and income, so you know how much money your guesthouse is making. There are a number of different types of costs involved in running a guesthouse. Knowing how much it costs to host guests is also an important part of setting your room prices as was discussed above.



#### DEFINITIONS

**Variable costs:** Variable costs change with the amount of goods/services produced and usually fall under the raw materials or labour column. For example, with a haircut variable costs would be shampoo or hair gel, and labour costs would be cutting and washing hair.

**Direct costs:** A price that can be completely attributed to the production of specific goods or services. Direct costs refer to materials, labour and expenses related to the production of a product. Other costs, such as depreciation or administrative expenses, are more difficult to assign to a specific product, and are therefore considered indirect costs.

**Fixed costs:** Fixed costs are the same regardless of the amount of goods and services produced. For the hairdressing example, the cost of rent, scissors and chairs are all fixed costs. For some fixed costs, you also need to think about the lifespan of items in order to work out the monthly cost. You need to calculate the price of furniture items such as beds, sinks, showers, and determine how long they will last. They will need to be replaced at some point. If they are estimated to last 5 years, then divide the value by the number of months to get the value to be inserted in the table. For example if a bed, curtains, nightstand table, and lamp with a total costs of USD 6000 are in the room and will last for 5 years. Hence the monthly cost would be 6000 divided by 5 (lifespan) divided by 12 (number of months in the year) = 100 USD / month.

**Raw materials:** These are the basic materials used to make the final product or



service. For hairdressing, it is the shampoo or conditioner needed to wash hair. This is a variable cost because it changes based on the amount of goods/services produced.

**Labour costs:** These costs are the amount of wages you pay your employees, as well as the amount of money you earn from your business. These are variable costs because the amount of money you pay your employees and yourself changes with the amount of goods/services produced.

Pricing and budgeting involves:

1. Determining your operating costs
  - a. Operating costs: fixed costs, variable costs and sales & marketing
2. Setting your room rates
3. Monitoring your revenue from your different guesthouse services (rooms, food and beverage, other)
4. Comparing your income and expenses. Are you making enough profit? Plan to reduce costs and increase revenue.

**Table 3.1: Total costs for an activity**

Variable cost sheet

Cost of materials needed list for one guesthouse bathroom

Items	Cost of material (\$)
Cleaning liquid	1.50
Cleaning utensil	1.50
Complimentary Shampoo	0.50
Conditioner	0.50
Shower gel	0.50
Towel	3.00
Total variable costs	7.50

**Table 3.2: Labour costs**

Labour costs one day 8 hours

Activities required for one bathroom	Worker	Time (hours)	Pay per day (\$)
Cleaning, basin, toilet bowl, and shower area	Assistant	8	16
Inspection & quality control	Me	1	32
		Pro rata (32/8)	4
Total	A	9	B 20
Labour cost per hour (B/A (48/16))			2.22

**Table 3.3: Fixed costs**

Fixed costs (per month)	Price per month (\$)	Days
Rent	40	20
Electricity	30	
Furniture	100	
Water	20	
Total	A 190	B 20
Fixed Costs Per Day (A/B (190/20))		9.5



## VARIABLE COSTS

**Table 3.4: Variable Cost Sheet**

**Tool 1**

Raw materials

Cost of material per room per night



## LABOUR COSTS

**Table 3.5: Labour costs**

**Tool 2**

Labour Cost per day	Number of employees		Time		Cost per day
Sub-total		A		B	
Total variable labour costs per hour (insert figure B/A)					



## FIXED COSTS

**Table 3.6: Fixed costs**

**Tool 3**

Fixed Costs per day		Price per month (\$)		Working days
Sub-total	A			
Average number of days worked per month			B	
Total (insert figure B/A)				



## TOTAL COST

**Table 3.7: Total cost**  
**Tool 4**

Step 1: Variable costs (tool 1)

Step 2: Labour costs (tool 2)

Step 3: Fixed costs (tool 3)

Total Cost = Step 1 + Step 2 + Step 3

Your Total Cost for one unit is \_\_\_\_\_




## BUDGET SHEET

**Table 3.8: Budget sheet**  
**Tool 5**

	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3
Sales			
Occupancy (%)			
Room nights (number of nights for rooms rented)			
Average room rate			
Total room revenue			
Food and beverage revenue			
Other revenue			
Total income			
Expenses			
Variable costs			
Direct room costs			
Direct food and beverage costs			
Fixed costs			
Other expenses			
Profit/(loss)			



# **Problem Solving and Developing Loyal Employees**

## 4. Problem Solving and Developing Loyal Employees

### OBJECTIVE:

- Solve problems better by including employees
- Retain valuable staff talent and skills by developing loyal employees through a positive work environment

### ACTIVITY BOOK:

We cover this in session 5

### 4.1. Problem Solving

All businesses have problems. Developing and using a problem solving system can help you tackle and solve problems quickly and efficiently. Helping your guesthouse to run smoothly. If you have employees in your guesthouse, it is important to involve them in problem solving so they can increase their skills, independence and decrease the need for supervision.

1. Identify guesthouse and hotel problems through brainstorming
2. Practice the three guidelines for effective brainstorming
3. Encourage everyone to contribute suggestions for solving the problem
4. Seek as many ideas as possible, even unusual ones
5. Make everyone feel safe and comfortable contributing ideas
6. Use the space below to list the problems



**Table 4.1.1: Problem solving 1**



1. Practice jointly solving a work-related problem with staff members
2. Invite them to brainstorm solutions



**Table 4.1.2: Problem solving 2:**

My Role: Housekeeper / Breakfast Server / Receptionist / Manager

Problem:

Background:

Ideas from  
brainstorming:

Generated solutions

Pros	Cons	What will it take? (i.e. cost, time, materials, etc.)
------	------	---

Option 1

--	--	--

Option 2

--	--	--

Option 3

--	--	--

Selected solution:

Action plan and timeline:



#### TEMPLATE FOR PROBLEM SOLVING

**Table 4.1.3: Problem solving 3**

Problem identified by

--

Role

--

Description of  
problem

--

Pros	Cons	Solution inputs (cost, time etc.)
------	------	-----------------------------------

--	--	--

--	--	--

ne:

## 4.2. Developing Loyal Employees

Having loyal employees is one of the keys to your success. Many guesthouses suffer from a high staff turnover. Developing loyal employees means they will stay with you longer, be better at their jobs and help your guesthouse succeed. One way to develop loyal employees is to make sure you have a positive working environment. The rest of this section looks at ways to create a positive work environment and develop loyal employees.

Communication is central to achieving a good work environment. Everybody has different communication styles, meaning it is easy to misunderstand each other. Before moving to the self-evaluation, think about your general work environment:

- Do my staff enjoy coming to work?

- Is there friction between my staff and me?
- Is there friction among staff members?
- Do I feel frustrated because employees are not loyal?
- Is negativity affecting the success of my business?



1. Conduct this self-evaluation by asking yourself these questions
2. Put an X in the Yes or No column

**Table 4.2.1: A successful guesthouse is a happy guesthouse**

Self-evaluation	Yes	No
Do all my staff members clearly understand what I expect them to do?		
If they do not understand, do I explain it to them in a friendly way?		
Do I compliment each of them every day?		
Do I get angry with them if they make a mistake?		
Do I turn mistakes into opportunities for learning in a positive way?		
Do I treat everyone fairly?		
Do I treat everyone with respect?		
Do I invite their ideas and suggestions and really listen to them?		
Do we take enough time to relax and enjoy each other's company?		
Is there any reason one of them is unhappy?		
If so, can I do something to help?		
Am I ever cruel or unfair to them?		
Do I yell at them or make fun of them?		
Do I know, understand, and respect national labour standards, including:		
Employee working hour limitations?		
Minimum wage requirements?		
Avoiding split shifts?		
Is my guesthouse (or hotel) a clean, safe, and pleasant place to work?		
Do I arrange fun, informal events so my employees can socialize?		
Do we have breakfast or lunch together?		
Do we celebrate employee birthdays or holidays together?		
Other questions		

# Improving Service

# 5. Improving Service

## OBJECTIVE:

- Help you to serve the needs of your guests better
- Give you tools to ensure consistent service standards

## ACTIVITY BOOK:

We cover this in session 6

## 5.1. Continual Improvement

The quality of service in your guesthouse will contribute to your guests' enjoyment and satisfaction during their stay. You have two key recourses in improving your service. One is the people who work in your guesthouse: yourself and your employees. The second is your guests. This section provides an overview to help you make the most of your resources to improve the service in your guesthouse.

Remember: having guests recommend your guesthouse to others is the best way to find new customers.

How can you find out what your guests like and dislike?

- Ask your staff
- Ask your guests

### Learning from your staff:

Your employees may have more direct contact with your guests than you. Guests will talk to employees and at the same time, employees may see guests' pleasure or frustration. You can gain access to this valuable information by holding weekly or daily meetings with your staff. Meetings will help your guesthouse in a number of ways:

- You will get more information about guests' opinions
- You will be able to continually improve your service
- You will increase good feelings and positive atmosphere among your workers
- Your employees' self-confidence will increase
- Your employees will have a space to share information; they might not feel comfortable sharing otherwise. Always thank your staff for being honest and telling you not only what your guests like, but also what they dislike.

### Learning from your guests:

Encouraging your guests to give their opinion on what they do and don't like about your guesthouse can be very helpful for your business.

In the tourism industry, a complaint is a gift. When a guest complains:

- You can apologise

- Show you care by explaining how you will fix the problem for future guests

Help your guests leave with a positive feeling, meaning they are more likely to repeat their stay and refer their friends.



### TIPS

Guidelines for holding daily or weekly staff meetings:

- Meet when people can relax and focus (for example in the afternoon when it is quiet)
- Keep the meetings short (about 10 - 15 minutes). These can be more productive
- Keep the meetings fun and informal
- Set a friendly, positive tone
- Agree that this is a way for everyone to suggest ways to improve
- Agree to show respect for each other's ideas and opinions
- Make it safe for employees to offer their ideas, opinions, and suggestions
- Encourage everyone to contribute to the discussion



Complete the table below and answer the questions

### Table 5.1.1: Successful staff meetings

Do you think it is a good idea to hold daily or weekly staff meetings (why or why not)?

How could staff meetings help you improve your service?

How could staff meetings help you improve your service?



### CHECKLIST



Table 5.1.2: Successful staff meeting checklist	
Review	
Action points from last meeting	Discuss progress on action points from your last staff meeting
Successes	What has gone well?
Challenges	Were there any problems?
Areas for improvements	What could have been done better? How?
Staff successes	Have any of your staff done something special since the last meeting? E.g. special assistance for a guest, been mentioned in a guest feedback form or online review? Thank and praise the employee at the meeting
Plan	
Action points for moving forward	Discuss what you want to do by the next meeting
Improvements	Discuss and invite ideas for improvements
Challenges	Discuss any questions or concerns
Special notices	Are any unusual or special events coming up? (e.g. a big holiday, maintenance project or price changes/new promotion)
Any other business	Ask if anyone has anything else to discuss, such as health and safety issues
	Invite employees to remain behind if they need to speak privately



### TIPS

Encouraging guest feedback:

- Remind employees to ask guests about their experience
- Encourage employees to accept complaints calmly and cheerfully
- Provide guests with comment cards to fill in before they leave
- Send a follow up email thanking guests for their stay and including a comment card



### GUEST COMMENT FORMS

Many businesses use guest comment forms, which invite guests to tell you what they

like and to give suggestions for improvements. If you choose to use them, leave one form in the guestroom each time you have guests.

Here is a sample:

*[Insert name] Guesthouse*  
*We value your opinion!*  
*Please take a little of your time to share your comments and help*  
*us improve the [insert name] Guesthouse.*

Name:	
Room number:	Arrival date:
Front desk and guest services	Breakfast service
What works well:	What works well:
What needs improvement:	What needs improvement:
Housekeeping	Are there any staff members you would like to praise?
What works well:	Name:
What needs improvement:	Reason

## 5.2. System: Good Reception Service

Ten steps for running a good reception service:

Using a good reception system will help you keep your guesthouse friendly and well organized. This section explains how to use a 10-step system for running a good reception service in your guesthouse.

1. Be friendly and confident when speaking with guests
  - a. Smile when you talk
  - b. Speak loudly enough for guests to hear you comfortably
  - c. Look at the guest when you speak
  - d. Stand up straight with shoulders back in a confident posture

2. Be clean and neat
  - a. Receptionists spend more time with guests, so they always need to be clean and neat
  - b. Pay close attention to hair, fingernails, clothes and shoes
  - c. See Section 6, Tool 2: Personal hygiene checklist
3. Keep your front desk and reception clean and well organized
  - a. This is the first thing guests see when they arrive and you should make a good impression
  - b. Keep important supplies and telephone numbers at hand
  - c. See Running your reception tools 1, 2, and 3
4. Answer the phone politely
  - a. Being polite, clear and efficient on the telephone will give your guests confidence in your guesthouse
  - b. Some tips for good telephone etiquette:
    - i. Answer the phone within 3 - 5 rings.
    - ii. Don't leave guests on hold for more than 30 seconds. If necessary take their number to call them back.
    - iii. Keep a pen and paper by the phone to take messages
    - iv. Start the call politely: "Hello, this is the \_\_\_\_ Guesthouse, how can I help you?"
    - v. End the call politely: "Thank you for your call, we're looking forward to your stay with us". If you don't understand the caller say: "I'm sorry, could you please speak more slowly?"
  - c. See Running your reception tool 4
5. Make advance reservations by telephone
  - a. Collect basic information (arrival and departure dates, number of rooms and people, type of bed)
  - b. Check room availability
  - c. If rooms are available and the rate is accepted, continue the booking
  - d. Collect further information (full name, contact details, arrival time)
  - e. Update room availability calendar
  - f. Send an email to guests to confirm booking
  - g. See Running your reception tool 6
6. Make advance reservations by email
  - a. Taking reservations by email or by SMS is increasingly popular
  - b. Use the sample email reply and the sample booking confirmation included in this GPG to help you create your own customized email responses
  - c. See Running your reception tools 5, 6, 7

## 7. Take walk-in reservations

- a. Be friendly and confident when tourists walk in to ask about a room
- b. Describe the guesthouse features e.g:
  - i. Room facilities
  - ii. Meal service
    1. Included meals
    2. Included beverages
    3. Location of dining area
    4. Meal times
  - iii. Other services and activities, e.g.,
    1. Snacks, bottled water
    2. Laundry service
    3. Bicycle rentals
    4. Cultural activities
    5. Cooking demonstrations
    6. Fishing
    7. Guided hiking or trekking
    8. Transportation
- c. See Running your reception tools 5 and 6

## 8. Help guests with problems

If a problem occurs, guests will probably want to discuss it with the Receptionist. If so, stay calm and follow these steps:

- a. Listen to the guest's problem without interrupting
- b. Apologise
- c. Discuss a possible solution
- d. Tell the guest exactly what you will do
- e. Don't promise the impossible, but try to make the guest happy
- f. Ask your manager if you need help
- g. Follow up with guests to make sure they were satisfied



### NOTE

In tourism, we say that a complaint is a gift, because it gives you a chance to show your guests that you care enough to solve problems for them. If you solve a problem, guests are usually even happier about staying at your guesthouse.

## 1. Give good customer service

Giving good customer service is key to running a successful guesthouse. The Receptionist should give information in a friendly way. Here are things your Receptionist should be able to explain well:

- a. Details of meal services i.e. breakfast times
- b. Snacks and beverages (tea, water, etc.)

- c. Other places to dine in the area
- d. Internet/Wi-Fi use
- e. Location of nearest ATM
- f. Lost and found items
- g. Maintenance problems
- h. Additional services and activities
- i. Local transport (buses, tuk-tuks, etc.)
- j. Regional and local tourist attractions

2. Check guests in and out

- a. Use a daily arrivals and departure list to help you manage check-ins and check-outs smoothly and professionally
- b. Have guests pay for their room and tax when they check-in and issue a receipt
- c. Have them pay for additional services and activities at check-out
- d. Give guests a room key, if applicable
- e. At check-in: the Receptionist should explain the following:
  - i. Meal service
  - ii. Housekeeping service (for guests staying more than one night)
  - iii. Other services and activities
  - iv. The Receptionist should walk with guests to their room as a sign of good customer service. While walking, invite guests to ask questions.
- f. Check-out:
  - i. Have someone check the room to see if anything is damaged or missing. If so, add the charge for repair or replacement to the guest's bill.
  - ii. Take payment for any outstanding charges (laundry, activities, etc.).
  - iii. Collect the guest's room key.
  - iv. Assist with guest's transportation and luggage (if applicable).
- g. See Running your reception tools 8 and 9



## RUNNING YOUR RECEPTION TOOLS

**Table 5.2.1: Clean front desk and reception**  
**Tool 1**

Tidy front desk

Paperwork and files tidy and organized

Computer, faxes, printers clean

Walls and ceiling clean

Fans clean

All common areas clean

Paintings and artwork clean

Fabrics and rugs clean with no rips

Windows and sills clean

Floor swept and mopped

Floor clear with no obstacles

Furniture dusted and clean

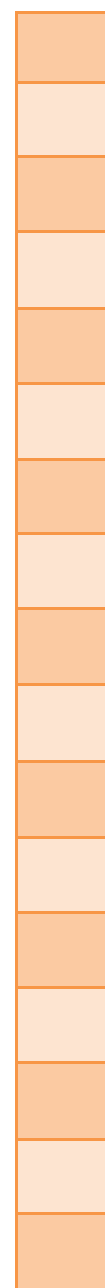
Plants watered and trimmed

Lamps and lighting clean and all bulbs work

Trash bins clean and empty

Other

Other



**Table 5.2.2: Supply list**

**Tool 2**

Items that need to be stocked so you don't run out	Date checked	Need to replace stock?	Date re-stocked
Check in-and check-out forms			
Credit card forms (if needed)			
First aid kit			
Guest comment forms			
Log book			
Paper for printer (if needed)			
Paper for messages			
Pens and pencils			
Receipt books			
Tourist information for guests (flyers, maps)			
Other			
Other			
Other			
Other			
Other			

**Table 5.2.3: Telephone numbers**  
**Tool 3**

Important numbers for Receptionist to have at all times

Owner:	
Staff:	
Police:	
Fire department:	
Doctors:	
Ambulance:	
Hospital:	
Pharmacy:	
Electricity company:	
Gas supplier:	
Water company:	
Internet supplier:	
Rental cars:	
Taxis/tuk-tuks:	
Tour companies:	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	
Other:	



**Table 5.2.4: Telephone message form**  
**Tool 4**

Receptionist (or other staff) should use this form when taking phone messages

Date:

Who message is for (name):

Caller's name:

Caller's telephone number:

Caller's email address:

Message:

Time:



**TIPS**

- Repeat the message to the caller to clarify
- Deliver the message as quickly as possible



## NOTE

The reception tools below (tools 5, 6, 8, and 9) should be available in the local language and the languages of countries with the highest number of guests, e.g. Chinese, English, French, Bahasa, Korean, and Japanese.

### Tool 5

#### Email response to booking request

Dear Mr and Mrs Li,  
Thank you for your interest in staying with us.

As you requested we have [insert number and type of rooms] available from [insert dates requested].

The rooms are priced at [insert rate] a night and include [add package conditions e.g. breakfast].

All our rooms are equipped with [insert air conditioning, fans, television, internet, transport services].

You can see picture of all our rooms on our website [insert web address]. Please note that our room prices are/are not inclusive of tax. Shall I reserve the rooms for you?

Sincerely,

**Mr/Ms** \_\_\_\_\_

**[Insert job title]** \_\_\_\_\_

**Guesthouse Telephone:**

**Website**

**Tool 6:**  
**Booking confirmation email**

Dear Mr and Mrs Li,

Thank you for choosing to stay with the \_\_\_\_\_ Guesthouse. The details of your reservation are confirmed as follows:

Reservation date: *[insert date reservation was made]*

**Guest name**

- Check in date :
- Check out date :

**Total number of nights**

- Number of rooms :
- Number of guests :
- Room type :
- Total amount due :
- Payment method :

**Total amount due**

- Estimated arrival time :
- Estimated departure time :

Check is from 2pm and check-out is 12pm

**Special instructions (if any):**

We are looking forward to welcoming you to the \_\_\_\_\_ Guesthouse.  
For further information or to make any changes to your booking please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please refer to our website for details on our booking and cancellation policy.

Sincerely,

**Mr/Ms** \_\_\_\_\_

**[Insert job title]** \_\_\_\_\_

**Guesthouse Telephone:**

**Website:**

Table 5.2.5: Daily arrivals and departures list						
Tool 7						
Date [insert today's date]						
Room	Departures (name)	Departure time	Notes	Arrivals (name)	Arrival time	Notes
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

**Table 5.2.6: Guest room receipt**  
**Tool 8**

Date [insert today's date]:

Guest name:

Check-in date:	Check-out date:	Number of nights:
Tax:	Total (incl. tax) due:	Amount paid:

Guest signature

[Insert name] Guesthouse

Address:

Email:

Telephone:

Website:

Table 5.2.7: Guest receipt on departure Tool 9			
Date [insert today's date]			
Guest name:	Check-in date:	Check-out date:	Room number:
Description of purchase		Price	
Total amount due		Amount paid	
Guest signature			
Receptionist signature			
[Insert name] Guesthouse Address: Email: Telephone: Website:			

### 5.3. Good Housekeeping:

**Having a clean and tidy guesthouse has many advantages:**

- More walk-in business
- You can charge higher room prices
- Guests take better care of your property
- Guests stay longer, relax and buy more items
- More guests return
- More guests recommend your guesthouse
- Staff have a strong sense of pride
- Fewer health and safety issues (pests, accidents, mould, etc.)

#### **Seven steps for good housekeeping**

Using a good housekeeping system will help you keep your guesthouse clean and tidy. This section explains how to use a 7-step system to ensure good housekeeping service for all your guests.

### **Step 1: Entering a guest room**

Use a standard system each time you enter a guest room. This will help you:

- Increase guests' comfort.
- Increase your efficiency.
  - See Good housekeeping tool 1

### **Step 2: Using good cleaning procedures**

Use a standard cleaning system to save time. To do this you should:

- Have all the cleaning products with you before you start cleaning.
- Follow safety guidelines when using cleaning products.
  - See Good housekeeping tools 2 and 3

### **Step 3: Cleaning guest rooms**

Always clean guest rooms from top (ceiling, lights, walls, windows) to bottom (furniture, floor, trash cans). Using this cleaning system will help you:

- Work quickly
- Avoid missing something
- Avoid having to clean something twice
  - See Good housekeeping tool 4

### **Step 4: Cleaning public areas**

Again, use the system and clean from top (ceiling, lights, walls, windows) to bottom (furniture, floor, trash cans). When cleaning in public areas:

- Do not allow guests to walk on wet floors (use a sign and/or chairs to block off wet areas).
- Greet guests in a friendly way. Smile and say "Good morning/afternoon/evening Madame/Sir!"

### **Step 5: Cleaning bathrooms**

Remember: Guests can be very sensitive about bathroom cleanliness. Some common complaints include:

- Dirty mirrors
- Dirty toilets
- Hair in the bathroom (bathtub, floor, shower, sink)
- Not enough toilet paper (always leave two rolls in the bathroom)
  - See Good housekeeping tool 5

### **Step 6: Cleaning stay-over rooms**

A stay-over room is a guest room where a guest stays for more than one night. It is important that these rooms look fresh and clean each day, but you do not have to change the linens and towels each day. For long-term guests, offer to change the linens and towels every third or fourth day.

- See Good housekeeping tool 6

### Step 7: How to manage room keys

Housekeepers are responsible for the keys they need to clean guest rooms as well as the guests' belongings in their rooms. It is important to use a system to safeguard those keys.



#### HOUSEKEEPING TOOLS

**Table 5.3.1: Entering a guest room**

**Tool 1**

**A: Entering a guest room**

1. Knock firmly on the door.
2. Say "Housekeeping" loudly (in English) so people inside can hear you
3. If there is no answer, enter the room.
4. Leave the door open while cleaning.

**B. When guests are in the room**

1. Knock firmly on the door.
2. Say "Housekeeping" loudly (in English) so people inside can hear you.
2. If a guest is in the room and answers, say (loudly) "Sorry, I will come back later."
3. Clean other areas or do other tasks.
4. Come back later, knock on the door and say "Housekeeping."
5. If there is no answer, enter the room.
6. Leave the door open while cleaning.

**C: When there is a "do not disturb" sign on the door**

1. Do not knock on the door
2. Come back later when the sign is removed
3. Follow the steps for entering a guestroom

**D: When there is a "please clean room" sign on the door**

1. Do not enter the room without knocking
2. Follow the steps to entering a guestroom

**Table 5.3.2: Cleaning products checklist**

**Tool 2**

## Facemask and gloves

Container to carry cleaning products

- Bleach
- All purpose cleaner
- Glass cleaner
- Toilet cleaner

Bucket

Broom and dustpan

Clean cloths

Insect spray

Bag or container for dirty laundry

Bag or container of supplies:

- Bottled water
- Soap
- Toilet paper

Large trash bag to remove trash

Mop

Scrubbing brush

Toilet brush

Bag or container of clean linens and towels



**Table 5.3.3: Do's and don't of using cleaning products**

**Tool 3**

**DO**

- ✓ Follow manufacturer's instructions
- ✓ Open windows
- ✓ Wear a face mask and gloves
- ✓ Dilute according to manufacturer's instructions
- ✓ Put caps on tightly

**DON'T**

- ✗ Put cleaning products in unmarked bottles
- ✗ Mix chemicals
- ✗ Store near food
- ✗ Smoke, eat or drink while using the products

**Table 5.3.4: Guest room cleaning checklist**

**Tool 4**

✓

Top to bottom cleaning. Do each action in this order, systematically cleaning from top to bottom, and each time consistently

Dust and clean the ceiling (spider webs, mould, dirt)

Dust and clean walls and woodwork (spider webs, mould, dust and dirt)

Clean the windows and window sills

Dust and wet wipe other items (TV, furniture, decorations, doorknobs, fans)

Sweep and mop the floor

Empty and clean the trash bins

Change or remake the beds

Tidy and arrange everything nicely

Clean the bathroom

When finished cleaning:

- Close the windows, if appropriate
- Turn off the fans/air conditioning
- Turn off the lights
- Close and lock the doors

**Table 5.3.5: Bathroom cleaning checklist**

**Tool 5**

- Wear a facemask and gloves
- Clean the ceiling
- Clean the walls (use bleach and a scrubbing brush to remove mould)
- Clean the shower curtain or door with a scrubbing brush
- Clean the toilet
- Clean the mirror using glass cleaner and a dry cloth
- Clean all shelves and other fixtures using a wet cloth
- Rinse and wipe the sink
- Restock bathroom supplies (toilet paper, soap)
- Clean the floor (sweep, then mop)
- Make sure there is no hair anywhere (sink, shower, toilet, wall, floor)
- Empty and clean the trash bin

✓

**Table 5.3.6: Stay-over room cleaning checklist**

**Tool 6**

- Clean guest room as usual
- If bedding is still fresh, just remake the bed - if not, change the linen
- Move guest's items only to clean under them
- Empty and clean the trash bins
- Clean and restock bathroom as usual

✓

## 5.4. Meal Service

### Three steps for running a good meal service:

Using a meal service system will help you keep your dining area clean and attractive. It will also help you serve meals in a friendly, efficient way.

#### Step 1: Preparing the dining area

- Prepare the dining area before your guests arrive
- Make sure any staff in contact with food maintain high personal hygiene standards

#### Step 2: Serving meals

- Smile and be friendly while serving meals
- Be attentive to guests' needs
- Explain what is included
- Try to accommodate simple requests if possible

#### Step 3: Cleaning up after meals - when the meal service is finished:

- Clean the dining area
- Prepare whatever you can for the next meal service

**Table 5.4.1: Preparing dining area checklist**

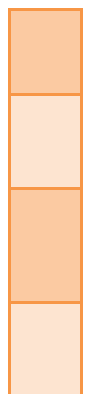
**Tool 1**

Clean the dining area from top to bottom (ceiling, walls, furniture, floor)

Arrange tablecloth, napkins, chopsticks, knives, forks, spoons, glasses, cups, etc.

Place clean condiments on table as needed (salt, pepper, seasonings, sauces etc.)

Prepare beverage service (coffee, tea bags, hot water, milk, sugar etc.)



**Table 5.4.2: Serving meals checklist**

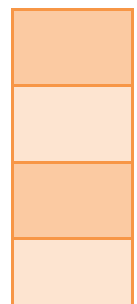
**Tool 2**

Greet guests as they arrive

Help guests find seating

When guests are seated, explain what food and drink choices they have

If you use menus and something is not available inform guests immediately



Offer guests beverages (water, coffee, tea)

Ask for their breakfast choices

Take the order to the cook

Continue to greet guests, seat them and take their order

Serve the food to guests, as it is ready. Place each person's order in front of them

Ask them if there is anything else that they need

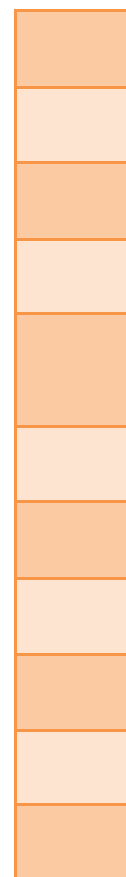
After a few moments ask guests if they are enjoying their meals

While guests eat, take away empty plates

Keep checking that self service areas are well stocked

When guests leave, smile and say "thank you, have a nice day" (or evening)

Clean tables and dining area after guests leave



**Table 5.4.3: Cleaning up after meals checklist**  
**Tool 3**

Clean tables and chairs (or benches) – remove all spills and crumbs

Clean menus (if you use them)

Clean and refill condiments (salt, pepper, spices, etc.)

Clean and refill accessories (napkins, toothpicks, etc.)

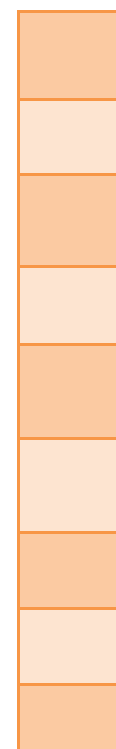
Arrange condiments and cutlery either neatly on the table or stored away

Put dirty tablecloths, cloth napkins etc. in the laundry

Sweep and mop the floor

Wash and dry cups, glasses, plates, forks, spoons, knives, chopsticks, etc.

Review supplies and re-stock items as needed





# Safety and Health

## 6. Safety and Health

### OBJECTIVES:

- Improve safety and health for those working in the guesthouse and for guests
- Give you tools and checklists to ensure good safety and health standards in your guesthouse

### ACTIVITY BOOK:

We cover this in session 7

Maintaining good safety and health standards in your guesthouse will help you to attract and keep guests. As the owner or manager of your guesthouse, you are responsible for the safety and health of your guests and employees.

This section provides an overview of the different areas of safety and health that relate to your guesthouse. Example checklists are included that you can change to suit your needs. Share the information with your staff so they can follow the tips and advice and keep your guesthouse standards high.



### NOTE:

You can keep safety and health standards high in your guesthouse at little cost.

- Failing to maintain high standards will reduce the number of guests who will stay at your guesthouse.
- You can prevent some accidents and problems by following basic safety and health systems.
- Not all accidents and problems can be prevented, but knowing in advance how to respond to them can limit damage and losses.

### 6.1. Occupational Safety and Health (OSH):

#### Accident prevention:

Many accidents can be prevented with careful planning. Using a system of regular maintenance of your buildings, tidying and cleaning common areas, and keeping guest rooms secure can prevent injuries or damage to personal items. Making sure your staff members wear clothing that is safe, and that they all know how to use equipment safely, can reduce accidents at work and improve your standards. (See OSH tools 1 and 2)

**Good Hygiene:**

It is important that you and your staff follow a system of good hygiene for the workplace, such as regularly washing their hands and keeping hair tied back when cooking. (See OSH tool 3)

**Fire safety:**

You can reduce the risk of fire by following an accident prevention system that includes maintaining equipment, frequently checking gas and electric circuits, regularly tidying corridors and keeping corridors and doors unobstructed. Fires often take people by surprise, so creating a fire safety checklist can limit damage. (See OSH tool 4)

**Pest control:**

Following a basic hygiene and cleanliness system in your guesthouse can help keep pests away. (See OSH tool 5)

**Accident response:**

Having accident response systems in place can help limit damages if accidents occur.

**First aid:**

Do you have a first aid kit to treat small injuries and illnesses? Is it easy to access, and do all your staff members know where it is? Does it have all the items you need and are they within their expiry date? (See OSH tool 6)

**Fire response:**

What plan do you have in case a fire occurs? Would you and your staff know what to do? Maintaining a fire response checklist and running regular fire drills can help you save lives and limit damage to your property. (OSH tool 7)





## OSH CHECKLISTS

**Table 6.1.1: Do's and Don'ts of Guesthouse Safety and Security for Managers**  
**Tool 1**

### For managers:

#### DO:

- ✓ Keep corridors and common areas lit
- ✓ Put handrails on all stairways
- ✓ Put locks on windows and doors
- ✓ Maintain steps and stairs in good condition
- ✓ Make electric outlets grounded (earthed)
- ✓ Maintain fire extinguishers
- ✓ Keep your first aid kit well stocked
- ✓ Practice fire and accident drills with your staff

#### DON'T:

- ✗ Leave obstructions in public areas or fire exits
- ✗ Install any hooks at eye level
- ✗ Allow domestic animals in kitchen or dining area
- ✗ Allow unsafe knife usage
- ✗ Lock fire exits
- ✗ Leave valuable items unattended
- ✗ Use broken equipment
- ✗ Over-work your staff

### For employees:

- ✓ Block off wet floors when cleaning to prevent people slipping
- ✓ Repair broken equipment
- ✓ Let staff (including you) rest when sick
- ✓ Wear strong, supportive shoes
- ✓ Wear a mask and gloves when working with toxic chemicals

- ✗ Carry things higher than eye level
- ✗ Leave guestroom doors unlocked
- ✗ Move or lift heavy items alone
- ✗ Stretch too far while on a ladder
- ✗ Touch electric sockets with wet hands
- ✗ Try to fix something yourself if it is not safe - ask someone to help

<b>Table 6.1.2: Personal hygiene checklist for staff who interact with guests</b> <b>Tool 2</b>	
<b>Have I:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bathed or showered today?</li> <li>• Used deodorant?</li> <li>• Brushed my teeth today?</li> <li>• Cleaned and trimmed my fingernails?</li> <li>• Washed my hands after every time I used the toilet?</li> <li>• Washed my hands before and after eating?</li> <li>• Tied my hair back when near food?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worn clean, neat clothes?</li> <li>• Worn shoes and clothes that are safe to work in?</li> <li>• Used a Band-Aid to cover open cuts?</li> <li>• Covered my mouth when I coughed or sneezed?</li> <li>• Thrown dirty tissues away immediately?</li> <li>• Rested if I am sick?</li> </ul>

- Table 6.1.3: Fire safety checklist**  
**Tool 3**
- Install smoke alarms in each guestroom (if possible)
  - Post evacuation procedures on the back of each guestroom door
  - Practice evacuation procedures with your staff on a regular basis
  - Choose a safe place to evacuate to
  - Keep fire extinguishers on each floor
  - Ensure an easy exit from each guestroom (two ways are recommended: for example, through a door and through a window)
  - Have a safe means for all occupants to reach the ground floor
  - Ensure that all windows and doors can be opened in case of fire
  - Know and comply with all local and national fire codes

✓

**Table 6.1.4: Pest control checklist**

**Tool 4**

- Check stored food supplies for signs of pests
- Store all food in sealed containers
- Clean up spills and crumbs quickly
- Do not leave food scraps exposed
- Make sure doors and windows close tightly
- Seal holes and cracks in floors and walls
- Seal openings around pipes
- Keep storage areas clean and dry
- Keep lids on all trash bins
- Clean and disinfect trash bins often
- Keep all equipment clean
- Trim plants regularly
- Insist on a high level of cleanliness

✓

**Table 6.1.5: Accident or emergency checklist**

**Tool 5**

- Take everyone involved to a safe place
- Call for help if needed (use the receptionist's emergency telephone numbers)
- Help the injured if possible (use your well-stocked first aid kit)
- Find out what caused the accident or emergency and try to limit the damage
- Later, discuss how you can prevent the accident or emergency from recurring

✓

**Table 6.1.6: First aid kit checklist (suggested items)**

**Tool 6**

- Antiseptic cream
- Bandages in various sizes and shapes
- Sterile pads
- Cotton wool packs
- Surgical tape
- Safety pins
- Clinical thermometer
- Painkiller (aspirin)
- Tweezers
- Mosquito lotion (calamine)
- Scissors
- Other?

✓

**Table 6.1.7: What to do in case of fire checklist**

**Tool 7**

- Alert people in the area so they can move to safety
- Turn on the fire alarm
- Call the fire department immediately
- If in doubt, evacuate the buildings
- Take guests and staff quickly but calmly to a safe place
- Remove all cash, if possible
- Take the Monthly Arrivals and Departures Calendar, if possible
- Close doors and windows, if possible
- Turn off the fuel or heat source (gas or electricity), if possible
- Keep phone lines open
- Be vigilant in case of theft
- Use fire extinguishers, if it is safe
- Do not use water on a fire involving fat, oil, or electrical equipment
- Wrap blankets around someone whose clothes are on fire to put out flames
- Call for an ambulance or medical help, if necessary

✓





## Small Business Competitiveness



International  
Labour  
Organization



[www.sme-tools.org](http://www.sme-tools.org)