



The SAT Guide to Managing Guest Complaints

Respond clearly resolve fairly and prevent repeat problems

A practical guide with editable Word templates and an Excel workbook

Hotel managers, reception teams and guest service supervisors

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How to use this toolkit

A guest complaint is a request for a response to an experience that has fallen short. The team needs a calm method for understanding the facts, putting urgent matters right and agreeing the next step. This guide provides a practical service recovery process, example wording and editable records. It is written for ordinary hospitality complaints and does not replace emergency procedures, safeguarding, professional investigation, consumer law or advice on formal disputes. Use it alongside the property's authority limits and escalation rules.

Begin with the guide, adapt the Word templates to your property, and enter your own figures or records in the highlighted Excel cells. Keep an untouched master copy. Use one currency and one reporting period consistently. The workbook starts with blank inputs; examples in the guide are illustrative and are not preloaded operating results.

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Prepare the team before a complaint

Write down who may authorise a room move, replacement service, refund or goodwill gesture. Set financial limits and a clear route to a manager. Staff should know the difference between acknowledging a complaint and admitting legal liability. They should also know which matters require immediate escalation, including injury, threats, discrimination, safeguarding, suspected crime and serious food or equipment concerns.

Make contact routes clear to guests before they need them. A useful pre-arrival message or room directory explains how to reach reception or an out-of-hours contact. Staff must have a workable way to record and hand over concerns. Avoid a process that depends on one person's memory or a private messaging thread unavailable to the next shift.

Train with realistic scenarios and observe the response. Give colleagues permission to listen and to find help rather than recite a script. Review accessibility, language and communication needs. The guest may need a quieter place, written explanation or additional time. Do not infer that anger, age or nationality determines whether the concern is valid. Consistent treatment means a fair process adapted to the circumstances.

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Choose one process to review this week. Record the evidence, responsible person and a realistic follow-up date in the editable templates.