The Basics of Hotel Security - The Same, But Different

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Whether the hotel is located within the United States or outside of the country, the security of hotel guests and employees is top of mind for all hotel brands and managers. Historically, certain events, such as the murder of Nan Todler in 2003 in her own hotel room by hotel manager Christopher Richee, have resulted in efforts to spur legislative reform. During the murder investigation, it was learned that no background check had been run on Richee. Had a background check been conducted, various red flags might have come to light, such as a criminal history, including the unlawful use of weapons, and allegations of stalking a female co-worker.

As a result of the failure to employ simple and basic security measures, the family of Todler received a civil judgment of $4.6 million. In addition, the Todler family lobbied for legislation in the State of Pennsylvania that would have required innkeepers to perform background checks on hotel staff, especially those with access to guest room keys. While no legislation was ultimately passed, a majority of hotel operators and managers employ this simple procedure as part of their best practices.

With the advent of new technology and the ability to change locks and track key card usage, access to rooms and room keys can be better safeguarded; in most cases, hotels have completely eliminated the need for traditional hard keys. Some hotel brands, managers and operators have implemented other forms of security, including the inspection of vendors and trucks and cars entering the hotel property, and, where there may be a specific threat, limiting the ability of the hotel to hold baggage before check-in and after check-out. While security in its truest essence has remained the same over time, technology has allowed operators and managers to employ innovative methods to ensure a more secure guest experience.

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