

Hotel Update



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Chairman, Crew Accommodations Committee

As I reported to you in the last issue, the long overnight hotel in RIC has started to require a credit card imprint from crewmembers. The Concourse Hotel in CMH may also start requiring a credit card imprint before turning on the phone, turning on the pay movies, or letting a crewmember make any room charges. Again, this is happening because some crewmembers are not paying the incidentals. We need everyone's help in stopping this practice from spreading. You can help by reminding everyone in your crew to make sure they pay their charges before leaving the hotel.

A few years back we had a discussion at a committee meeting about establishing a check-out procedure that would avoid the need to require credit card or cash deposits by our hotels. After much debate we decided to keep doing what we have been doing: try to remind the crews of the need to pay these incidentals. We enjoy a great benefit by not having to leave a credit card imprint or cash deposit each time we check into a hotel. Traveling on my own, I've never been able to get a hotel to give me a key to a room without leaving something with them.

America West is using a procedure we were considering. They reported that when this policy was instituted their unpaid incidentals dropped to almost nothing. What we would do is add two columns to the sign-in sheet. One column would be where the hotel would enter your charges and the other column would be for your initials indicating you agree with the amount that the hotel had entered. By requiring the hotel to have the total entered before checkout, crewmembers could make sure that their folio was closed-out before departing. It

would require some education on our part with the hotels to make sure that they had the totals recorded before checkout, especially for early morning departures. One would have the option of not signing out. However, that would open up the risk of being billed for charges that were recorded in error.

This system has worked so well for America West that the company guarantees that incidentals will be paid. I've not talked to my counterpart at America West for awhile so I don't know how the system is running now. I would like to be able to continue our current procedures, but if we don't take responsibility for our own actions we may find the only way to have anything turned on in the room is by leaving a credit card imprint. Currently, we have the ability to get a receipt when checking out of a hotel, ensuring that there are no unpaid room charges.

CLT committee vacancy

The committee has at least one opening for a committee member in Charlotte. Dennis Rawls, a committee member since just after I assumed the chairmanship, is resigning to join the Training Department. I'm sorry to lose him, but I believe the Training Department is gaining a super individual. So if you have an interest in joining the Crew Accommodations Committee, please contact Bob Gaudio (CLT) or me.

Miscellaneous

I was hoping to be able to report on a meeting with Mr. Tom Fink, VP of Purchasing, but the meeting had to be postponed due to schedule conflicts. We have rescheduled the meeting. I hope to also meet with the Dining and Cabin Service folks to get the crew meal menus moving forward again. This process has been bogged

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down for quite some time and I would like to see our company get value for the money they spend on our crew meals.

Speaking of being bogged down, the computer program responsible for scheduling crew meals is still not meeting the requirements of our contract. When crews bring these cases to my attention they are usually resolved successfully, but it would be nice to not have to go through the process at all.

We have also been asked by the Training Committee to become more involved with the hotel training rooms we use, primarily in Pittsburgh and Charlotte. Management has tried to centralize the purchasing of these rooms and it's now being handled by Crew Accommodations personnel whom I already deal with. I would appreciate some feedback by phone, letter, or e-mail regarding your experiences with these training rooms. By contacting a committee

member or me, instead of the training committee, we might be able to resolve some of these hotel training room problems more quickly. I will talk with Training Committee Chairman Tim Baker about what we're doing.

I hope that by directing these kinds of complaints in my direction, Tim will have more time to devote to other training issues. Not that I have a lot more free time than Tim, but we should be able to coordinate our trips to these cities along with Crew Accommodations duties.

Changes

On July 1, there was a change in the ORD short overnight. We will now be using the Wyndham Garden Hotel for short overnights. As I reported last month, the move to this hotel should eliminate the noise complaints we had at the Radisson Hotel as well as the heating and air conditioning system problems. Each room has its own unit eliminating the problem of the entire hotel being in either a heating or cooling mode. For those of you who like to open the window, you will also be able to do that at the Wyndham and without hearing airport noise.

On August 1, we will be changing our hotel in Houston to the Sheraton North. You have passed it many times on your way to the Clarion. We will be using this hotel for both long and short overnights. But in the past six months we have only had seven crews on long overnights. Six of those occurred in January and one in May. The Sheraton also runs a local shuttle just as the Clarion did, but the hotel is much closer to the airport.

Hotel reviews

We paid a visit to MKE to search for a long overnight hotel and should have one in place by August. At the present time we are looking to move only the crew that arrives in the early afternoon. We have found two hotels in town that would be acceptable, but due to the deadline everything is not yet in place. We decided to leave the late-arriving crew at the airport hotel, as there is very little open in town at the time the crew would be downtown. My thinking was that the crew might like the chance to sleep in and get to bed earlier on the trip instead driving further just to sleep. If the crews are unhappy about being located at the airport, we will change it.

We also made a trip to Detroit to review our short overnight hotel and other options. On this trip I finally was able to meet the newest committee member, J. H. Smith (BWI). We were

able to spend some time reviewing hotels. Smitty's perspective and observations were a big help and I am looking forward to working with him.

The reason for the trip was that the Doubletree has been relocating our crews and we wanted let them know that this is unacceptable. We have found a couple of other hotels that are very close in quality that would like to have some of our business. So if we're not able to come to an agreement with the Doubletree about the relocations, we have alternatives already selected.

I took the time to run by the St. Regis Hotel, which we are using for our long overnights. We had to make the move there because the Marriott terminated our contract so they could renovate the hotel. The area around the St. Regis is not as noisy, but I'm not sure there is a good place to overnight in the city of Detroit. We want to expand the search and look in some of the suburbs, but the long overnights haven't been that steady for us recently. I looked at one other

hotel in Ann Arbor, but it was just as far away as the city. The hotel was run down and they host a lot of groups, especially during football season. Again, we know we need to spend some more time in DTW looking for a long hotel. In the meantime, the St. Regis has a shuttle at the hotel that they say is available to the crews, but no one is using it. Please try to use it and let me know your thoughts on this hotel.

That's it for this month. I hope everyone is having a good summer and please keep the OF-310 forms coming. Just because you see a hotel on one of these lists, don't think you don't need to fill out a form if you have a problem or want to express your opinion.

Thanks and have a good overnight!



Disapproval List

EWR long — I have received a proposal from a hotel that would like to do business with us, but we've not had a chance to inspect it. We may be getting close to solving this one.

Watch List

CLE short — Ramada. Dirty hotel. We are trying to find time to inspect some alternate choices.

IND short — Quality Inn. Dirty hotel and very poor location for any long overnights. We need to inspect the Ramada again and look for alternatives for the short business that we put at the Quality.

MCI long — New to the list. This hotel is tied for the most complaints with the old FLL long. Problems are its distance from the field and that it is a limited service hotel. We had a committee member on an overnight there who was able to inspect a hotel in town interested in some business.

MSP — Hotel under renovation and it is time to do a market survey for a better hotel.

PBI long — A big drop off in complaints from last month. Only one complaint was received and it was a follow-up to a reply I had sent.

TPA long — Very poor location. We will be looking for options.

The OF-310 Form count for the month was down a bit due to it being summer. The total was 75. Of these, five were good comments, two concerned crew meals, and two were general comments.