

Front Desk — Shift Set-Up & Readiness

Department: Front Office | Category: Operational · audit-supporting | Standard: Forbes / LQA

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Document Identification

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Title (EN)	Front Desk — Shift Set-Up & Readiness
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Department	Front Office · Reception
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Related JDs	Front Office Manager · Front Desk Agent · Shift Leader

1. Purpose & Scope

Purpose:
This procedure defines how the front desk is prepared at the start of each shift. An unprepared front desk — a system not checked, a key not reconciled, a VIP arrival note not communicated — creates a reactive shift instead of a proactive one. The set-up converts the handover into a state of readiness so the first arriving guest is met by someone who already knows who they are.

It sets the structured shift handover, the PMS and system readiness check, key-cabinet verification, room-status review with Housekeeping, uniform and presentation standards, and the opening sign-off.

Regulatory & KSA context:
The front desk readiness includes confirming the guest-registration and Shomoos reporting system is operational (FO-KSA-001), and that VIP and royal guest arrivals are flagged and coordinated with Security.

Scope:

- Applies to the front desk at the start of every shift.
- Covers shift handover, PMS and system readiness, key control, room status, uniform, and sign-off.

Out of scope:

- Check-in mechanics — covered by FO-D-002.
- Night audit close — covered by FO-NA-001.

2. Definitions & Key Terms

The following terms are used throughout this procedure and are defined here so that every team member applies them consistently.

Term	Meaning
PMS	Property Management System — the hotel's operating system for reservations and guest records.
Shift handover	The structured transfer of information from the outgoing to the incoming team.

Term	Meaning
Room status	The real-time condition of each room: dirty, clean, inspected, occupied, or vacant.
Key cabinet	The secure store for master and emergency keys; logged and controlled.

3. Roles & Responsibilities

Who does what:

The RACI letter after each role indicates its level of involvement: A (Accountable, single owner), R (Responsible, executes the work), C (Consulted, provides input), I (Informed, kept aware).

Front Office Manager · A

Oversees shift readiness; reviews handover quality.

Shift Leader · R

Leads the handover; signs the readiness checklist.

Front Desk Agent · R

Checks system readiness and their assigned stations.

4. Procedure

The procedure runs in six phases from the handover through to the opening sign-off.

PHASE 1 Shift Handover · At shift start

- 1.1 Shift Leader:** Receives the verbal and written handover from the outgoing team: arrivals and departures for the session, VIP and special-occasion guests, any outstanding guest requests, room issues, complaints in progress, and any unresolved operational matter.
- 1.2 Shift Leader:** Reviews the departure list and the arrival list: confirms which rooms are expected to be ready, which guests are due, and which VIPs need personal attention on arrival.

PHASE 2 PMS & System Readiness · Start of shift

- 2.1 Front Desk Agent:** Logs into the PMS and confirms it is responding correctly; verifies the day's arrivals, departures, and stay-overs; confirms that room-status updates from Housekeeping are flowing.
- 2.2 Front Desk Agent:** Confirms the guest-registration system (Shomoos/Muqem) is operational (FO-KSA-001); confirms payment terminals are live and key-card encoders are loaded.

PHASE 3 Key Control Verification · Start of shift

- 3.1 Shift Leader:** Audits the key cabinet: every master and emergency key is signed in/out correctly; any discrepancy is investigated and resolved before the shift begins; the log is signed.

PHASE 4 Room-Status Review · Start of shift

- 4.1 Shift Leader:** Contacts Housekeeping to confirm the status of arrivals for the session; identifies any rooms that will not be ready at the expected check-in time and plans guest communication.

PHASE 5 Uniform & Presentation · Start of shift

- 5.1 Shift Leader:** Confirms every agent at the desk is in the complete, pressed uniform with name badge worn; presentation is professional and grooming is to the Forbes/LQA standard before the first guest arrives.

PHASE 6 Sign-Off & Opening · Before first guest arrival

- 6.1 Front Office Manager:** Walks the lobby and the front desk against the opening standard; confirms the team is briefed, systems are live, keys are controlled, and the desk is ready; signs the readiness checklist.

5. Standards & Regulatory Alignment

The front desk is a Forbes/LQA observed space from the moment the first guest approaches.

Source	Standard / Requirement	Where Addressed
Forbes	Team in complete uniform; name badge worn; professional presentation	Phase 5
Forbes / LQA	VIP arrivals flagged; special occasions noted; team briefed	Phase 1
LQA	Systems operational; room status accurate	Phase 2

6. Common Deviations & Recovery

The deviations below are anticipated; each has a defined recovery action to ensure a consistent response and protect the guest experience and operational continuity.

Potential Deviation	Immediate Recovery Action	Prevention
Handover incomplete or verbal only	Require a written handover; verbal-only loses detail.	Written handover discipline (Phase 1.1).
PMS or system fault at shift start	Escalate to IT immediately; the shift cannot operate without systems.	PMS check (Phase 2.1).
Key discrepancy found	Investigate immediately; do not begin the shift with an unresolved key issue.	Key audit (Phase 3.1).
Room not ready for an arrival	Communicate to the guest proactively; offer a plan.	Room-status review (Phase 4.1).

7. Documentation & Records

Shift readiness records demonstrate operational discipline.

Record / Artefact	Owner	Storage / Retention
Shift readiness checklist (signed)	Shift Leader · FO Manager	FO ops folder · 3 months
Key log	Shift Leader	Security / FO folder · 12 months

Audit-trail integrity:

- Readiness checklist is signed before the first guest interaction.
- Key log is audited at every shift change.

8. Related Procedures & References

Related SOPs:

- FO-D-002 — Individual Guest Check-In
- FO-NA-001 — Night Audit
- FO-KSA-001 — Guest Registration & KSA Compliance

External references:

- Forbes Travel Guide hotel standards (current edition)
- LQA front office standards (current edition)

9. Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Summary of Change
1.0	2026	Seen Brands	Initial issue.

10. Document Approval

This procedure is approved for operational use upon signature by the following authorities.

Front Office Manager
Name · Signature · Date

Director of Rooms
Name · Signature · Date

Training & Quality Manager
Name · Signature · Date

General Manager
Name · Signature · Date