

Legal Alert – April 2015 – Grading and Classification of Hotels and Other Hospitality Establishments Regulations

Introduction

According to BusinessDictionary.com, there is no globally accepted, industry generally recognised benchmark(s) for the grading, rating or classifying of Hotels and other Hospitality Establishments.

Large Hotel Chains, Groups and Hotel Associations in different countries however have some globally recognised Guide which though is/are only implemented within the Hotel Chain, Group or Association itself.

Presently in Nigeria, one of the Codified legal framework in this area is the Nigerian Tourism Development Corporation Act from which the Hospitality and Tourism Establishments (Registration, Grading and Classification) Regulations were made.

There is also for Lagos State, the Lagos State Hotel Licensing Law which authorises the Lagos State Ministry of Tourism and Inter-governmental Relations, through the Lagos State Hotel Licensing Authority, to classify, regulate, standardise and grade hospitality and other tourism businesses in Lagos State.

Guide to Grading and Classification Criteria

Hospitality and Tourism Establishments are required to be graded and classified based on the minimum operating standards of the facilities and the services provided, managed and maintained in each Grade or Class of such establishment.

A review of the various Grading or Classification Criteria in different countries reveals the following common minimum requirements for each Class or Grade of Hotel, Restaurant, or such other Hospitality Establishment. Some of these minimum requirements are examined in the following paragraphs.

ONE STAR – A One-Star Hotel has some modest, limited range of facilities, furnishing and refreshment with at least ten (10) ensuite bedrooms. It adheres to a high standard of facilities-wide cleanliness. Such Hotels are generally located in an accessible section of the City, with onsite representatives on a twenty-four (24) hour, seven (7) days a week basis.

TWO STAR – This grade of Hotel offers a higher standard of accommodation, with at least twenty (20) better-equipped ensuite bedrooms than a One Star Hotel. Each Guest Room must have a telephone and a coloured television (“TV”). It must also have a minimum parking area for at least 10 Guests cars.

THREE STAR – This grade of Hotel offers more spacious, nicer, better-equipped furnished ensuite rooms when compared to One Star and Two Star Hotels. It also has high-class decorations, coloured television in the ensuite rooms, showers, central air-conditioning, valet and room service, one or more bars and lounges in the Hotel, on-site Restaurant, and a small fitness centre with a standard swimming pool. It must also have a minimum of thirty (30) ensuite rooms in a more high-brow location of the City where it is located.

FOUR STAR – A Four Star Hotel comes with exceptionally well furnished ensuite rooms, with central air-conditioning, room and valet service, excellent restaurant and cuisine, concierge, portage and luggage handling services, laundry, standard swimming pool and other recreational facilities. The location and environment where the Hotel is situated should be suitable for a Hotel with international standards. A Four Star Hotel also offers at least Fifty (50) ensuite rooms – 20% of which must be Suites and 25% must be single rooms.

A Four Star Hotel must also have at least one serviced elevator for its Guests, and another service elevator for its staff. Other facilities that it must have include: - fire detection facilities, closed circuit television (CCTV), a dining room, an internationally trained Manager, car park for at least 50 cars, Reception/Information Counter, Conference and Banquets Halls. At least 70% of its employees must be professionally trained.

FIVE STAR – This is usually an internationally recognised branded Hotel, offering the highest standards and luxuries in its premises, with some of the finest architecture, ambience, accommodation, amenities, range of top-class guests and services provided. A Five Star Hotel should have a gym, a bigger sized Swimming Pool, Cuisines, more than one Restaurant, Casino, on-site shopping facilities and other in-premises recreational facilities.

A Five Star Hotel also offers at least one serviced lift/elevator for its Guests and another lift/elevator for its employees and goods. It must have at least 100 bedrooms; 25% of these rooms must be Suites and 20% must be Single Rooms. It must also have Gardens, a Lawn or Roof Garden, Reception and Information Centre, 24hours Concierge and Porter Service, room service, a central Air-Conditioning System, CCTV, Wake-up Call Service, Conference and Banquet Halls, at least 2 Restaurants, Dining Rooms, 24hours coffee shop, a well-equipped Bar and a Car Park for at least 50 Guest cars.

Its Manager must be internationally trained and should speak, where possible, more than one internationally recognised language. At least 80% of its other personnel must be trained in providing the highest quality of hospitality services.

Classification of Restaurants

For Restaurants, their classification or grading is usually in One, Two, Three or Four Crown classification.

Offences

It is an offence for any Owner or Manager of any Hospitality, Leisure or Tourism Establishment to use any Star or Crown other than the one approved by the Hospitality Regulator. Fines and terms of imprisonment apply where such Owner or Manager is found guilty of any grading or classification infraction.

The Hospitality Regulator also has the legal authority to seal any business premises that constantly breaches any of the above Grading or Classification Regulations.

Conclusion

A nationally transparent, buyers and sellers accepted good-faith Criteria and Regulations for the grading and classifying of Hotels and other Hospitality Establishments is very important in building consumer confidence and trust in the Hospitality, Tourism and other leisure sectors of the economy.

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