

Unit-1

Handling Special Situations

The **Groups** module is used to make **reservations** for five or more guests who have some features in common (they are all from the same company and are arriving on approximately the same dates, or they are all members of an organized tour **group**). Front office team has to be prepared for receiving a **group** in the **hotel**. They should also make sure that the requested rooms are ready at the time of **group arrival** and also the room blocking as been done as per the rooming list sent by the Travel Agent / Company. **Handling Group Arrivals** is a Standard Operating Procedure (**SOP**) to assist and expedite the moving of guest luggage from bus to lobby, then from the lobby to the guest's room.

Types of Groups

For the convenience of Front Office, hotels classify groups in following categories:

1. **Series group:** Group in this category arrives in series and follows the same itinerary one after another for a specific period of time, say one year. Similar packages and arrangements such as types of rooms and food-are given to groups. Generally the number of persons in the group is also same. Generally brochure programmes are used and are sold by tour operators. Series groups are booked through a travel agent on a discounted tariff.
 2. **Ad-hoc group:** These are one-time groups and are booked through a travel agent to avail of special rates. They don't make a part of series. For every group under this category the packages may be different. They are also booked through travel agents.
 3. **Incentive group:** This category consists of groups sent to the hotel by various multinational companies and national corporations, etc. The staff are given incentives and are paid by the company or organization to which they belong and are sent by their companies, etc. as incentive for
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meeting the production or sales targets, etc. These are very lucrative groups for the hotel. Hotels give special rates to them.

4. **Fam groups:** They are also called as familiarization groups. This type of group is composed of travel agents, tour operators and travel writers, etc., who come to familiarize them with the destination and its tourism product. They are important because they are the people who would be sending groups in future. They are generally provided complimentary rooms. Sometimes the hotel may not have sufficient rooms to book for the groups requested by the travel agent. In such cases the hotel sends the following letter to the travel agent group suggesting alternate dates.

Wait listing Group: Sometimes when the lead time is more and many groups are booked and a hotel gets a request for booking of a new group, which cannot be confirmed, and at the same time hotel does not want to say no to this business, then in this case the reservation manager may send a letter to the group organizer that his request of reservation has been put on waiting list.

Group reservations are of great importance and must be dealt with quickly and accurately because of the following reasons:

- Group forms a major part of business.
- The tour operator can only proceed in marketing the package after he secures room confirmations.
- Group reservation demands the blocking of a large number of rooms sometimes years in advance.
- A final confirmation of group booking takes longer too materialise.

Some Examples of Group are:

Tour Groups, Convection groups, Participants to a seminar, Participants to a training programme, Political delegations, performing artists, Military troops, Fashion show organisers and models, Reunions, sport team and delegations, Airlines crews, Government delegations, State visits.

Rooming List

A group leader sends a roster of guests and their lodging need presented to a hotel before the arrival of group. By referring the roaster sent by group leader rooming list is a list prepared by receptionist for the groups or crews, containing the names of group members and corresponding room numbers.

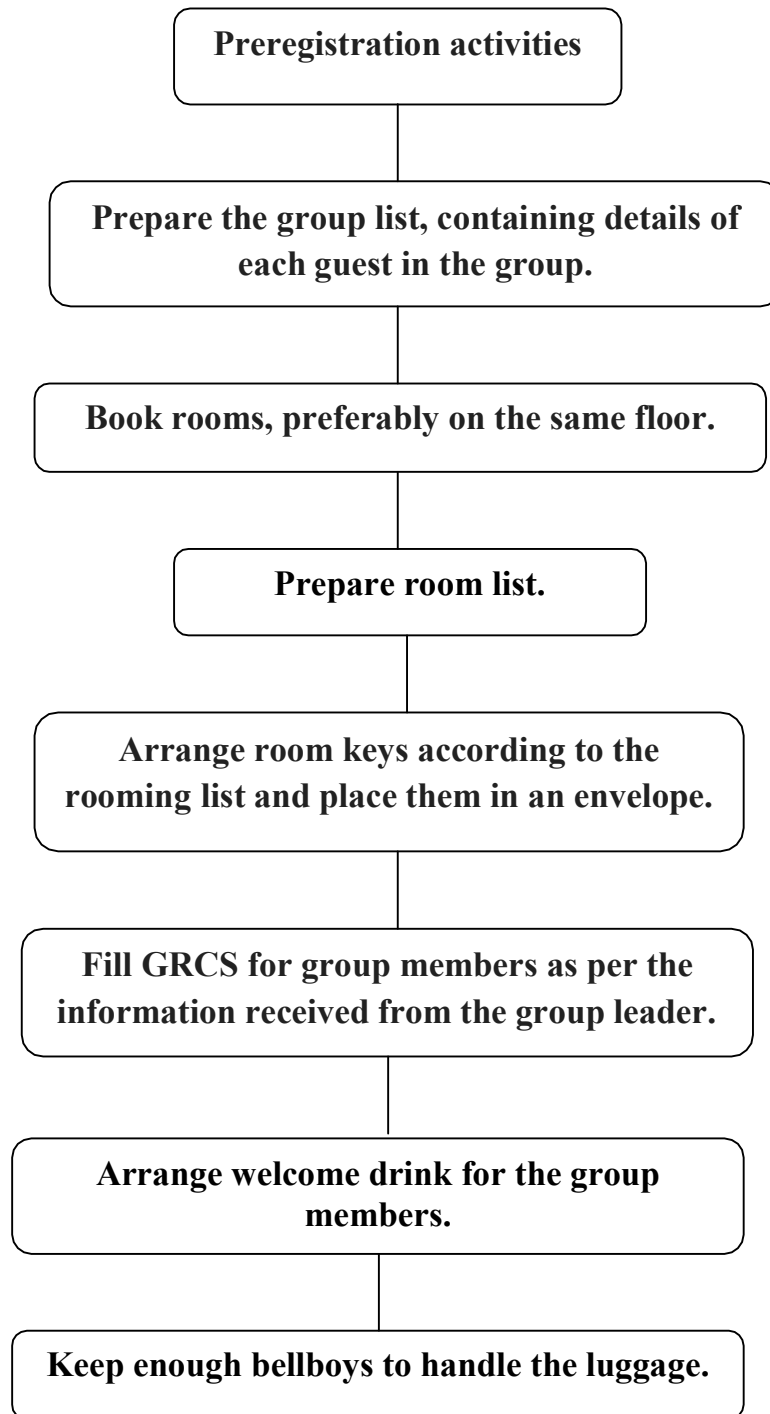
HOTEL ABC ROOMING LIST						
Source of Booking: _____					S. No. _____	Date: _____
Name of Group Leader/Airport Representative _____						
S. no.	Name of Guest	Address	Room no.	Nationality	Passport no.	Remarks
Front Office Assistant						

Group Pre arrival Procedure

The check-in procedure for a group or crew requires specialized preregistration activity as a group contains a large number of people who have to be registered at the same time. The following preregistration activities are required for the check-in of a group/ crew:

- The front office should prepare a group list, containing details of each guest in the group. The list should contain details such as name, address, purpose of visit, of stay, meal preference (vegetarian/non-vegetarian), passport details (for foreigners), and any special instruction regarding the location of the room.
 - After ascertaining the type and the number of rooms required, the front office should block rooms for the group, preferably on the same floor.
 - The front office should prepare a rooming list, which should contain the names of the group members and their corresponding room numbers.
 - The front office should arrange keys according to the room numbers and place them in an envelope to be handed over to the group leader.
 - Based on the information received from the group leader or airport representative, the front office should fill GRCs for group members and arrange them alphabetically.
 - The front office should arrange the appropriate number of bellboys for carrying group's luggage to their rooms.
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Group Pre registration Activities

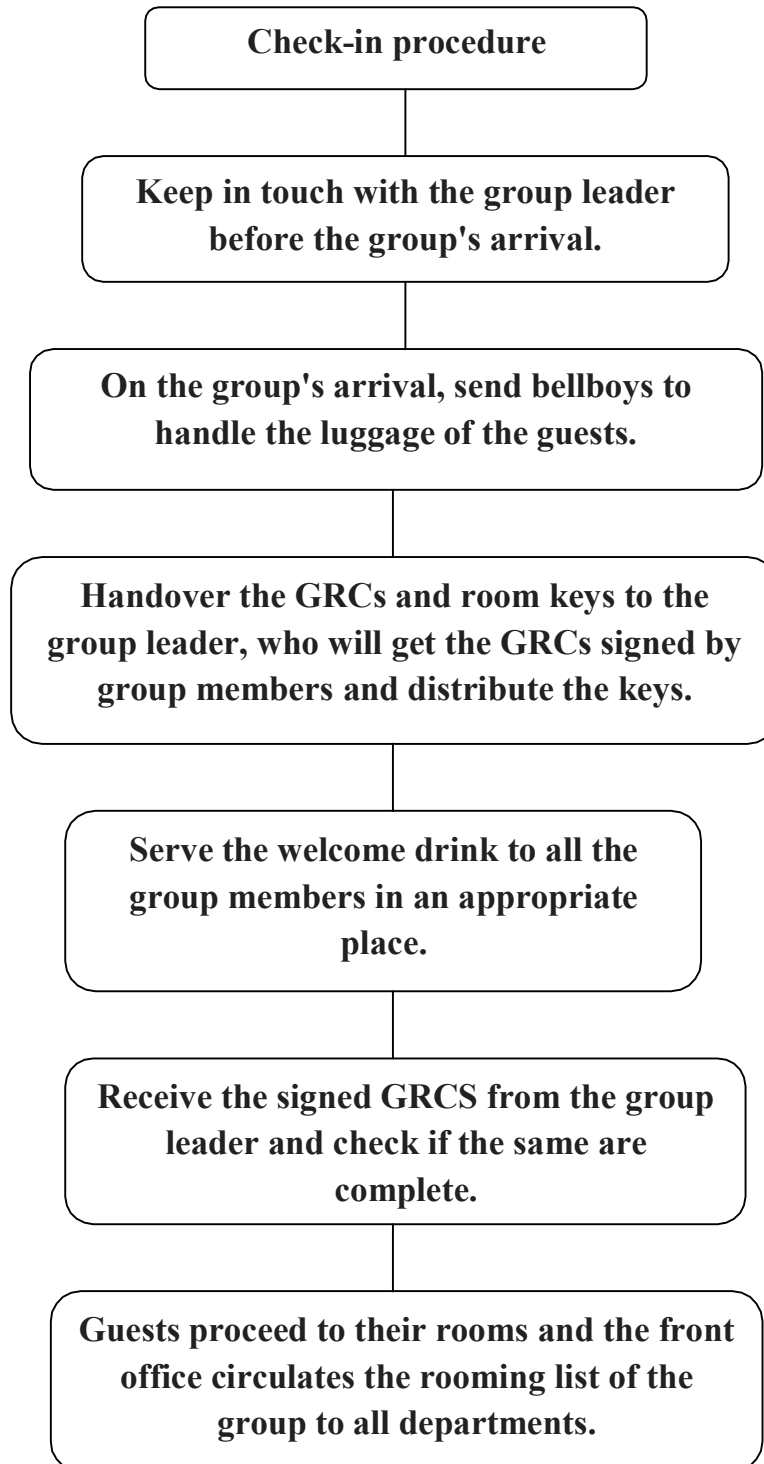


Welcoming and Group Actual Check in Procedure

The front desk agent should be in constant touch with the group leader or airport representative. Once the group arrives at the hotel, the following steps are involved in the check-in procedure:

- When the guest vehicle arrives at the portico, bellboys should handle the guest luggage. They should identify the luggage of individual guests and put the luggage tags as per the rooming list. Then they should transfer the luggage to the respective rooms using luggage trolleys.
 - The front office agent should escort the leader to the reception desk to complete group the registration formalities. The receptionist should hand over the room keys and the registration forms of all the members to the leader, who can get the GRCs signed by the group members and distribute the room keys.
 - Meanwhile, the front office staff should organize welcome drinks for the group members in a pre-scheduled area. .
 - Once the group leader hands over the signed registration cards at the front desk, the guests may proceed to their respective rooms.
 - The office agent should ask the group leader about the group's activities, meal schedules, wake-up calls, and other requirements, and make a note of the same.
 - The front office cashier should prepare a master folio for the group and individual folios for each member of the group after the mode of payment is settled.
 - The front desk should distribute copies of the rooming list of the group to the different departments-housekeeping, telephone exchange, F&B and room service to inform them about the arrival of the group.
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Group Check in Procedure



Departure and Post Departure: The front office should try to cover up any unpleasant episodes during guest's stay by ensuring smooth and hassle-free departure of the guest.

The functions of front office at the time of departure are as follows:

- 1. Preparation and presentation of guest bills:** The front desk cashier prepares a guest's bills on the basis of financial transactions between the hotel and the guest recorded in the guest folio. The bill is presented to the guest for settlement.
- 2. Settlement of guest account:** A guest's account is settled by zeroing the guest folio balance. The folio balance may be debit or credit. If the guest folio balance is in debit, then the required amount of money is received from the guest to make the balance zero. If the balance of guest folio is in credit, then the balance amount is returned to the guest to settle his account.
- 3. Luggage handling by bell desk and Left luggage handling.**
- 4. Sales and Marketing activity for future reservation:** Giving promotional materials to guests, informing them about upcoming offers, and making future bookings in the same hotel or sister concerns in other cities.
- 5. Warm farewell:** It is important to keep in touch with guests even after their departure, generally done by sales and marketing team, which sends flyers with special offers or discounts, gift vouchers etc and wish guests on their important life events.

Room Change

Guest rooms are the most important commodity of a hotel. They form a large component of the guests' overall experience at a hotel. In case a room does not match the guest's expectations, the guest may want to change the room. There are times when the hotel may wish to change the room of a resident guest. If the change of room is done in the presence of the guest, it is called a live move, and if it is carried out in the absence of the guest, it is known as a dead move.

A guest may want to change his/her room under the following circumstances:

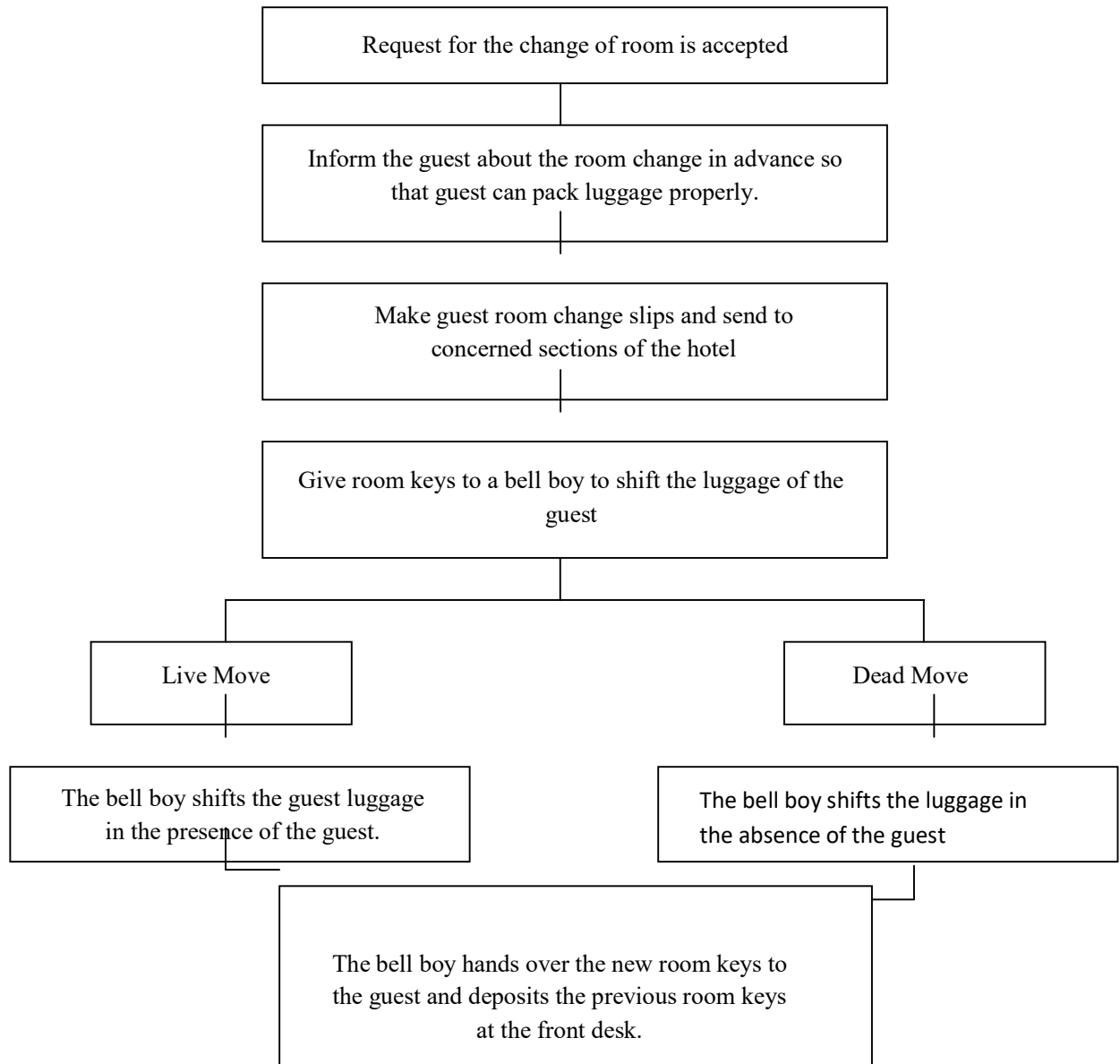
- If the room assigned to the guest is not as per his/her choice.
- If one or more equipment or facilities in the room are not working satisfactorily.
- If the number of occupants in the room changes.

The hotel may wish to change the guest's room for the following reasons:

- If the guest was upgraded due to the non-availability of the requested category of rooms.
- If the guest overstays and the hotel does not have a room of the same type to allot to the next guest.
- If the hotel has scheduled a spring cleaning for the room
- If the room requires maintenance work

It is important for the hotel and the guest to mutually agree on the change of room to avoid any discord or unpleasantness

FLOW CHART OF GUEST ROOM CHANGE

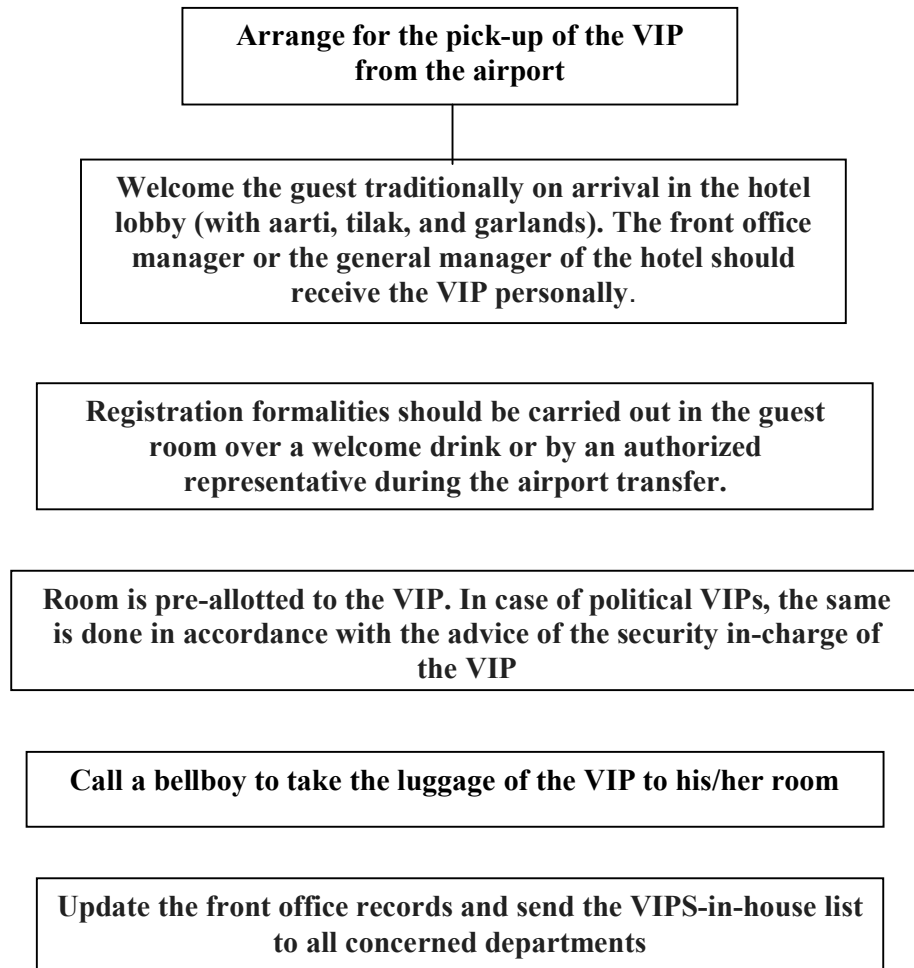


Procedure for Changing the Guest Room

In order to change the room of a resident guest, the following procedure:

- The front office informs the guest about the room change in advance so that the guest packs his/her luggage properly.
- The front office agent fills in six copies of the guest room change slip for reception, bell captain, front desk cashier, telephone exchange, housekeeping, and room service. and takes authorization from a competent authority
- A bellboy is called and given the keys of the new room. He proceeds to the guest room to shift the guest's luggage
- In case of dead move, the bellboy asks the room boy/floor boy to open the guest room. If it is a live move, he goes to the room and requests the guest to allow him/her to shift the luggage.
- The bellboy removes all the guest's belongings from the room and locks the room. He then carries all the belongings to the new room and hands over the new room keys to the guest. He collects the keys of the room being vacated from the guest and deposits the same at the front desk.

Check-in Procedure of VIP Guest



Very important persons (VIPs) include heads of states, ministers, senior media personnel, sports personnel, film stars, rock stars, travel writers, top executives of corporate houses, CEOs of large business houses, senior defence personnel, and famous public figure. They get special treatment and attention from the hotel staff due to their VIP status.

The check-in process of VIPs may start with their arrival at the airport. The role of the hotel in welcoming political VIPs at airport is minimal due to security reasons. In the case of corporate heads of business houses, the hotel representative may receive them at the airport and escort them to the hotel room.

The registration process may be carried out during their transfer from the airport to the

hotel or in the hotel room. The check-in procedure of VIP guests involves the following steps:

- The hotel may arrange for the pick-up of a VIP guest from the airport. Depending on the status of the VIP, the pick-up vehicle may vary from a luxury car to a limousine.
- When the guest arrives at the hotel, the front office staff should give him/her a traditional welcome tilak, garlanding, and aarti. The General Manager (GM) of the hotel and the Front Office Manager (FOM) should also be present to welcome the VIP.
- The registration formalities are mostly completed in advance by an authorized representative of the VIP. Otherwise, they can be completed in the guest room over a welcome drink.
- The GM or FOM should escort the VIP to his/her room.
- The front office should send the arrival notification slip and any special instruction of the VIP to all the concerned departments.

OVERBOOKING

Selective Overbooking or Capacity Management

Capacity management involves various methods of controlling and limiting room supply. The availability of rooms plays a vital role in taking advance booking of hotel rooms. Hotel managers, based on their experience and historical data available, often take chances to book more rooms than the total inventory of rooms in the hotel. Overbooking is the practice of intentionally selling more rooms than available, to offset the effect of cancellations, no-shows, and early departures. For example, though the total number of available rooms in a hotel is 200, 220 rooms may be booked on a certain day. Since the probability of exactly 200 guests turning up on a day is low, the income from the additional guests generally compensates the loss of revenue. The availability of rooms increases in the following situations:

- **Early departure or understay-** When guests leave the hotel before their expected date of departure, the number of vacant rooms increases. If a provision is not made, the newly vacated room will remain unsold, which would result in the loss of revenue. To avoid this situation, hotels generally discourage early departure.
- **Cancellations-** Cancellation is another major factor that increases the availability of rooms. The guests are free to cancel a booking made before a stipulated time. There are times when guests cancel their reservations after the stipulated time, which increases

the number of available rooms. If a provision is not made, this would result in unsold rooms and loss of revenue.

- **No-shows-** It is a condition wherein the guests with confirmed bookings do not turn up at the hotel on the expected date of arrival, without any prior intimation. This also leads to the increase in the inventory of rooms. In case of non-guaranteed reservations, if the guest does not arrive on or before the cancellation hours (generally 6:00 p.m.), the room is released to wait-listed guests or walk-ins. In case of guaranteed reservations, if the guest does not arrive, the room is kept vacant and one day charge is levied on the guest and adjusted against the advance deposit. However, no-shows result in increasing the room availability of the hotel, which leads to the loss of revenue in case the room is not sold.

In order to avoid the loss of revenue from any of the aforementioned situations, hotels generally prefer overbooking. Overbooking is not done by mere guesswork but selective overbooking is done by considering the following factors:

- Past history of data such as cancellations statistics, understay statistics, No show Statistics, Turn away Statistics.
- Activities in town such as sports events, cultural, business, protest and emergency.
- Experience of the reservation manager will show how many of the reserved guest will turn up.