



# Provide valet services to guests

D1.HHK.CL3.06

Trainee Manual





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William  
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# Introduction to trainee manual

## To the Trainee

Congratulations on joining this course. This Trainee Manual is one part of a 'toolbox' which is a resource provided to trainees, trainers and assessors to help you become competent in various areas of your work.

The 'toolbox' consists of three elements:

- A Trainee Manual for you to read and study at home or in class
- A Trainer Guide with Power Point slides to help your Trainer explain the content of the training material and provide class activities to help with practice
- An Assessment Manual which provides your Assessor with oral and written questions and other assessment tasks to establish whether or not you have achieved competency.

The first thing you may notice is that this training program and the information you find in the Trainee Manual seems different to the textbooks you have used previously. This is because the method of instruction and examination is different. The method used is called Competency based training (CBT) and Competency based assessment (CBA). CBT and CBA is the training and assessment system chosen by ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) to train people to work in the tourism and hospitality industry throughout all the ASEAN member states.

What is the CBT and CBA system and why has it been adopted by ASEAN?

CBT is a way of training that concentrates on what a worker can do or is required to do at work. The aim of the training is to enable trainees to perform tasks and duties at a standard expected by employers. CBT seeks to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes (or recognise the ones the trainee already possesses) to achieve the required competency standard. ASEAN has adopted the CBT/CBA training system as it is able to produce the type of worker that industry is looking for and this therefore increases trainees chances of obtaining employment.

CBA involves collecting evidence and making a judgement of the extent to which a worker can perform his/her duties at the required competency standard. Where a trainee can already demonstrate a degree of competency, either due to prior training or work experience, a process of 'Recognition of Prior Learning' (RPL) is available to trainees to recognise this. Please speak to your trainer about RPL if you think this applies to you.

What is a competency standard?

Competency standards are descriptions of the skills and knowledge required to perform a task or activity at the level of a required standard.

242 competency standards for the tourism and hospitality industries throughout the ASEAN region have been developed to cover all the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to work in the following occupational areas:

- Housekeeping
- Food Production
- Food and Beverage Service

- Front Office
- Travel Agencies
- Tour Operations.

All of these competency standards are available for you to look at. In fact you will find a summary of each one at the beginning of each Trainee Manual under the heading 'Unit Descriptor'. The unit descriptor describes the content of the unit you will be studying in the Trainee Manual and provides a table of contents which are divided up into 'Elements' and 'Performance Criteria'. An element is a description of one aspect of what has to be achieved in the workplace. The 'Performance Criteria' below each element details the level of performance that needs to be demonstrated to be declared competent.

There are other components of the competency standard:

- *Unit Title*: statement about what is to be done in the workplace
- *Unit Number*: unique number identifying the particular competency
- *Nominal hours*: number of classroom or practical hours usually needed to complete the competency. We call them 'nominal' hours because they can vary e.g. sometimes it will take an individual less time to complete a unit of competency because he/she has prior knowledge or work experience in that area.

The final heading you will see before you start reading the Trainee Manual is the 'Assessment Matrix'. Competency based assessment requires trainees to be assessed in at least 2 – 3 different ways, one of which must be practical. This section outlines three ways assessment can be carried out and includes work projects, written questions and oral questions. The matrix is designed to show you which performance criteria will be assessed and how they will be assessed. Your trainer and/or assessor may also use other assessment methods including 'Observation Checklist' and 'Third Party Statement'. An observation checklist is a way of recording how you perform at work and a third party statement is a statement by a supervisor or employer about the degree of competence they believe you have achieved. This can be based on observing your workplace performance, inspecting your work or gaining feedback from fellow workers.

Your trainer and/or assessor may use other methods to assess you such as:

- Journals
- Oral presentations
- Role plays
- Log books
- Group projects
- Practical demonstrations.

Remember your trainer is there to help you succeed and become competent. Please feel free to ask him or her for more explanation of what you have just read and of what is expected from you and best wishes for your future studies and future career in tourism and hospitality.



# Unit descriptor

## **Provide valet services to guests**

This unit deals with the skills and knowledge required to Provide valet services to guests in a range of settings within the hotel and travel industries workplace context.

### **Unit Code:**

D1.HHK.CL3.06

### **Nominal Hours:**

45 hours

## **Element 1: Identify the role of a valet**

### **Performance Criteria**

- 1.1 Describe the services delivered by a valet
- 1.2 Locate the position of valet within the enterprise
- 1.3 Identify the personal characteristics required of a valet
- 1.4 Describe grooming and personal presentation standards for a valet
- 1.5 Interpret enterprise policies and procedures for the provision of valet services
- 1.6 Identify and explain the role of communication in valet service provision

## **Element 2: Prepare to deliver valet services**

### **Performance Criteria**

- 2.1 Obtain guest information in advance of guest arrival
- 2.2 Determine guest requirements and preferences
- 2.3 Liaise with other staff and external service providers to meet anticipated guest needs
- 2.4 Check guest room prior to guest arrival to ensure compliance with stated requests

## **Element 3: Deliver valet services**

### **Performance Criteria**

- 3.1 Welcome guest on arrival and establish appropriate rapport
- 3.2 Advise guest of available services
- 3.3 Deal with guest luggage
- 3.4 Deal with guest clothes
- 3.5 Deal with guest requests
- 3.6 Deliver enterprise-specific VIP treatment and services

- 3.7 Adjust service delivery to suit guest needs and preferences
- 3.8 Maintain guest privacy and confidentiality
- 3.9 Assist guest with pre-departure and on-departure services

## **Element 4: Record valet services**

### **Performance Criteria**

- 4.1 Process billable charges
- 4.2 Update guest history details
- 4.3 Debrief with management

# Assessment matrix

Showing mapping of Performance Criteria against Work Projects, Written Questions and Oral Questions

		Work Projects	Written Questions	Oral Questions
<b>Element 1: Identify the role of a valet</b>				
1.1	Describe the services delivered by a valet	1.1	1	1
1.2	Locate the position of valet within the enterprise	1.1	2	2
1.3	Identify the personal characteristics required of a valet	1.1	3	3
1.4	Describe grooming and personal presentation standards for a valet	1.1	4, 5	4
1.5	Interpret enterprise policies and procedures for the provision of valet services	1.1	6, 7	5
1.6	Identify and explain the role of communication in valet service provision	1.2	8, 9	6
<b>Element 2: Prepare to deliver valet services</b>				
2.1	Obtain guest information in advance of guest arrival	2.1	10	7
2.2	Determine guest requirements and preferences	2.1	11	8
2.3	Liaise with other staff and external service providers to meet anticipated guest needs	2.2	12, 13	9
2.4	Check guest room prior to guest arrival to ensure compliance with stated requests	2.2	14, 15	10

		Work Projects	Written Questions	Oral Questions
<b>Element 3: Deliver valet services</b>				
3.1	Welcome guest on arrival and establish appropriate rapport	3.1	16	11
3.2	Advise guest of available services	3.1	17, 18	12
3.3	Deal with guest luggage	3.1	19, 20	13
3.4	Deal with guest clothes	3.1	21, 22, 23	14
3.5	Deal with guest requests	3.1	24	15
3.6	Deliver enterprise-specific VIP treatment and services	3.2	25	16
3.7	Adjust service delivery to suit guest needs and preferences	3.2	26	17
3.8	Maintain guest privacy and confidentiality	3.2	27, 28	18
3.9	Assist guest with pre-departure and on-departure services	3.1	29, 30	19
<b>Element 4: Record valet services</b>				
4.1	Process billable charges	4.1	31	20
4.2	Update guest history details	4.1	32	21
4.3	Debrief with management	4.2	33	22

# Glossary

Term	Explanation
AM	Ante Meridiem – before noon/midday. 9:00am/9.00AM = 9 o'clock in the morning
Buck	Specialist piece of ironing equipment used to optimise the pressing of certain pieces of clothing or parts of certain items. This includes collars and cuffs
CRS	Computerised Reservation System
Canapés	Also known as 'hors d'oeuvres': small, delicate finger food featuring sophisticated toppings and fillings
Concierge	A front office staff member who operates the concierge desk, providing advice, direction and information to guests about all aspects of the venue, the local area, products, services, facilities and anything else the guest wishes to know about
ETA	Estimated time of arrival
ETD	Estimated time of departure
Epaulettes	Shoulder flashes worn with jackets to designate the position of the person wearing the jacket
Gratuities	Tips – money given to staff by guests in appreciation of service provided
Grooming	Activities undertaken by a person to ensure they are well presented and their personal hygiene is acceptable
High-roller guests	Guests in a casino who spend lots of money in the casino, through gambling. They are often given various free products and services such as room, valet, meals, beverages as an incentive
Industry 'black and whites'	Articles of clothing commonly worn by service staff which are traditionally a combination of black and white colours. Normally this constitutes black trousers with a white top, whether a shirt or jacket
PA	Personal Assistant – staff who assist the guest with business or personal affairs
PM	Post Meridiem – after noon/midday. 9:00pm/9.00PM = 9 o'clock in the evening
Posting of charges	Adding a charge to a guest account so the venue can recover payment from the guest

Term	Explanation
Petit fours	Small pastries or confections
Rapport	Relationship between two or more people characterised by agreement and harmony
Retinue	The group of people retained by a person to manage their affairs, assist and deal with their business
SOP	Standing Operating Procedure
Scope of authority	Permission given by management to staff allowing them to take action, within designated parameters, without the need for them to obtain management or other approval for such action
VIP	Very Important Person. All persons a valet serves must be regarded as VIPs
Valet	Butler
Walk-in	A guest who arrives without a reservation and simply walks in off the street seeking accommodation

# Element 1: Identify the role of a valet

## 1.1 Describe the services delivered by a valet

### Introduction

This unit applies to all establishments where specialist valet or butler services are conducted.

This Section identifies the tasks a valet undertakes.

### The job of the valet

A valet, sometimes also known as a 'butler', is employed by a hotel to provide a personalised and specialist service to guests for the duration of their stay.

They add a degree of service, class and style many people associate with indulgence and opulence.

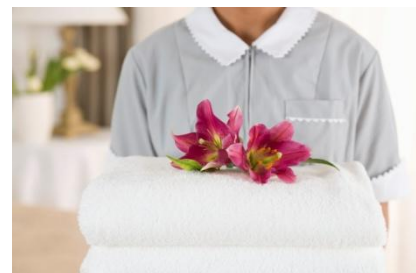
Valet services are not common. Certainly not all establishments provide valet service and the position may not exist in some countries. Many hotels will only supply a 'valet parking' service.

However international guests may have very high levels of expectation in relation to the service provided by valets, especially American and Japanese guests. Many expect the same level of service provided by other up-market hotels around the world.

### The many roles of a valet

Many regard the valet as providing a combination of roles each with its own demanding level of personalised and individualised services. The various roles include:

- Housekeeper – performing a range of services normally provided by room attendants in other rooms
- Confidant – being a trusted person whom the guest can confide in when they need to talk or share an idea, experience or opinion
- Guide – informing the guest of what is available both within and outside the venue, when it is available, how to get there and how to obtain entry, tickets, preferential treatment
- Concierge – while all valets work together with the concierge in a venue, many valets often take the role of concierge for the guests they are looking after
- Organiser – organising activities including reservations, tickets to shows, entry to events, meetings with people, daily schedules, on behalf of and under the direction of the guest



- Supervisor – overseeing the work of other people (venue employees and outside workers) who provide products and service to the guest
- Guest relations – ensuring the guest has a pleasant stay in the venue, ensuring their expectations are met and dealing with any problems that arise during the stay.

It is true that a valet may be all these and more. Exactly what a valet is or the services they provide, depends greatly on the needs of the individual guest.

There is a special relationship between the valet and the concierge, especially the nature of the working relationship between them that demands instant responses to guest needs, quick supply of information, and general professional support.

The valet must be able to respond immediately and appropriately to the needs of individual guests who may all have widely diverse demands. It is definitely a challenging position but, without doubt, an extremely rewarding one.

The role of valet would generally be undertaken by experienced staff members or other people with sound organisational and interpersonal skills.

Depending on the organisational structure of the venue, 'valet' may be located in Housekeeping, Front Office or another appropriate department such as Finance or Sales and Marketing.

The valet is always:

- A front-of-house member of staff – they are not 'back of house' staff who work 'behind the scenes'
- A guest contact staff member – as opposed to a manager or administration officer
- A service provider – while they perform some liaison and supervision duties their primary role is one of service provision.

## The main duties of a valet

The main duties of a valet refer to the services they provide to their guests.

The Position Description for 'valet' at your venue will provide a good starting point regarding what they are expected to do.

The nature and extent of these services will vary between guests with some guests demanding constant attention and others requiring little in the way of valet service.

Services can include, but are not limited to:

- Professionally and confidentially communicating – with the guest and on behalf of the guest
- Unpacking and storing guest luggage
- Preparing guest clothes and footwear – ready for use
- Light pressing of garments – as required or requested
- Packing guest luggage – for their departure





- Cleaning and polishing shoes – as required or requested
- Repairing, or organising the repair of, clothes and other guest belongings
- Providing assistance in relation to organisation of guest needs and requests including wake up calls, newspaper, coffee and tea
- Monitoring the provision of establishment services to the guest – both in-room and throughout the venue. This may include:
  - Arranging and supervising the provision of room service for meals, snacks, parties and drinks
  - Organisation and implementation of functions for the guest in their room or in a function room at the venue
- Recording services that have been delivered – for quality control and accounting procedures
- Preparing room before guest arrives – by providing various items such as fruit bowls, complimentary gifts, bathrobes, chocolates or flowers
- Looking after guest laundry and dry cleaning needs – on an ongoing basis for the duration of their stay
- Organising and processing secretarial duties upon request – such as messages, faxes, packages, translation, postage, and use of the business facilities at the property
- Arranging restaurant bookings, car hire, tours, specified purchases of gifts or other items
- Organising activities to meet guest needs – such as arranging special functions in the venue, booking local excursions and tours, and making reservations for the theatre, shows, dining and special events
- Provision of local advice (the 'concierge' function) including:
  - Recommendations for dining and shopping
  - Suggestions for transport and sight-seeing
  - Options for tourism and leisure activities
  - Acquisition of personal services
- Making, altering or confirming travel arrangements.



Prior to guest arrival the valet must:

- Investigate background information and knowledge about guest preferences and previous history with the establishment
- Take action to ensure promises made to the guest are met when the guest arrives.

On guest departure the valet must:

- Record and process guest charges and accounts – for billing and payment

- Assist in the maintenance of guest history file – to provide relevant and up-to-date information about the guest/VIP
- De-brief with management – to identify lessons learned, determine changes needing to be made to SOPs and whether or not management needs to contact the guest to make an apology.

## 1.2 Locate the position of valet within the enterprise

### Introduction

The position of valet can vary in its location within a venue.

This Section looks at the options for positioning a valet within a property.

### The non-negotiable elements

The valet is always:

- A front-of-house member of staff – they are not ‘back of house’ staff who work ‘behind the scenes’
- A guest contact staff member – as opposed to a management or administration
- A service provider – while they perform some liaison and supervision duties their primary role is one of service provision.

### Gender

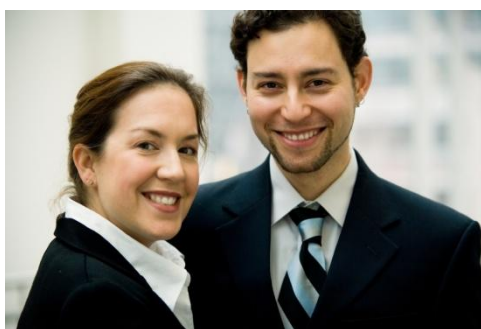
Valets were traditionally male as their previous titles indicate, with other names for valets being:

- Manservant
- Gentleman’s gentleman.

Today females are also employed as valets by some venues to reflect the growth of women requiring valets in their own right

Generally speaking, guests still expect valets to be men but they may:

- Request a female valet
- Ask if a female valet is available.



### Location of the valet

Where valets are employed by a venue the valet is usually shown on an organisational chart for a venue as being located in the Housekeeping department, also known as Rooms Division.

The position of valet:

- Reports directly to the head Housekeeper or Executive Housekeeper
- Is regarded as a higher position than room attendants, but does not have responsibility for them.

## Job position requirements

The valet may:

- Liaise with Sales and Marketing – to be advised of VIP guests arriving, and to advise them of needs, wants and preferences of VIPs
- Liaise with Front Office and Concierge – to deliver products and services as required by the guests
- Liaise with Food and Beverage, Kitchen and Banquet departments – to ensure special food, drink, catering and event needs are provided for
- Be involved in middle-level management meetings – to:
  - Enable the identified needs, wants and preferences of VIP guests to be met
  - Discuss and initiate required security protocols for certain guests
  - Facilitate venue-wide organisational and operational arrangements to support a VIP stay.



## Employment status

Employment status for valets varies enormously.

Options include:

- Full-time valet – this is not common except at 5-star and 6-star facilities because there is insufficient work to warrant their employment on a permanent ongoing basis
- Part-time valet – this is relatively common. The person works as a valet when required, and performs another role such as Room Service attendant, Porter or Laundry attendant within the venue when there is no demand for a valet
- Wages per hour are usually higher for a valet than for other lower-level duties
- Casual – the venue hires valets as required, paying them on an hourly basis, choosing employees from a known pool of professionals
- Outsourcing – where the services of an external provider specialising in the provision of hospitality professionals is used
- This option is gaining in popularity amongst employers where such a service is locally available.



## 1.3 Identify the personal characteristics required of a valet

### Introduction

The work performed by a valet requires them to possess a unique set of personal characteristics.

This Section identifies the personal characteristics needed by you as a professional valet in order to meet the expectations of guests.

### List of characteristics

Valets need to be able to perform a range of *technical skills*. This includes serving food and drinks, cleaning and folding clothes, shining shoes and making reservations.

In order to deliver the services required by a guest and fulfil the expectations of guests, a valet must possess all of the following personal characteristics as a minimum requirement in order to make their guests feel comfortable, valued and respected.

#### Tact and diplomacy

Tact may be seen as the ability to know when to say something and when not to say something. It also means being able to say what needs to be said without giving offence, without making people feel uncomfortable or ignorant.

Diplomacy is the skill of applying tact to situations so the outcome is beneficial to the valet and their guest. The two terms 'tact' and 'diplomacy' are commonly used together.

A person who is effective with tact is said to be 'tactful'.

A person who applies tact very well is regarded as being 'diplomatic'.

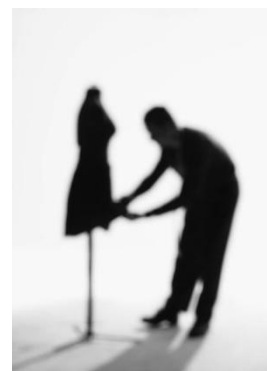
#### Discretion

Exercising discretion means being discrete.

In practice this means demonstrating the ability to judge when to ignore something the guest may have said or done.

Central to being discrete is:

- The action of 'turning a blind eye'
- Not mentioning the event to the guest or to anyone else.



## Etiquette

Etiquette refers to knowledge about social convention across a range of issues such as:

- The different forms of address to be used when talking to dignitaries
- The correct piece of cutlery to use when setting a table for a meal
- Action to take to make others feel 'at ease'.

Etiquette can be described as good manners, decorum and propriety. It is the set of customary rules for behaviour in polite society.

## Good manners

Good manners and etiquette go together but they are not the same thing.

Manners relates to:

- Showing respect for others
- Demonstrating politeness
- Being refined and appropriate in all situations.

In practice it means:

- Knowing when to talk and when to be quiet
- Giving way to guests
- Remaining a respectful distance from guests in terms of physical distance and personal connection.



## Politeness

Being polite means applying necessary etiquette and good manners.

It is closely aligned with showing respect, making people feel at ease and creating an appropriate and refined atmosphere for the guest and their associates.

In practice it means:

- Asking for permission to undertake tasks
- Saying 'please' and 'thank you'
- Knowing when to withdraw and leave guests alone and when to maintain a presence.

## Civility

Civility means acting in a civil manner.

Civility is closely linked to manners and means avoiding anything that could be construed as rude, disrespectful or intended to give distress or cause offence.

It may embrace adhering to a 'Code of Conduct' imposed by the venue in regard to treatment of guests and others.

## Honesty

This is a basic requirement for all staff.

See Section 1.5 for more information on 'honesty' as it applies to valets.

## Dedication

Dedication means being committed to your job and the guests and showing enthusiasm about what needs to be done.

As a valet you may sometimes find yourself in a position where being dedicated to a guest means you cannot be dedicated to what the venue requires you to do.

These situations require you to use personal judgement about what to do.

When making a decision about who or what takes priority in these situations, consider the following:

- Always use common sense to assist in deciding what to do
- Never do anything that is illegal or places you in danger
- Be prepared to seek guidance and counsel from more experienced and senior staff.



## Willingness to be of genuine service

All venue staff should be willing to provide genuine service to all guests but nowhere is this more important than with valets.

Demonstrating willingness to be of genuine service means not only 'doing the right thing' but doing it with the right attitude.

For a valet, a willingness to be of genuine service is critical because:

- They spend comparatively more time with guests than any other staff member – valets are with their guests on a day-to-day basis and sometimes for many hours at a time
- Guests rely on valets to a greater extent than they rely on most other staff – valets are expected to undertake many duties on behalf of the guest that reflect the guest's standing, image and reputation
- Guests pay a premium to have the services of a valet – generally speaking valets must be paid for by the guest on an hourly, or 'per stay', basis so guests are entitled to expect them to be genuinely committed to excellent levels of service delivery.



Very often, this means being prepared to do 'a little bit extra' to please or satisfy the guest.

**Note:** some venues, especially casinos, provide valets free-of-charge to 'high roller' guests.



### **An unbiased and prejudice-free disposition**

All valets must be free of bias and refrain from judging their guests because:

- They will have to deal with people from a wide range of cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and ages
- They will experience a great variation in the personal habits of guests, individual opinions and thoughts of guests and in the manners, attitudes and beliefs of guests.

All of these characteristics will give rise to differences in the way guests behave, conduct themselves, talk to and treat people. The role of the valet is not to judge the guest based on these individual differences but simply to continue serving them.

The important thing to remember when a guest holds a different opinion, attitude or stance to your own is you do not have to agree with them. You do not have to adopt their orientation, you only have to serve them.

### **Punctuality**

All valets must be highly aware of the need for them to be punctual.

In practice this means:

- Arriving for work early – to ensure all the requirements for the day have been arranged
- Not leaving work until the needs of the guest have been taken care of – a valet can never work hours totally governed by a roster. You must stay as long as the guest needs you or arrange for another valet to replace you
- Making sure all arrangements made for the guest are delivered punctuality – this applies to ensuring in-house services are delivered when expected as well as following up with external service providers to make sure what they have promised arrives on time.



### **Attention to detail**

The valet must have an eye for detail and take necessary action to make sure everything done for, or provided to, the guest is the best it can be.

The fact of life for a valet is the little things do count and it is often the little things that make the big difference for a guest.

Definitely, for a valet, 'near enough is never good enough'.

Keys to making sure every detail is correct are:

- Planning and preparation – deciding in advance what needs to be done, what needs to be present and how things must look, flow or occur
- Observation – physically paying attention to determine whether or not things are correct or whether some details requires attention.

Many expert valets develop what may be regarded as a sixth sense – being able to intuitively predict what their guest needs will be even before the guest realises them.

- Taking action when a detail is identified as missing, or in some way incorrect – valets must always take action when there is a need to do so.

### Initiative

Perhaps the greatest personal characteristic a valet can have is the ability to use their initiative to best serve their guest.

Some people are born with initiative and some learn it on-the-job through ongoing contact with guests. This guest contact teaches them what to expect and gives them insight into how individuals can vary and how these variations translate into necessary or appropriate service delivery.

Initiative requires you to anticipate what the guest will need and take action to ensure these needs are met.

When unsure about what a guest wants, needs or prefers the recommended advice is to ask the guest what they want.



## 1.4 Describe grooming and personal presentation standards for a valet

### Introduction

While all staff in a venue will be required to comply with a nominated standard of grooming and personal presentation, the importance of these for a valet is even greater.

This Section presents relevant requirements for valets.

### The need for high standards of grooming and personal presentation

Valets need to be professionally groomed and are required to comply with the venue requirements in relation to personal presentation, personal hygiene and uniform.

A valet's presentation will have a lasting impression on the guest and it is important this impression be of the highest standard at all times.

Note the use of the words 'at all times'. Valet must look as presentable five minutes before they finish, as they did when they started.

Other staff may have the luxury of allowing their appearance to show 'wear and tear' during the working shift, but valets do not.

How you stand and move reflects on the image of your personal presentation. Be aware of your posture, body language and the speed of your movement. Dignity is a good word to bear in mind. A valet should carry themselves and discharge their duties with dignity.





Remember a uniform, as well as personal grooming and deportment, completes the physical side of a valet's professional and personal presentation. The uniform deserves, merits and demands appropriate attention.

Make sure you know and abide by any venue-specific requirements relating to personal presentation, grooming and uniform.

## Wearing of uniform

The correct wearing of the venue uniform is a key to personal presentation.

While venues provide and launder uniforms you must ensure:

- It fits properly – so it looks good, enables freedom of movement and is comfortable to wear

It is kept clean – a standard requirement for all valets is to have at least one change of clothes available to them at work so uniforms can be changed when they get dirty or look 'tired'.

The uniform must always be:

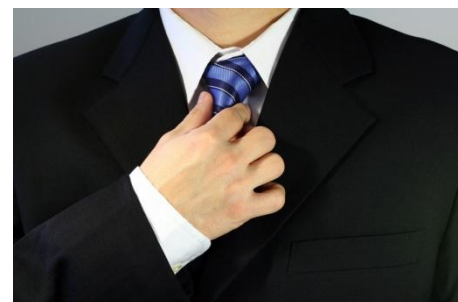
- Pressed – meaning it must be free of wrinkles and look cared for
- Stain-free – and free of marks, dirt or other mess
- It remains in good repair – there can be no loose threads and no missing buttons.

### Wear the full uniform

Every venue will identify the full uniform for a valet, and all valets **must wear the full uniform** as determined by their employer.

The requirements of the employer may refer to:

- Type and style of shoes to be worn – such as black, polished leather shoes
- Whether or not a name tag is worn – most valets do not wear a name tag as this is seen as detracting from or demeaning the position of valet
- The uniform itself – for example, many valets are required to wear a designated style (lounge or dinner suit; two or three piece) and colour (black or grey) of suit as opposed to wearing traditional industry 'black and whites'
- Epaulettes – where a jacket is worn by a valet they commonly wear a different colour or style of epaulette to distinguish them from other service staff
- Tie – stipulating colour and type of knot to be used
- For information on tying ties refer:
  - <http://www.tieknot.com/>
  - <http://www.tie-a-tie.net/>.

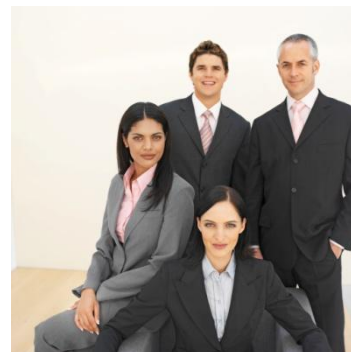


## Ensuring personal hygiene

Grooming activities ensure your personal presentation and hygiene.

Standard grooming activities to be considered or applied may include:

- Regular washing – a minimum is once per day but many valets will bathe twice daily
- Use of a suitable deodorant – to help prevent perspiration
- Use of lightly-scented aftershave or perfume – strong perfume which is predominant or over-powering must be avoided
- Make-up must be kept neutral for women – no excessive eye shadow, no dramatic colours for lips or eyes
- Good personal hygiene habits and practices – cuts and sores must be kept covered with a clean dressing, use of handkerchief, no coughing or sneezing near guest or food
- Men must be clean shaven – or have whiskers neatly trimmed. Many valets need to shave twice per day to maintain a suitable appearance
- Hair neat and tidy – brushed, combed and tied back. Regular hair cuts should be had to help maintain style and a suitable appearance
- Hands and nails must be clean and well cared for at all times – women should wear only neutral polish avoiding colours and nail decorations. Men and women must have properly manicured nails
- Regular attention to teeth – meaning regular brushing of teeth and dental checks to help avoid bad breath.



Many valets are non-smokers as they believe 'smokers' breath' can never be effectively addressed by brushing or taking mints

- Sufficient rest – it is imperative for a valet to be alert and awake
- Exercise – this helps avoid stress, increases the chance of proper rest and contributes to a feeling of general well-being which is reflected in all the actions undertaken.



## Ensuring suitable personal presentation

To ensure proper personal presentation:

- Always check your appearance in a full-length mirror – before starting work or resuming work as a valet. Take whatever action is necessary to remedy any identified faults or short-comings
- Maintain good posture – valets should walk and function with head up and shoulders back indicating pride in their role and presenting a suitable 'air' expected by guests

- Guests expect valets to have a certain 'bearing' and this can never be achieved if they walk with their head down and shoulders hunched. The posture must convey a feeling of style and class and an appropriate demeanour
- Only wear basic jewellery – nothing ostentatious should be worn. The valet should never 'outshine' the guest.

A wedding band and a standard watch are allowable. Anything else may be regarded as superfluous and unnecessary.



## The valet's kit

Valets should develop their own personal kit which they should keep with them in their workplace.

This kit is used to:

- Maintain their own personal appearance
- Assist guests with any needs they may have.

Contents of the valet kit is very much an individual concern and the items will grow as experience dictates. Possible items include:

- Small scissors or clippers
- Tweezers
- Hair brush and comb
- Clothes brush
- Polishing and application brushes for shoes
- Disposable gloves
- Needle and an assortment of threads and buttons
- Safety pins – different sizes
- Thumb tacks
- Nail varnish remover
- Stapler with staples
- An eraser
- Liquid paper
- Adhesive labels
- A small first aid kit – making sure there are several sizes of plasters
- Matches – a valet should always carry a lighter in their pocket.



## 1.5 Interpret enterprise policies and procedures for the provision of valet services

### Introduction

Venues will have a range of enterprise policies and procedures relating to the provision of valet services.

These can be expected to remain relatively standard across the industry but they vary between properties.

This Section identifies possible enterprise policies and procedures valets may have to comply with.

### Enterprise policies and procedures

Venue policies and procedures a valet may have to adhere to include:

- Service standards and protocols – these may address:
  - Under what conditions valet service is available or to be provided
  - Ratio of valets to guests – one valet is unable to effectively cater for large groups of guests and the venue may provide guidance on the number of valets required to cater for different group sizes
  - How guests are to be addressed – prescribing the acceptable forms of address for differing guest types. Many policies in this regard provide advice (for example) on forms of address for royalty and religious leaders
  - Actions required for delivery of nominated service provisions – policies and procedures may stipulate:
    - Products to be provided – by brand name, type and style
    - Quantity of products – per room or per guest
    - Duration of service delivery
    - Activities to be provided
    - Sequence of activities
    - Timing requirements – for example ‘Turn down must be provided by 8:00PM’
- Honesty – this will cover the need for valets to be honest in all their dealing with guests. In practice this can mean:
  - Telling the truth – about products and services, what the venue can and cannot deliver
  - Only charging guests for what they have received – only legitimate charges should be applied to a guest’s account



- Not stealing – money, property or information you have become aware of as part of your dealings with the guest
- Not taking photographs of the guest room – or their belongings, activities or the condition in which they leave their room.

**Note:** in some cases a valet will have to be dishonest with some people including other guests, members of the media and unsolicited callers, in order to protect the privacy and security of the VIP guest.

- Use of enterprise equipment and facilities for personal use or gain – there is usually a complete ban on any staff using venue items for their private use
- Obviously there is also a total ban on valets using guest items unless specifically told or invited to do so
- Treatment of VIPs – while all guests should be treated by all staff as VIPs the fact is valets must treat their guests in an exceptional manner.



Valets may be required to:

- Prepare items for nominated VIPs that are not offered to other guests
- Arrange for preferential seating in in-house dining rooms, at functions and for entertainment
- Provide associates of VIPs with the same treatment being given to the actual VIPs
- Demonstrate deferential treatment to VIPs – this means always giving the best option, the best that is available or deferring to their personal preferences above the standard service provision given by the venue.

**Note:** while catering for every guest whim it is critical you never appear subservient when doing so. There is a fine line between deference and subservience but it is one the professional valet treads easily and with dignity

- Protect the privacy and security of VIPs to a higher standard than is normally provided for other guests – this may mean liaising with in-house security staff as well as liaising with security personnel accompanying the VIP
- Given many VIPs are royalty, politicians, sports stars, movie or music stars there is regularly a need for valets to:
  - Be subjected to various security screenings
  - Cooperate with security personnel
  - Provide misleading information to others
- Complimentary goods and services to be provided as part of the standard valet service – such as flowers in the room, turn-down service, drinks on arrival.



Not only will VIPs receiving valet service receive items not provided to other guests, they will also normally:

- Receive more of them
- Receive a higher-quality version of what is normally supplied



- Discretionary authority – valets traditionally have a significant scope of authority to allow them to deal with the wide range of issues their guests present them with.

The scope of authority may relate to:

- Their ability to act on behalf of the venue – without needing to refer to or confer with management before taking action
  - Their authority to spend money on behalf of the venue – usually up to a nominated amount
  - Their authority to act in given situations – such as when there is a problem or potential complaint as well as in the event of an emergency
- Reporting procedures – for communicating with other staff and persons external to the venue. This includes contractors, officials and authorities, in the event of a need to:
    - Manage an emergency
    - Charge expenses to the room or individual VIP
    - Report an issue or incident
    - Advise of new or revised VIP guest needs
    - Confirm existing arrangements.



## How do I find out what applies in my workplace?

To determine what applies in your workplace regarding enterprise policies and procedures for valets to adhere to:

- Complete all necessary in-house training programs for valets – these will not only cover the house-preferred way of folding shirts, polishing shirts and packing suitcases but also identify and explain the venue policies under which valets are expected to work
- Talk to more senior and experienced valets, or supervisors or managers – to determine what they regard as important things to be aware of and comply with
- Read the relevant policies and procedures – these may in hard copy form in the Staff handbook or similar or may be found in electronic format on the workplace intranet.



## 1.6 Identify and explain the role of communication in valet service provision

### Introduction

Communicating with guests is a critical aspect of the valet's role because it is the basis of the trust and confidence necessary in the relationship between valet and guest.

This Section presents important information to enhance communication between valets and guests.

### Building trust and confidence with guests

You can optimise the development of trust and confidence between you and the guest by:

- Being aware of the needs of the guest before they arrive – this means reading reservation or 'Special Request' details commonly provided by or for VIP guests prior to their arrival
- Having extremely high levels of product knowledge about:
  - All the products, services and facilities of the venue
  - All venue policies and procedures
  - The local area – amenities, infrastructure, shopping, dining, industry, authorities, travel and transport, features and tourist attractions
- Making sure beyond all doubt everything told, explained or discussed with the guest is true, up-to-date and accurate. This builds credibility which is the basis of trust and confidence
- Being proactive – a valet must demonstrate initiative to prove they are thinking and acting on the guest's behalf and to their advantage and benefit
- Always ensuring any promises are kept – when and as promised
- The guest will always judge a valet by their actions rather than their words. You must always 'walk the talk'
- Not interfering – the role of the valet is to serve and not to direct. Valets must cultivate the capacity to allow their guests to be who they want to be and do what they want to do.

Working quietly in the background is key to this while, at the same time, listening and observing the guest, with a view to anticipating what guest needs may be so they can be effectively addressed.



## Rapport and goodwill

Good communication also enhances the relationship between the valet and their guest which must be characterised by agreement and harmony. This is called ‘the rapport’ and is addressed in more detail in Section 3.1.

‘Goodwill’ is a generic term referring to intangible elements of the relationship involving a blend of sentiments.

Goodwill and rapport comprise:

- Friendliness towards the guest
- Approval of the guest and who they are and what they do
- Willingness to help and be of service
- Adding value to transactions and dealings by virtue of the human level of contact and the personal feelings involved
- Positive feelings towards the guest
- Interest in the guest and what they have done, are doing and are going to do.



## Communication standards

The following are important standards relating to communication between valets and guests:

- Listen – always be alert to:
  - What the guest is saying
  - What others around the guest are saying
  - Questions asked by the guest
  - Any sound giving rise for concern or action –the room door or telephone ringing or crashing noise
- Observe – constantly monitor:
  - What the guest is doing – or appears about to do
  - The activities of others in the company of the guest
  - The performance of equipment – such as lights and appliances
- Know when to speak and when not to speak – being a valet is not the same as being a bar attendant, waiter or other frontline staff member and a different protocol applies.



The valet seeks to be a background presence rather than an obvious presence – they must not intrude yet be available when required.

A valet is not required to supply casual banter, witty remarks or offhand comments on events they may see, or on comments they may hear. The principle of ‘seeing everything and saying nothing’ definitely applies



- Valets must never communicate hotel secrets to their guests, nor communicate guest secrets to others. All information received from the guest must be treated as confidential and not discussed with others.

Similarly all observations in relation to the guests must be kept confidential. This includes how they behave, how they treat others, their level of intoxication or how neat or untidy they are in their room.

Guests who use valets often bring public relations people and other staff (security, personal assistants, and cooks) with them for the duration of their stay meaning valets:

- Sometimes need to speak to the guest's personal staff to access information about the guest, determine their preferences or identify their requirements
- Must keep information provide by these people confidential –this information must be treated as coming directly from the guest
- Must keep confidential any conversations or observations regarding the support staff – in the same way conversations and observations of the guest will be kept confidential.



This also means the valet's duties are likely to intersect with those of these staff so there is a need to interact cooperatively with those individuals. This can be difficult at times when the needs of the guest and their staff run contrary to standard house protocols but every effort must be made to accommodate these requirements

- A second language is always seen as a bonus for anyone seeking to be a valet being bi-lingual or multi-lingual is definitely an advantage and having high-level English language skills are also regarded as necessary in most venues and most countries.

## Principles of communication

To help you achieve effective communication with a guest the following rules apply:

- Every message must have a purpose – if there is no need to say anything, do not speak. Always think before talking, and plan what you are going to say and how you are going to say it
- Messages should match the interests and abilities of the guest – conversation should focus on the guest as opposed to focussing on the valet.

Conversation, for example, must focus on what the guest has done and where they have been rather than on what the valet has done or their experiences

- Unnecessary words should be eliminated – conversation between the valet and the guest should be limited in nature. The aim is to be direct without appearing short or rude. This respects the guest and demonstrates it is the guest who is in charge of the situation. The valet is there to serve



- Chosen words should be within the experience range of the guest – if you are going to use local language, terms or phrases when talking to the guest then it is imperative these are explained first.

Explaining these things enhances the guest's experience and prevents embarrassment caused if the guest does not know what is being discussed

- Verbal messages should be clear and concise – using the correct words and with correct pronunciation, along with appropriate inflection, tone, language, speed and volume of voice.

Speaking calmly is recommended. Speaking at a slightly slower speed than normal is also regarded as useful and helps to create a more considered and gracious ambience.

## Why is good communication important?

Good communication between valets and guests is important to:

- Meet guest expectations – regarding service delivery
- Identify guest needs, wants and preferences – so they can best be addressed
- Assist the guest – in whatever ways they may want
- Create the desired atmosphere – of service, dignity and exclusivity
- Facilitate all relationships between the guest and the venue – and enhance rapport, trust and goodwill.



## Clarifying guest requirements

It is important for valets to make sure they do exactly what the guest wants, needs or prefers.

To optimise the likelihood of this occurring you must ensure you understand what it is the guest wants.

Sometimes the guest will tell you what to do quite clearly and there is no doubt about what is needed.

At other times the guest will ask for something without providing all the necessary detail to allow you to fully determine what is required. In these situations:

- Thank the guest for their instructions and ask them follow-up questions to obtain the detail needed
- Use common sense to meet requirements – to the best of your knowledge and ability in keeping with:
  - Standard house protocols
  - Previous service delivery provided to this guest or other guests who have used valet services
- Ask staff of the guest for their interpretation of what is required.

## Work Projects

It is a requirement of this Unit you complete Work Projects as advised by your Trainer. You must submit documentation, suitable evidence or other relevant proof of completion of the project to your Trainer by the agreed date.

### 1.1 For the venue where you work:

- Provide their Job Description for a valet – or prepare and submit one
- Provide an Organisational Chart for the venue showing the position of valet – or prepare and submit one
- Provide the grooming and personal presentation standards required for valets – or prepare and submit a list of these standards
- List the policies and procedures relating to the provision of valet services to guests.

### 1.2. Prepare and submit a brief report written within the context of your workplace detailing:

- Ways a valet may communicate with their guests before arrival and during their stay
  - The role of non-verbal communication in the work of a valet
  - House requirements relating to communication between valet and guest
  - The importance of communication in the guest-valet relationship.
-

## Summary

### Identify the role of a valet

When identifying the role of a valet:

- Seek to identify the roles and duties they are expected to undertake from both a management and guest perspective
- Read the job/position description
- Talk to management and more senior and experienced staff
- Determine the way the position fits into the organisational chart and how it integrates with other positions
- Ascertain and comply with required personal characteristics
- Determine and demonstrate appropriate grooming and personal presentation
- Access, read and understand venue policies and procedures relating to the delivery of services by a valet
- Establish the personal scope of authority applicable to the role
- Appreciate the need for excellent levels of communication to establish rapport, goodwill and trust, and to determine and clarify guest want, needs and preferences.

# Element 2: Prepare to deliver valet services

## 2.1 Obtain guest information in advance of guest arrival

### Introduction

While many guests in a venue are walk-ins, guests who require a valet never arrive without a reservation.

As part of this reservation a request is made for a valet or management decide a valet will be provided. The guest also provides certain details about their stay and their needs, wants and preferences during their stay.

This Section identifies how valets may obtain information in advance of the arrival of a VIP guest who will be receiving valet service.

### Why is it important to obtain this information?

It is important to obtain VIP guest information so you can:

- Learn about the guest – knowledge is power when used to satisfy the guest. The more knowledge you have about the guest to be served, the better you can meet their needs
- Identify their individual needs, wants and preferences – so service delivery can be tailored to meet their personal needs
- Meet expectations – where valet service is provided, VIP guests have high expectations about the standard of service received, and how they will be welcomed and treated. Meeting or exceeding guest expectations is important in relation to:
  - Attracting repeat business
  - Obtaining positive word-of-mouth advertising and endorsements.



## Where and how can guest information be obtained?

### The need to be proactive

Valets need to be proactive in sourcing information about guests they are required to service.

They cannot afford to wait for information to be given to them – they must take action to obtain it.

This may mean valets may:

- Ask management to contact the guest and request information from them
- Contact guest support staff (such as personal assistants) to obtain information.



### Possible sources of guest information

Valets may also use the following to source guest information:

#### *Internal guest history*

Where the guest is a repeat visitor to the venue there is a strong possibility the venue will have details about their previous stay that can be used to provide information about their next visit.

The internal guest history may be a paper-based report or an electronic file on the venue CRS containing:

- Information from venue staff who served the VIP on their previous stay/s about:
  - Likes and dislikes of the guest
  - Things to do and not do for the guest
  - Preferences in terms of things such as:
    - Brand names
    - Wake-up calls
    - Food and beverages
    - Timing of service delivery
    - Privacy
    - Personal treatment
    - Forms of address
- Requirements relating to the room – such as preferences regarding:
  - Room type or number
  - Room set-up on arrival
  - Facilities required
  - Extra items required
- Problems encountered by the guest or their party – so special effort can be made to avoid a repeat of these issues.



### **Guest-related communications – verbal and hard copy**

The guest may send communication to the venue regarding the upcoming stay of the VIP guest who will receive valet service.

This communication is traditionally electronic or paper-based but can be verbal (face-to-face, telephone or Skype).

Where verbal advice is provided to the venue about a VIP guest requirements you should:

- Obtain a contact telephone number or email address – to enable follow-up, clarification or confirmation
- Take notes during the discussion – to record what is required, timing requirements, brands preferred by the guest
- Send a transcript of your notes to the agent – asking them to confirm what you have written, adding anything that is missing or incorrect
- Politely enquire if they can send a hard copy of the requests made – this is often not possible as they have more important things to do. Agents will believe once they have the venue what is required, that is all they have to do. They will expect their requests to be met without further communication.



Some VIPs will have forwarded a list of personal preferences. This list should be seen as extremely beneficial as it provides valuable insight into what has to be done to make the guest's stay a pleasant and positive one.

A valet can never have too much information about a guest, so be grateful for the information such a list provides.

### **Discussion with other staff, departments or external providers**

Where advance notice a VIP is attending management often arrange a staff meeting between staff, people and support businesses who have dealt with the VIP (or *similar* VIPs) and those who are going to deal with the VIP.

This meeting is very useful as it enables:

- Sharing of the experience in dealing with a VIP – it is true most VIPs are not the same as other guests in a venue. It is important the 'little things' about the guest are shared so valets gain a full appreciation of what to expect and what the guest is all about
- Sharing of needs, wants and preferences of the VIP –so their requirements can be met
- Sharing of known idiosyncrasies of the VIP – so valets are not surprised or distressed at unusual behaviour, language or attitudes
- Planning for the stay – such as allocation of duties, integration of services, scheduling of activities and preparation of required products or services.





## Examples of pre-arrival information

Information regarding guests who want or merit valet service will greatly exceed the traditional information captured from other guests when they make a booking.

The type of pre-arrival information available may include, but is definitely not limited to:

- Names – of the VIPs and those in their party. Their ‘party’ can include:
  - Spouse or partner
  - Children – including their age and special; requirements for them:
    - Entertainment
    - Food and drinks
    - Child-minding
  - PA's or agents
  - Retinue – such as security, cooks, hairdressers, make-up people, advisors, media personnel, nannies, doctors
- Title (if appropriate) – and how the person is to be addressed:
  - ‘Your Majesty’
  - ‘Your Holiness’
  - Culture-specific forms of address and respect to be employed
- Special requests – these can relate to specific tasks to be undertaken when the guest is in the venue or during their stay:
  - Valets may be asked to run errands, arranging bookings or functions, obtain nominated items, meet with designated people
  - There really is no limit to the range of things a valet may be asked to do for a guest
- Personal preferences – see Section 2.2
- Itinerary– this is a list of what the guest is doing during their stay, where they are going and when it is all happening:
  - This is provided so the valet and other venue staff can make sure they accommodate guest needs. Schedules can range from the very detailed to general
  - Not all guests who use a valet will provide an itinerary
- Functions to be organised detailing:
  - When they are required – date, start and finish times
  - Numbers attending – and who the venue needs to invite
  - Where they are to be held – in the venue or at another location
  - Menus and drinks required
  - Entertainment
  - Budget
  - Ancillary requirements – theme for the event, colour scheme, displays.





## 2.2 Determine guest requirements and preferences

### Introduction

Meeting guest expectations has been identified as an important for valets.

This Section identifies issues to be considered when determining what these requirements and preferences might be.

### How to determine guest requirements and preferences

Guest requirements and preferences can be determined prior to guest arrival, and once the guest has arrived.

#### Prior to guest arrival

The techniques discussed in the previous Section 2.1 should be applied:

- Reading internal guest history
- Reading hard copy and electronic communication from the guest, their agent or staff
- Talking to the guest, guest staff or management of the venue
- Talking to venue staff and external providers who have previous experience with the VIPs.



#### When guest has arrived

Every effort must be made to determine as many guest requirements and preferences before the guest arrives but it is impossible to identify *every* possibility prior to arrival.

Where requirements and preferences are not known for an activity, product or service three keys to determining what is required are:

- Use common sense to determine what to provide – based on personal, venue or local knowledge, and what you see and hear ‘at the time’
- Ask the guest or their staff – this should be done:
  - As soon as possible – the sooner these questions are raised and answered, the better. Never leave asking these questions till the last minute
  - By describing options available – where the guest is unaware of what is available
- Clarify specific valet attendance requirements – identifying times the guest requires valet service for nominated activities.



### Note 1

Asking the guest what they want after they have arrived is not the preferred option but the reality of valet life is guests are often unable to be contacted for several days prior to their arrival.

This means arrangements have to be made based on the information available which is often incomplete.

The key is to make some arrangements based on what is known from previous experience and then be ready to change things if the need to do so arises.



### Note 2

If you have to ask the guest or their staff about what is required:

- Take notes about what is required
- Make sure the requirements and preferences are met – to the greatest extent possible.

Once you have asked about guest requirements and preferences you have created expectations about them being met, so try to make sure you do not disappoint the guest.

Always under-promise and over-deliver.

## Examples of guest requirements and preferences

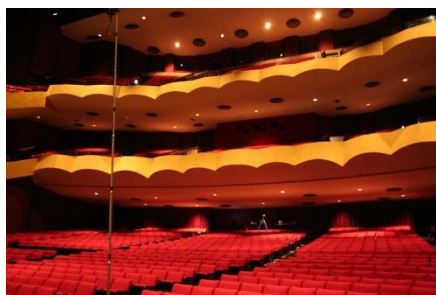
The guest may have personal requirements or preferences in relation to:

- Specific brands of beverages or food
- Newspapers or magazines to be provided in-room
- Colours of Smarties to be supplied
- Setting of temperature for air conditioning
- Calls to the room – reminder or wake-up calls
- Car or transport
- In-room services – meals, massage, business support, small parties.



Individual requirements for service provision may embrace:

- Organising excursions
- Making restaurant or theatre bookings
- Arranging meetings with local identities, authorities, personalities or nominated other people, businesses or groups
- Providing advice about personal services – such as hairdressing, medical, legal and shopping
- Making or confirming travel arrangements.



## 2.3 Liaise with other staff and external service providers to meet anticipated guest needs

### Introduction

Valets provide personal service to guests but the total guest experience relies on teamwork and the cooperation of other staff within the venue as well as businesses external to the venue.

This Section addresses the need for valets to liaise with other venue staff to provide the optimum guest experience.

### Activities involved in liaising with other staff

When liaising with other staff regarding a guest stay where valet service is being provided, you may be required to:

- Meet with staff to discuss guest stay – and make necessary arrangements
- Share original information about the guest – and any information provided subsequent to this altering previous knowledge, service delivery requirements or planning
- Organise the arrival of the guest – which may involve:
  - Pick-up and transfers
  - Preparing the guest rooms as required
  - Organise refreshments or meals
  - Security and privacy arrangements
  - Luggage movement
- Notify other staff or departments of guest arrival – depending on the nature of the arrival this may require:
  - Informing management – so they can welcome the guest
  - Advising Front Office – especially where management or the valet handles guest check-in. There can be situations where, rather than requiring the guest to complete standard check-in procedures, these are undertaken elsewhere. This can include the guest room
  - Confirming guest numbers with the Kitchen or Food and Beverage department – important where the guest will be eating in-house
  - Notifying internal Security regarding:
    - Numbers of guests
    - Room numbers
    - Arrangements made by security personnel accompanying the guest

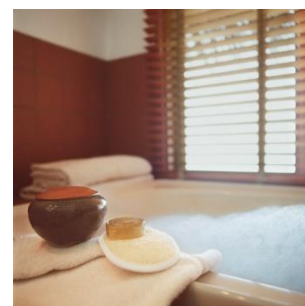
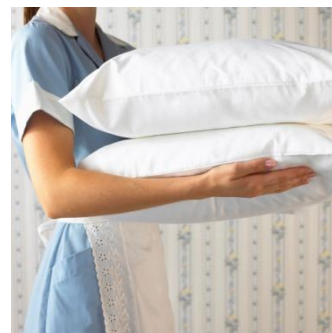


- Contacting Housekeeping to:
  - Confirm arrival
  - Verify guest numbers
  - Verify room allocations
  - Request special services
- Communicating with whatever personnel or departments necessary to respond to guest needs and requests as they are identified on arrival.

## Preparing the guest room

When preparing the guest room a valet should:

- Ensure any notified requirements are catered for – in accordance with identified guest needs, wants and preferences
- Be involved in the cleaning and preparation of the room – the finished product always seems to be better if the valet who will provide service in the room is involved in cleaning and servicing the room
- Prepare the room according to venue standards where the guest has not specified alternative requirements – in practice this can mean:
  - Turning nominated lights on or off – in different sections of the room, or in different rooms of the suite
  - Setting the air conditioning
  - Setting the levels of sound for the radio, sound system or television
  - Setting the radio and television to nominated stations or channels
  - Setting the time on clocks in the room
  - Opening or closing drapes and curtains
- Check the final presentation of the room – see next section 2.4.



## Those who may need to be liaised with

### External providers

Where provision of services or products for the guest stay relies on external providers, the valet must:

- Contact them
- Advise of updated information, arrangements or numbers
- Confirm other existing arrangements
- Clarify issues as required



- Communicate last-minute details – such as:
  - Timing and scheduling
  - Room numbers
  - Names of venue staff who will be involved
  - Final requirements for integration of activities or service provision.



### The Guest and their staff

There is nearly always a need to speak with the guest or their staff.

This may be required to:

- Identify yourself as the valet
- Provide your contact details – such as work cell phone, pager number or extension number
- Welcome the guest – and their entourage
- Offer to be of service
- Identify changes to previously arranged plans, schedules and requirements
- Confirm existing arrangements
- Seek answers to questions where the guest was presented with options but has not decided which option to select.



## 2.4 Check guest room prior to guest arrival to ensure compliance with stated requests

### Introduction

All rooms to be used by guests receiving valet service must be inspected and checked to ensure they comply with requests by the guest and house protocols.

This Section considers the checks that should be made.

### Inspection of the rooms

#### Timing

The room or suite to be occupied by the VIP guest must be ready to receive the guest at least three hours prior to their anticipated arrival.

This means the room has been inspected and checked, and deemed to be 'ready'.

Ensuring the room is ready at least three hours early allows:

- Time to address identified short-comings
- The guest to be accommodated should they arrive early.

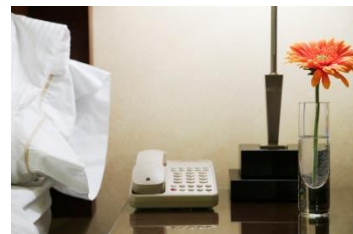




## Personnel involved

It is standard practice for the room to be inspected by all the following. Separate inspections are recommended rather than a single 'group inspection':

- The room attendants who cleaned/serviced the room
- The Floor Housekeeper
- The Executive Housekeeper
- Management
- The valets.



## Conducting the inspection

The inspection should involve the following activities:

- Use a pre-prepared checklist to guide the inspection – based on the requirements for the guest as communicated to the venue
- Cover all aspects of the room:
  - Floors, walls, ceilings and carpets
  - Fixtures, furniture and equipment
  - Appliances and equipment, systems and technology – including remote control devices fully operational for television, air conditioning, lights, drapes
  - Interior aspects as well as outside areas such as patios, balconies and court yards
  - External appearances of cabinets, drawers, cupboards, wardrobes as well as inside cleanliness and condition
  - Presence and physical location of all complimentary products
  - Door locks function smoothly and effectively
- Check previously set settings to equipment including radios, lights, television, systems, clocks – and confirm:
  - Operation of all electrical equipment, lights, refrigeration
  - Ice is provided as required or in accordance with house requirements
  - Refrigeration is at correct setting
  - Alarm clock is not set – to avoid it waking the guest up when not required
  - Telephone and internal communication (message lights, on-screen/television-based) systems are fully operational
  - Television and radio are on designated stations and volume is correctly adjusted
- Confirm the presence of 'on arrival' items – such as:
  - Flowers in vases or bouquets
  - Gifts or gift baskets
  - Tickets to events, shows or the theatre



- Confirmation of reservations – for dining, personal services, tours
- Products specifically requested by the guest to be available on arrival – food, reading material, confectionery, drinks and clothing
- Use all the senses – for example:
  - Check everything **looks** clean, tidy and as it should be – special attention must be paid to windows and mirrors
  - Check everything **smells** as it should – with special attention to ‘off’ odours in respect of carpets, refrigeration, toilets and confined spaces
  - Check everything **sounds** as it should – no excess or unacceptable levels of noise from fans, refrigeration, heaters or other appliances or systems.



## The need to take action

Checking the room is not an end in itself.

The objective in checking the room is to ensure it meets guest expectations.

This means it is crucial necessary action is taken to address any identified problems or short-comings.

Remedial action may include:

- Re-cleaning the room – or parts of it
- Replacing furniture, fixtures or items
- Undertaking maintenance or repairs
- Re-rooming the guest – moving the guest to another room.





## Work Projects

It is a requirement of this Unit you complete Work Projects as advised by your Trainer. You must submit documentation, suitable evidence or other relevant proof of completion of the project to your Trainer by the agreed date.

2.1 Produce and submit a brief report detailing the activities you could undertake in preparation for a valet-serviced guest stay at your workplace to:

- Obtain information in advance of the arrival of the guest
- Determine guest requirements and preferences.

2.2. Submit video or photographic evidence demonstrating you have:

- Liaised with other venue staff in preparation for a valet-serviced guest stay
  - Helped prepare a valet-serviced room in preparation for a guest stay
  - Checked a valet-serviced guest room prior to the arrival of the guest to ensure it complies with stated guest requests.
-

## Summary

### Prepare to deliver valet services

When preparing to deliver valet services:

- Obtain and check pre-arrival notifications received from the guest or their representatives
- Be proactive in obtaining pre-arrival notifications – never just wait for instructions to arrive
- Search internal guest history to determine previous guest preferences
- Never be afraid to talk to the guest on/after arrival to determine requirements or clarify expectations
- Under-promise and over-deliver
- Liaise with other staff to include them in the provision of service and in meeting expectations. Never feel it is all up to you
- Participate in preparing the guest room in accordance with house protocols and specific guest instructions
- Ensure room is ready well in advance of guest ETA
- Meet and liaise with other staff and management to organise for the arrival and presence of the guest
- Double-check the guest room just prior to guest arrival.



## Element 3: Deliver valet services

### 3.1 Welcome guest on arrival and establish appropriate rapport

#### Introduction

An important starting point for the relationship between valets and guests is for the valet to be in attendance when the guest arrives to welcome them, introduce themselves and commence the process of rapport building.

This Section identifies important aspects of this critical phase of a stay when a guest uses the services of a valet.

#### Rapport

A valet is very much a frontline staff member and as such it is important they are able to build rapport with clients.

The word 'rapport' comes from the French word 'raporter' meaning 'to bring back' which identifies nicely what you are trying to achieve with guests or clients when you work as a valet – to bring them back to the venue.

Because valets will frequently spend a large portion of their time with guests it is important rapport is built to enhance the relationship between the guest and the establishment, and create the foundation for optimal guest satisfaction.

Building rapport means establishing a relation and connection with the guest is characterised by agreement and harmony.



#### The need to build rapport with guests

All communication between valets and guests must be characterised by the following points, some of which have also been discussed in previous notes:

- Consistent use of a professional manner by the valet – in all dealings with guests
- Politeness and courtesy – showing respect for the guest
- Use of correct etiquette at all times – behind closed doors as well as when in public
- Use of guest name at all times – or an appropriate alternative such as 'Sir' or 'Madam'
- Being truthful at all times – honesty about everything at all times is essential. The valet needs to create a relationship with the guest such that the guest can rely on what the valet says as being 100% true and accurate
- While the valet must be tactful, they are not expected to tell lies

- Being tactful, diplomatic and discrete – to protect the reputation, sensitivities and image of the guest
- Indicating when a personal opinion is being given – as distinct from facts
- Maintaining privacy and confidentiality issues relating to the guest and their stay – so other people who do not need to know are not made aware of guest activities, conversations and meetings. See Section 3.8
- Exhibit a constant willingness to assist – demonstrating ‘nothing is too much trouble’ and it is a pleasure to serve.

## Welcoming the guest

### Before the guest arrives

Prior to the arrival of the guest, as a valet you will need to:

- Confirm the people in the guest’s party with Reception – by name and number
- Practice saying the guest’s name – where the name is unusual, difficult to pronounce or the guest is from another country
- Identify the correct form of address for the guests – to ensure the guest is addressed in the most polite and appropriate form as applicable to their position
- Make a last minute check of the guest room or suite – to verify all is ready for the arrival of the guest
- Conduct or participate in a staff briefing – where a VIP is expected in the venue it is SOP for all staff to be briefed about:
  - The names of those arriving – the VIP guest and all those in the party
  - Schedule for the party – detailing what the guests will be doing and when they will be doing it
  - Allocation of roles and responsibilities to staff – for service delivery to the guest and their party
  - Special arrangements made by the venue that are different to normal practices and procedures – as required by the guest and as organised by the venue for the guest
  - Things the staff must do and must not do – while the guest and their party are in residence at the venue
  - Ancillary aspects of the visit – such as:
    - Security arrangements
    - Media access to the guest
    - Special events the guest will be hosting or attending



- Meet with management to discuss and organise the arrival addressing:
  - Where the guest will arrive – options may be for normal entry through the front doors of the venue, or discrete entry using an alternative door
  - Expected time of arrival
  - Activities organised as part of the arrival, covering issues such as:
    - Registration
    - Introductions to staff and others
    - Media obligations and photo opportunities
  - Who will be present to greet the guest – in many instances there can be a need to accommodate attendance at the arrival of a VIP by:
    - Head office staff or management
    - Dignitaries and officials
  - Media attendance – venues will always try to accommodate the media and give them access while at the same time protecting the guest
  - Security arrangements – relating to crowd control, vehicle access and screening of individuals and luggage, items and cars
  - Transportation of luggage to the room – identifying how this will occur
  - The sequence in which ‘welcoming the guest’ will occur – by identifying the order in which management, staff will be introduced to the guest.



### The welcome

To welcome a guest properly and professionally a valet should participate in a two-stage welcome.

#### Stage 1

Stage 1 is the formal, yet quite brief introduction to the guest when they arrive at the venue.

This is the introduction where the valet is introduced as part of the wider welcome to the venue conducted by management and involving other staff including Executive Chef, Head Housekeeper, Duty Manager.

Traditionally:

- The venue Manager introduces key staff by name and title to the guest
- A very brief word of welcome is given to the guest by each staff member



- A decision needs to be made in advance about whether or not hand shaking should occur. This could involve communication before arrival with the guest or their agent to identify guest preferences
- Generally speaking:
  - There is no shaking of hands
  - Staff should be alert to the need to shake hands if the guest offers to do so
  - Hands are not shaken with women unless they offer their hand
  - No other form of touching is permitted or appropriate such as hands on shoulder, or kissing.

### Stage 2

Stage 2 is the private and more private and personal introduction where the valet should:

- Uses the guest's name and greets them and welcomes them to the venue
- Introduces themselves by name and position
- Confirms their previously advised requests have been taken care of
- Invites questions and further requests
- Makes an offer of immediate assistance or a statement indicating they are ready to help in any way.



### Note

This introduction may take place between the valet and the guest, or between the valet and the agent, manager or PA of the guest.

This highlights the valet may not, on some occasions, welcome the guest in the traditional sense.

## 3.2 Advise guest of available services

### Introduction

When the guest has settled into their accommodation the valet should be ready to advise them regarding all the services available to optimise the satisfaction or effectiveness of their stay.

This Section identifies the variety of services a venue may provide to its VIP guests

### The need for teamwork

Valets should remember they are not on their own when it comes to providing any service, information or advice to guests.

The establishment, and the other staff, should recognise the role of a valet and strive to assist wherever possible. In many ways the valet organises for things to get done through the efforts of others, as compared to actually doing those things themselves.





This utilisation of others within the establishment applies to offering of information and advice, as it does to anything else.

### Product knowledge

As previously identified it is important for valets to have high levels of product knowledge about:

- The venue itself – with special reference to in-house provisions, facilities, options and services
- The local area and external provisions – including identification and ability to describe products and services available to meet identified guest needs.



A standard requirement for all valets is to make a conscious effort to find out all there is to know about these two large but key areas.

But this is not, perhaps, as important as knowing *where to go to get the information and advice that is required*. No-one can know the answers to all questions a guest can ask, but the valet must at least know where to go to get the answer.

This could include contacting internal staff including the chef, front office staff, head bar attendant or executive housekeeper. In addition a range of external individuals can be contacted included tourist operators, medical and emergency personnel, religious or professional people.

There is always a strong relationship between valets and Concierge.

The critical aspect to delivering this service is the valet must undertake to find the answer to a question to which they do not know the answer, with the same good grace as they show when answering a question they do know the answer to.

## Services

A prime requirement is for valets to be alert constantly to service cues presenting themselves throughout a guest's stay.

There is no single list that can describe every possible available services, so constant watchfulness coupled with initiative are the keys to advising the guest on what is available.

While every guest is likely to have individual needs, experience has shown the following services are often required by guests and valets have a primary role to play in arranging them:

### Providing general valet services

The guest should be advised, where necessary, of the general duties the valet can provide.

These services include but are not limited to:

- Providing general housekeeping duties for the room
- Making tea and coffee
- Preparing guest clothes and footwear
- Undertaking personal errands for the guest
- Answering the telephone and door and screening callers



- Liaising with guest and venue staff
- Making arrangements on behalf of the guest.

This list is by no means comprehensive, it is merely indicative.

### Organising special functions

These are commonly small functions often conducted in the guest's suite, such as a small cocktail party, but can include larger gatherings where a bigger area or tables in the dining area are required.

You need to liaise with function, room service or food and beverage staff to cater for these requests.

### Organising excursions and trips

Where the guest is from another town, region or country they frequently seek advice from valets about day trips and what is 'best' to see or what places are worth visiting.

The advice you provide should reflect any special tastes the guests have. It is always best to enquire as to what sort of things they prefer. Do they like natural attractions or do they prefer man-made ones? Have they a liking for history?

You also need to enquire as to how long they want to spend. Are they seeking a half-day trip, a full-day trip or do they just want to fill in two hours?

Once you have clarified these points you should then make appropriate suggestions and ask as to whether they would like you to book tickets or make other appropriate arrangements on their behalf.

### Making restaurant and theatre bookings

Guests may ask you to make bookings for a nominated restaurant or theatre event or they may ask for your advice on where to eat or what show to see.

Where they nominate what they want make sure you identify what times apply and how many people will be going.

Where they seek your advice once again you will need to ask some questions to determine their preferences for food and entertainment before making recommendations.

### Arranging room service

Rather than order room service themselves guests will often ask the valet to organise it.

If the guest identifies what they want ensure you fully understand the order and have all the necessary details. These include: How many serves? How is the steak to be cooked? When do they want it delivered?

Also be alert to the opportunity to up-sell by recommending items the guest may have overlooked.



If the guest has not specified what they want you will, once again, need to ask questions to identify preferences before making recommendations or placing an order.

Depending on house policy or guest preference, you may need to serve the room service order yourself or this may be the role of dedicated room service staff.

### Providing general advice

Guests often ask the valet about information relating to personal services and it is here where your local knowledge will be called on.

Providing information on personal services relates to topics such as:

- Hairdressing
- Medical requirements
- Legal
- Shopping.



Whilst most of this information is available to guests in the room compendium, the valet is expected to verbally provide reliable and appropriate advice on these topics.

Wherever possible a hard copy of information including brochures or maps should also be provided.

The advice from the valet should also include 'local knowledge' tips such as:

- The best way to get to a location
- Who to ask for when they get there
- Places (shops, precincts) to avoid and places to make sure they go to.

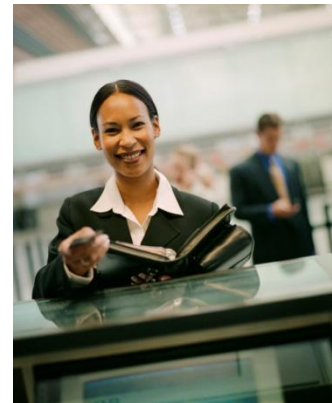
### Making or confirming travel arrangements

It is not common for valets to be asked to make large-scale travel arrangements as most guests already have an itinerary planned, travel arrangements made and tickets booked.

In some cases, the agent or management for the guest will handle these issues.

There can however be need for the valet to:

- Change travel arrangements – moving the guest to another flight and changing the departure date or time
- Make arrangements for day and side-trips – while the guest is in residence
- Contact the airline or travel agent on behalf of the guest – to confirm previously made arrangements or tentative arrangements.



Where there is a problem with any previously made arrangements this needs to be communicated to the guest as soon as possible so the guest can make alternative arrangements.

It is critical any request from the guest relating to travel arrangements is acted on promptly.

Any arrangements made on behalf of the guest must be authorised before final confirmation or payment is made and a copy of all relevant paperwork must be forwarded promptly to the guest. This included tickets, itinerary and insurance.

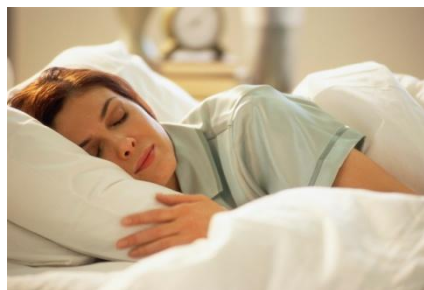
See also Section 3.5.

### Providing wake-up or reminder calls

Even where the room features an automated wake-up call service the guest may ask the valet to arrange the call.

Where there is no request for these calls from the guest the valet should enquire as to whether or not wake-up calls are to be booked.

The valet may give the guest the option of having the wake-up call placed directly to the guest's bedside phone, or the *valet* may take the wake-up call and then personally knock on the guest's door to awaken them.



Guests often require reminder calls to remind them of important times or issues.

### Delivering newspapers, coffee or tea first thing in the morning

The guest may need a newspaper the property does not normally provide, and even where tea and coffee making facilities are provided in-room some guests prefer to have it brought to them.

From guest history, the valet will ascertain what newspapers are required, though it is a good idea to double-check with the guest.

Formal coffee or tea may also be required first thing in the morning, before breakfast is served or taken.



### Ordering and serving breakfast

There may be times when the valet will have to organise a guest's breakfast: usually, all breakfast orders are taken the night prior to service, but with some VIPs, their order may be filled in the morning, as the order is received.

If breakfast is required, the valet will take the order.

All hotel rooms offering breakfast service will provide a menu in the guest's room, and the valet should present the guest with this menu and record the guest's order taking note of preferences, such as the type of milk the guest prefers or how they like their eggs cooked.

Valets will often be able to recite the breakfast menu, making personal recommendations at the same time.

The valet should also ask the guest what time they require breakfast and how they would like breakfast served.

Some guests may prefer to eat their breakfast in bed, while others will prefer to eat breakfast at the table in the room or outside on a balcony.

The valet may also ask the guest if they require the morning paper to be served with breakfast.





Breakfast will normally arrive via room service and it will be the valet's responsibility to set up the breakfast according to the guest's requests.

Should the breakfast be served in bed, the valet may have to open or uncover certain items, prepare certain foods, and attractively arrange items on the tray, before presentation to the guest.

Should the breakfast be served at the table, the valet must set out all breakfast items on the table in accordance with the hotel's policy and procedures on such matters, and in accordance with guest requests.

While setting up breakfast, the valet must:

- Check all items the guest has ordered have been supplied and special requests have been delivered
- Check all crockery and cutlery is clean and free from marks or spills
- Food is served at the correct temperature
- Unroll and correctly position cutlery.

### Looking after dry cleaning and laundry needs

Even where an internal facility exists and there are dockets in the room to enable guests to do it themselves many guests will ask the valet to take care of these requirements.



Some guests will stipulate where the items are to be cleaned (in-house laundry or an external provider) and how they are to be cleaned.

Others will leave those decisions to your good sense and judgement.

### Organising a personal driver, limousine, taxi, or hire car

From guest history it may be possible to ascertain guest preferences for a personal driver, limousine, taxi or hire car.

The phone number for these services will usually be listed in the guest's history.

If not, they can be obtained from the concierge.

Requirements in this regard can be for a one-off/single use time, or a day or week booking. Ensure you have relevant details relating to location of the car, times, numbers travelling and expected duration.



### Arranging for appropriate security

Security may apply to items the guest wants stored in the establishment safe. It can also apply to personal security required at their door or on their floor, in their room, when they leave their room or when they enter or leave the venue.

Where there are VIPs in the house it is standard practice for their floor or room to receive extra security attention.



## 3.3 Deal with guest luggage

### Introduction

A standard requirement for all valets is to deal effectively with guest luggage.

This Section discusses issues related to handling guest luggage.

### Basic requirements

In relation to guest luggage a valet needs to:

- Organise transfer of the luggage to the rooms using other Front Office staff, porters or housemen
- Unpack the luggage and store the items
- Check and service the luggage
- Re-pack the luggage when guest departs.



### The need for care

As part of their duties, the valet must care for all guest property.

Primary requirements are you handle all items carefully to avoid damage, and action is taken to prevent theft or loss.

Care is needed when transporting luggage, when unpacking items and when storing them.

It is important to realise your actions when handling luggage or guest belongings is usually visible to others and they will quickly determine whether or not they believe you are treating items with care and respect or not.



### Taking luggage to guest rooms

Porters or Housemen will usually take guest luggage to guest rooms.

They may do this independently of the valet, who may be with the guest in their room at this time. Alternatively the valet may accompany them and oversee or supervise this process.

It is possible one valet stays with the guest and another valet accompanies the luggage.

Luggage must be treated with care. Much of the luggage is *extremely* expensive and must not be treated roughly. Never throw luggage around and ensure the way items are stacked on trolleys does no harm to them. Avoid double-stacking as this can damage suitcases and crush contents.

Ensure luggage does not fall off the trolley. Not only does this look bad but it also presents very real risks of damaging the luggage and breaking contents within the bags.

A bag that is dropped and which contains a duty-free two-litre bottle of Scotch will not only smash the bottle, but will also damage clothes and other items in the bag.

Points to note relating to transferring luggage to rooms include:

- Organise sufficient staff – multiple porters are usually required to handle the relatively large volume of luggage VIP guests bring with them. Liaison with porters is essential when dealing with VIP guest luggage
- Arrange for sufficient trolleys – if insufficient trolleys are available a plan detailing the sequence of luggage delivery to rooms must be created
- Ensure rooming sheets are available – and match luggage trolleys to each room being used by the VIP party. Each room must have its own trolley. Never try to accommodate luggage from different rooms on the same trolley
- The VIP guest must be serviced first – the focus of delivering the luggage must be to get the bags to the primary guest before their retinue receives their luggage
- Gratuities are never solicited – most VIP guests make an allowance for gratuities when they settle their account on departure. Porters will be advised during the staff briefing they are not to solicit gratuities
- Luggage trolleys must be clean and in good condition
- Porters must make VIP guest luggage delivery their priority – they cannot deal with other matters, provide service to other guests or take directions for other tasks.



## Unpacking luggage

The valet must follow guest requests and instructions regarding the unpacking and storing of items in their luggage as each guest has personal needs, individual habits and their own way of doing things.

Remember, as valet you are there to serve and not to dictate.

### First step

A first step in unpacking luggage is to obtain the keys necessary to open the luggage and the locks.

Advise the guest if there is evidence of tampering.

### Comply with all guest requests and directions

Some requests from guests when unpacking and storing items may include:

- Sending clothing to be dry cleaned or laundered
- Sending clothing to be pressed
- Need for shoe care, cleaning or polishing
- Hanging of suit and clothing bags in wardrobes or on hooks
- Brushing clothing to remove lint
- Hanging individual clothes in wardrobes on appropriate hangers



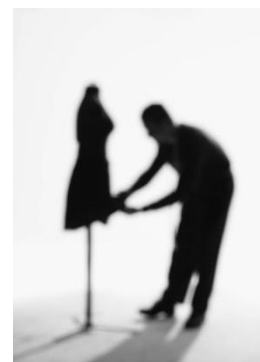


- Folding clothes and placing in drawers
- Providing or arranging basic clothing repairs such as sewing on of buttons, mending tears and stitching.

### Additional points

When unpacking the guest's luggage, you may also need to:

- Check the outsides of the luggage – and clean away any marks
- Place luggage on an appropriate surface in the room to avoid damage – the luggage rack is the most common area to use
- Remove all items from the luggage – making sure all items are clean and dirty items are sent for laundering, or otherwise cleaned as appropriate
- Place clothing and items appropriately:
  - Drawers – jumpers, casual shorts, T-shirts, underwear: ensure all clothes are neatly folded and stacked according to colour
  - Wardrobe – shirts, trousers, coats, suits, skirts, gowns
  - Hang similar items together – all suits together, all shirts together
  - The purpose of correctly hanging and folding clothes and other items is to keep the garments ready for use and wrinkle free
  - Bottom of wardrobe – shoes:
    - Place aside shoes requiring attention
    - Position polished shoes in pairs and stack according to colour and occasions
  - Bathroom or make-up room:
    - Toilet bags
    - Make-up cases.



## Storage of guest luggage

Guest luggage may be dealt with in a variety of ways once it has been unpacked but guest preferences and directions must always be complied with.

Options for dealing with unpacked luggage include:

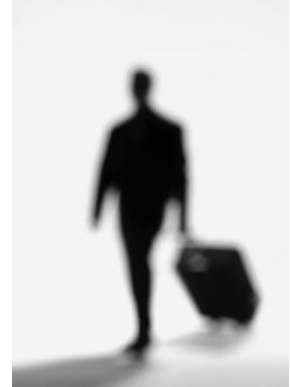
- Removal of empty luggage to the venue 'Luggage Room'. Every item is tagged to identify the room it came from to facilitate retrieval of the correct items for the correct room when re-packing and departure time arrives
- Storing of empty luggage in the guest's room in designated luggage storage spaces – suites and VIP rooms commonly provide specific areas where luggage can be stored in-room
- Leaving nominated items of luggage in the room and taking other items to the Luggage Room
- Moving empty items of luggage to rooms occupied by members of the guest's entourage.

## Dealing with damaged luggage

Luggage can become damaged during travel and part of the valet's job is to deal with these situations.

When identifying damaged guest luggage as part of the unpacking process you should:

- Advise of the damage straight away – so they are aware of it as soon as possible. Advice may be provided to the guest or their staff
- Ask if the guest wants the luggage repaired or offer to have it repaired
- Enquire if the guest wants a substitute item of luggage obtained
- Liaise with the guest to determine if they require you to follow-up on the damage by contacting an airline and seeking compensation.



## Security

Standard security protocols must be adhered to when dealing with guest luggage:

- Never allow anyone apart from authorised people to handle or take items of luggage
- Restrict access to areas where guest luggage is stored or being unpacked – close and lock doors
- Notify the guest or their staff as to where luggage has been taken for storage
- Check tags on bags are intact – take remedial action as necessary
- Verify locks on bags are fully operational – advise where locks are damaged or missing
- Look for evidence of tampering – and advise where this is detected.



## Need for sensitivity

Never 'force' valet service on guests.

While valets definitely provide additional service to guests there may be times when guests simply want their privacy.

They may be tired after a long flight, or they may require time alone to think and undertake personal tasks.

Be alert for, and respond appropriately to, requests or non-verbal cues to leave the unpacking till later or for the guests to do it themselves.

## 3.4 Deal with guest clothes

### Introduction

A major part of delivering valet services is the need to deal with guest clothes.

This Section presents information relating to this important and ongoing task.

### Unpacking and storing clothing

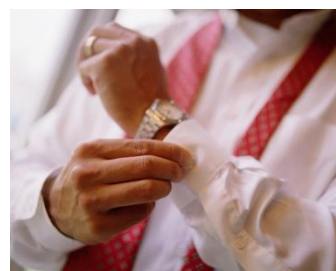
See Section 3.3.

Always follow directions, requests and suggestions made by the guest.

### Preparing clothes

Valets are often required to prepare and present guest's clothing, ready for the guest to wear.

In cases where the guest has requested their clothing be laid out to wear they will inform the valet of the clothing they wish to wear. It is then the responsibility of the valet to identify the right clothing and present it for the guest to change into.



The more information the valet can obtain, the better.

Some guests will give very precise information about what they want to wear and leave no doubt about each and every item of clothing, piece of jewellery or style of shoe.

Other guests will give you a general idea and leave it up to you. This is fraught with danger and to be avoided wherever possible as it is almost impossible to determine what the guest's preferences are.

Before presenting the guest's clothing ensure:

- The clothing is in good condition – no rips, tears, missing buttons, hanging hems, loose threads and split seams
- It is clean – free from stains, lint, dust and other marks
- It is pressed and looks presentable.

You must act on behalf of the guest and take all steps and total responsibility to ensure they are not embarrassed by what you prepare.



Your work must be characterised by respect for the guest and a pride in what you do.

It is also important to understand the guest has the decision about what they will wear. It is **not** part of your job to give an opinion about whether or not an item is suitable, acceptable or 'goes with' another item.

If you are asked to do, remember to use tact, discretion and diplomacy.

Clothes are usually laid out in the sequence in which the guest will dress.

- Underwear – socks, bras, stockings and under garments
- Tie
- Blouse
- Dress
- Skirt
- Jacket
- Coat
- Scarf
- Hat
- Gloves.



Items may be placed on a valet chair, on the bed or on an item of furniture within the room. It is not standard practice to lay items out in the bathroom but where there is a make-up room, this may be used.

Any personal requests made by guests differing to the above must be adhered to.

Check all items as you lay them out to verify they are presentable, clean, pressed and appropriate.

Where you have to prepare and present a subsequent set of clothes for a different occasion it is a good idea to check with the guest as to whether what you did last time was acceptable to them or if they would like something different next time.

Be prepared for all manner of feedback and comments. All guests are individuals and as such potentially have different preferences.

## Pressing guest clothes

It is vital all guest clothes are kept looking presentable.

For many clothes this requires the ironing or pressing of items.

Three options are available to achieve this:

- The valet irons clothes in the guest room – using a standard iron and ironing board with all the necessary accompaniments such as spray bottles for starch and water, and lint removing brushes
- Items are sent to the laundry for ironing – this is commonly only done where there are large quantities of clothing to be pressed or where the items require the use of special bucks
- Laundry staff come to the guest room – and iron clothes in the room using specialist equipment and products as required.



Before pressing guest clothes you must:

- Receive instruction – from senior and experienced laundry staff in the venue
- Practice – so you gain confidence and competence.

Basic pressing tips include:

- Shake clothes out before starting to iron them
- Check the iron and the ironing surface is clean before use
- Iron on an underliner
- Check 'care labels' on clothing before ironing
- Set the iron to the correct temperature and setting. A common mistake when ironing is to have the iron too hot which can damage clothes
- Use ironing chemicals as appropriate.



### **Online videos**

View the following for instruction on how to iron clothes but always follow house protocols or guest directions where they differ from what is presented.

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MnHirHxqkA>
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5PU5S\\_U\\_8c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5PU5S_U_8c)
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f\\_3qWYcpxD4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_3qWYcpxD4)
- [http://www.ehow.com/video\\_4791107\\_quick-easy-tips-ironing-clothes.html](http://www.ehow.com/video_4791107_quick-easy-tips-ironing-clothes.html).

## **Making or organising repairs**

The wide variety of requests made to valets often includes a request for repairs to be made to clothing, shoes or luggage.

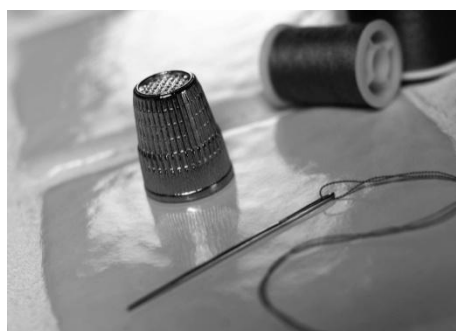
In other instances long-term guests can also be expected to ask you to arrange repairs to other items such as watches, broken spectacles or computers.

### **Minor repairs**

Valets may be asked by guests to do small 'running repairs' and should have a comprehensive repair kit available to them to facilitate the execution of such repairs.

In essence these repair jobs are small in nature such as sewing on a button or putting a stitch in a hem: there is limit as to what can be done.

In addition valets should be on the lookout for items that require repairing and ask guests if they would like the item repaired.



## Dealing with bigger repair jobs

When faced with a larger repair job the role of the valet is to *organise* the repairs rather than actually *undertake* the repairs.

This may mean sending the item to an in-house department such as laundry, housekeeping or the maintenance department. It may involve sending it out-of-house for attention by a professional organisation specialising in that area.

Valets must ensure charges, where incurred, are posted to the guest's account with relevant and supporting documentation also forwarded to accompany the charges.

See Section 4.1 for more detail regarding guest billing.

In most cases the guest will need to authorise repairs but in many cases the valet builds up a relationship with the guest that allows them to initiate such repairs without the usual need for such authorisation.

### Who to use?

Most venues will have an established list of reputable businesses they deal with when acting on behalf of the guest. This will include specialist dry cleaners, shops, stores, professionals, agencies, authorised dealers and other 'preferred suppliers'. These are the businesses to use when it becomes necessary to go out-of-house for repair work.

In most cases the guest will rely on your good judgement to determine which business should be used but is always wise to check to identify if they have a preferred business they wish to handle the item.

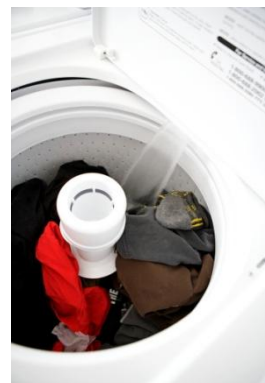
## Arranging cleaning of clothes

Guests may require clothes to be laundered or dry cleaned.

It is to be expected venues offering valet services will have an on-premises laundry that can meet these requirements. Your job as valet is to organise what needs to be done as opposed to actually laundering items or dry cleaning them.

Arranging for the laundering or dry cleaning of clothes involves:

- Counting and recording the items to be laundered or dry cleaned
- Identifying special attention required such as:
  - Stains requiring treatment identifying the cause of the stain if possible
  - Repairs
  - Requirements of the guest – specific cleaning methods or a prohibition on the use of certain chemicals
- Identifying and recording of pre-existing damage or problems with the garments prior to treatment. This ensures the venue is not held responsible for causing these problems
- Checking pockets and remove any items left in pockets





- Checking the garments – to look for and remove anything attached to them such as brooches, name tags, ornaments
- Completing internal documentation requesting laundry or dry cleaning. This documentation forms the basis of charging the guest for services provided in this regard
- Arranging for collection of the items or delivering the items to the laundry
- Specifying time required for items – a VIP guest using a valet receives preferential treatment in terms of the priority afforded to their clothes to be cleaned or repaired.

**Note:** in many cases the guest will not request you to have clothes laundered or dry cleaned. You will be expected by them to use your initiative and take action to do what needs to be done.

## Cleaning shoes

Quite often the valet will be required to clean and polish guest shoes.

This is probably the single most common job valets are asked to do.

### Equipment required

The equipment necessary to polish shoes may include:

- Shoe-tree – this is used because it helps to retain shoe shape. You should never put a shoe-tree in a cold shoe as it may crack the lining and exterior and incorrectly stretch the shoe
- Different types and colours of polish as appropriate to the shoe being cleaned
- Different types of shoe laces. The valet should always check the condition of laces and replace them where they show signs of wear
- Brush Number 1 – to brush away dirt
- Brush Number 2 – to add polish
- Brush Number 3 – to polish and shine the shoes
- A soft cloth to buff the shoes after they have been polished.

### Note:

- The venue is responsible for providing all the necessary items needed to clean and polish guest shoes. However in limited cases the guest may supply their own especially where there have footwear made from unique materials or they have a preference for a certain product
- Never use the one brush for different coloured polish. There should be one brush for applying, for example, brown polish and another for black polish.





## Procedure

A standard and effective way to polish shoes is:

- Place shoe onto shoe-tree – where appropriate to do so
- Remove dirt from shoes – with dirt brush
- Remove laces – check the way the shoes are laced into the shoes before removing the laces. This is the way the laces should be replaced when the shoes have been cleaned
- Apply the appropriate polish with polish application brush
- Wait for a minute to allow the shoes to dry
- Work the polish into surface of the shoes with shine brush
- Use the soft cloth to polish and buff shoes until they shine all over
- Check laces – replace with new ones if necessary and re-lace the shoe.



Remember, when cleaning shoes:

- Use the right polish for the right shoe surface
- Clean brushes regularly so they do not transfer dirt and so they look clean to anyone watching the process
- Keep all shoe-cleaning equipment together for easy access and retrieval.

Watch the following videos to gain a better understanding of the cleaning requirements for shoes:

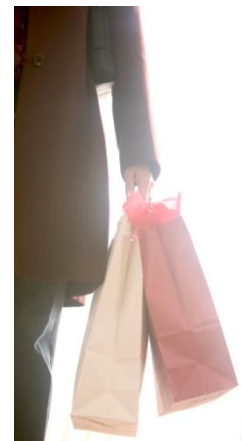
- <http://www.videojug.com/film/how-to-clean-suede-shoes>
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_U7Os0S\\_I7k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_U7Os0S_I7k)
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leScJ\\_Hemno](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=leScJ_Hemno).

## Purchasing guest clothes and footwear

Sometimes you may be required to buy clothes and shoes for your guests.

Common situations giving rise to this include:

- Guest has forgotten to bring an item with them
- An item has been damaged and must be replaced
- An unexpected need for an item has arisen and the guest wishes to be dressed appropriately.



Keys to dealing with the need to purchase clothing and footwear for a guest are:

- Obtain as much information from the guest as possible about what is required – style, size, colour, materials, patterns, sleeves or no sleeves
- Where possible obtain a sample of what is required – for example you may be able to obtain:
  - The damaged item that needs to be replaced – this will give an exact indication of what is required
  - A similar item in a different colour which can provide guidance relating to style and size
  - A photograph of what is required
- Determine if guest has a preference for shops to be used or brand names to be bought. Where the guest has no preference, use your initiative and buy ‘known’ labels
- Identify the amount the guest wants to spend
- Only deal with shops who:
  - Are prepared to come to the venue and make a presentation to the guest enabling them to see the items first-hand and make a choice. This demonstrates high levels of service and removes the responsibility from you of having to make a decision on their behalf
  - Are prepared to sell the items on the basis they can be returned if the guest does not like them, for a full refund
  - Will allow multiples of items to be taken ‘on approval’. You may want to take the one style of garment in a range of different colours, or you may want to take to show the guest a range of different styles or sizes for the item they were seeking
- Keep all receipts and accompanying paperwork to prove amounts spent and indicates where items were purchased, and when.



### Disbursements

In many cases the venue pays for clothing bought by guests and then recoups this money by charging the items to the guest’s house account.

This means you will rarely need to obtain cash or a credit card to make purchases on behalf of the guest.

Payments made by the venue on behalf of guests are called ‘disbursements’.

Commonly disbursements cover small to medium size expenditures only such as:

- Taxi fares
- Flowers
- Theatre tickets.



## 3.5 Deal with guest requests

### Introduction

While guests are staying at the venue they can make a limitless number and type of requests to their valets.

This Section identifies some of these possible requests and provides advice on dealing with them.

As already mentioned, valets must never agree to undertake anything that is illegal or places their personal health or safety at risk. They must also refuse to do anything which could damage property.

Within the limits of this restriction, valets must adopt the position 'nothing is too much trouble for their guests'.



### Organising repairs

You may need to organise repairs to equipment and sundry items on behalf of the guest.

Important aspects to consider in this respect are:

- Arrange repairs when asked to do so. Also be on the lookout to identify items requiring repairs and either ask for permission to have the repairs done. Be proactive and go ahead and arrange for them to be undertaken

House rules and the nature of your relationship with the guest will indicate which course of action is best.

- Use external service providers as opposed to internal maintenance staff. This allows maintenance to continue with their scheduled work and relieves the venue of any legal obligation attaching to repairs provided
- Use known or 'preferred providers' or businesses indicated by the guest.



In some cases you will have to use businesses who are accredited dealers or repairers

- Ask the guest if there is a limit to how much they want to spend on repairing the item and whether or not they want a new item purchased.

It can also be useful to ask if the guest requires an item to replace the one that is being repaired.

You may be required to obtain a quotation for the work to be done before authorising the repairs

- Determine when the guest needs the item. This should be passed on to the repairer indicating any urgency accompanying the need for the repairs

- Where the repairer is unable to meet these time-related demands the guest must be immediately notified so they can make appropriate decisions based on this feedback
- Get things moving – you must immediately arranged for the item needing repairs to be taken to the appropriate business or for it to be collected as soon as possible from the venue.

You, or other venue staff, may need to personally take the article where it needs to go.

## Making bookings

A common task for valets is to make reservations on behalf of their guests.

Reservations may need to be made for travel, accommodation, theatre, dining, excursions and tours.

Steps in the process include:

- Obtain necessary detail from the guest, advising or making recommendations and suggestions as appropriate:
  - Destination, trip, tour or business
  - Dates and times
  - Number of reservations required
  - Budget
  - Preferences for seating, travel, options
- Contact necessary businesses to enquire and:
  - Make bookings as required
  - Confirm reservations, verifying booking details
  - Pay for reservations ensuring relevant discounts and commissions are obtained
  - Obtain documentation
- Forward documentation including receipts, confirmations, associated terms and conditions and seating allocations:
  - To guest for their use and reference:
    - Explain variations to original requirements if applicable
    - Verify details of the reservation
  - To accounts department – to enable charges for bookings to be claimed back from guest where reservations have included payment by the venue on behalf of the guest.



In some cases, the guest will ask for reservations which will be difficult to make. In these cases, the influence of the venue and the personal contacts of the Concierge are used to maximise the effort made on the guest's behalf.

## Making sundry purchases

You are likely to be asked by guests to purchase sundry items on their behalf.

Items may be purchased from in-house shops or departments or from outside business. Purchases from internal shops or departments are commonly charged directly to the guest's account.

Sundry purchases from external businesses are usually handled as a disbursement being charged to the venue account or paid for in cash or by credit card. Charges are then recouped from the guest.

There is no end to the list of sundry items a guest may require a valet to purchase – examples include:

- Flowers
- Gifts
- Special need items – items the guest has forgotten or replacement items for damaged or lost property.



## Responding to unusual circumstances

The valet is also usually the first point of contact for the guest when an 'unusual circumstance' occurs and there is a need to address it.

While the valet is not expected to personally deal with most of these situations, they are expected to notify others so *they* can deal with the situation.

For example:

- A complaint from the VIP guest about noise in an adjoining room. The valet would contact Management, Front Office or Security to handle the noise, as opposed to knocking on the door and asking people to modify their behaviour
- A situation where an item in the room is not working. The valet would contact Housekeeping to arrange for a replacement item or contact Maintenance to undertake repairs. The valet would not be expected to fix the item.



In all 'unusual circumstances':

- The safety of the guest, their party and the valet is the primary consideration
- The security of guest and venue property is a secondary concern
- Immediate action must be taken to address the situation and notify the appropriate person, department or external authority
- House policies and procedures must be implemented. For example as they apply to dealing with 'Difficult guests', 'Security breaches', or 'Evacuation'
- The guest must be kept advised of what action has been taken to address the situation and what will occur as a result.



## Arranging for room service

### Room service meals, snacks and drinks

There are several options relating to room service in which the valet may be involved:

- Taking the room service order – this may involve:
  - Explaining food and beverage items
  - Making recommendations based on knowledge of guest preferences
  - Recording the order
  - Communicating the order to the Kitchen or Room Service area
- Setting up the guest room for the room service ordered, this may include:
  - Enquiring where the guest would like to eat or drink
  - Removing items from locations where the food or drink is to be taken
  - Laying the table with appropriate cutlery, crockery and accoutrements
  - Preparing glassware, ice buckets and ancillary items including wine basket, openers or decanters
- Serving the room service items that have been ordered:
  - This may mean:
    - Leaving the primary service tasks to Room Service staff, and performing supporting duties such as removing covers from food, opening bottles and carrying items to the table from the trolley
    - Completing the full service of all food and drinks from the trolley delivered to the room by Room Service staff. In this option the staff who delivered the trolley departs the room leaving the guests only in the presence of their valet.



### Room service functions

Where the valet is asked to cater for a room service function, the service delivery will involve Function staff or Food and Beverage staff in providing in-room function set-up, waiting and service duties.

The valet will be responsible for:

- Determining guest requirements – such as:
  - Type of function
  - Numbers
  - Timing
  - Menu – food and drinks
  - Budget
  - Supplementary requirements including music, flowers or displays
  - Security





**Note:** the guest is usually responsible for invitations but you should be alert to the need to assist in this regard. Involve Management or Front Office where necessary to help the guest

- Making suggestions to the guest on the basis of venue knowledge and known guest preferences
- Communicating requirements to the Food and Beverage Manager
- Preparing the room in conjunction with Housekeeping staff. This may involve:
  - Cleaning or re-cleaning
  - Removal of items or furniture
  - Introduction of additional items or furniture.



## 3.6 Deliver enterprise-specific VIP treatment and services

### Introduction

All guests who receive valet service are regarded by venues as VIP guests.

This Section identifies the special VIP treatment such guests may be entitled to receive.

### Background to venue-specific VIP treatment and services

#### Variations between venues

The exact types of treatments and services provided to VIP guests will vary between venues. It may even vary between properties belonging to the same chain or organisation.

Commonly, a VIP who will use valet service will be advised, verbally and in hard copy form, of the special treatment they can expect to receive. They will also be encouraged at this stage to communicate any additional special treatments or services they require.

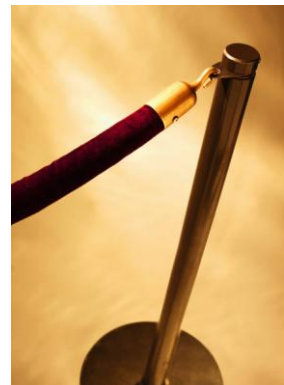
#### Reasons for variations

Treatment offered to and services provided for VIPs will vary due to:

- Cost – in most cases the venue seeks to show a profit from a stay by a VIP so the nature and extent of special treatments and services is restricted by either the price charged for the room or the cost charged for the valet.

In some cases, the venue may be prepared to 'break even' where the presence of the VIP generates business from other sources or creates valuable media attention

- Physical resources available – a venue is unlikely to spend money buying materials and equipment just to service a one-off VIP guest requirements



- Ability of staff – venues traditionally operate using the staff they have and therefore can only function within the expertise and capabilities of those people.

It is rare, but not unknown, for venues to ‘fly in’ extra staff just to provide VIP services

- Time constraints – this is a major cause of difference. Where the guest has limited time or is on a tight schedule the capacity of the venue to deliver certain services and treatments is severely restricted.

## Examples of venue-specific VIP treatment and services

It is possible the following may be made available to VIP guests.

- Provision of turn down service, where house protocols are followed such as:
  - The bed is turned down, a mat is laid next to the bed and slippers and robes are laid out
  - Curtains are closed
  - Lights are turned on
  - A chocolate or similar is presented on the pillows
  - The room is serviced
- Provision of fruit baskets:
  - Often already in the room when the guest first arrives
  - Accompanied by a ‘With Compliments’ card
  - Refreshed throughout the duration of the guest’s stay as items are used
- Provision of confectionaries including:
  - Items requested by the VIP when the booking was made
  - Quality, wrapped chocolates
  - *Petit fours* or *canapés* prepared at the venue
- Preferential treatment – because the guest is a VIP, is paying top rates and is usually influential, they always receive preferential treatment for everything they want.



It is the valet’s job to ensure Room Service, the Kitchen, Housekeeping and other departments as necessary are advised an order or request is for a VIP thereby indicating the preferential treatment to be provided.

Preferential treatment may include:

- All food and beverage orders are given first priority even before other existing orders
- Provision of extra items when a product or service is being delivered:
  - Services are usually provided for a longer time period than normal
  - Larger serve sizes
  - Supplementary products to enhance presentation or service delivery

- Preferential booking and seating privileges in the venue:
  - The restaurant or dining areas automatically reserve the best table for VIPs when a reservation for rooms is taken, even though there is no definite indication the VIP guest will eat in-house
  - Other guests who have reserved the best tables are bumped to other tables so the VIP can have their seat/table
  - Special table set-up including candelabra, better quality crockery, cutlery and glassware
  - Allocation of the most competent and knowledge service staff to their tables
  - Notification to the Kitchen regarding attendance of the VIPs
- Provision of valet parking. This service may be supplied to all guests or be reserved only for VIPs. It is often not the valet who actually provides the valet parking services.



Valet parking involves:

- Taking the guest car once they have arrived and after every subsequent arrival at the venue after they have been elsewhere and returned
  - Parking them in a secure location, ensuring ready availability
  - Recovering and returning the vehicle on request, parking it in a designated and easily accessible location
  - Detailing, cleaning and polishing the vehicle, making sure they look clean and polished
  - Noting mechanical problems with the vehicle and notifying the guest
  - Monitoring service requirements and arranging for same in consultation with the guest
- Delivering items to VIP and guest rooms throughout the day. Other guests may receive only electronic or telephone notification about the arrival of items but VIPs will have them delivered directly to their room.



Items may include:

- Gifts
- Flowers
- Parcels
- Documentation.

House protocols regarding security checks on parcels must be implemented.



- Provision of escort or guide – VIPs may be provided with a local person with high levels of knowledge about the local area, local customs and culture to enhance the guest stay. The guide will also help with arranging shopping, local tours, general knowledge, and introductions to individuals and businesses.

Where the guest is from a non-English speaking country, this person will always be bi-lingual speaking both the language of the country being visited, and being fluent in English so they can act as interpreter and communicate effectively.

This person is not the valet but may be organised by the valet or Concierge

- Provision of additional rooms. Venues must be alert to the potential for VIP guests to need additional rooms when they are staying in a venue.

Standard practice is to ask the guest whether they will require additional rooms when the initial reservation is received, but often the need for such rooms can occur on-the-spot in which case it is up to the valet to arrange what is required with Front Office, Housekeeping, security and other departments as appropriate.

Additional rooms may be required for:

- Media events and press conferences
- Parties and functions
- Business uses such as meetings, conferences, and presentation of products.



### **Provision of VIP treatment and service**

Note many of the above treatments and services are provided as part of standard service delivery for VIPs:

- The guest does not need to ask for them. They are simply provided
- If the guest specially requests they not be provided, they must not be provided
- Treatments for the VIP may or may not extend to members of the VIP guest party – by arrangement or in accordance with directions from the guest or house policies and procedures.

## 3.7 Adjust service delivery to suit guest needs and preferences

### Introduction

Guests receiving valet service have a right to have service delivery adjusted to suit their individual needs.

This Section identifies what this may apply to and how it may occur.

### Adjusting service delivery

At all times there is an essential need for all valets to be customer focused in their work.

This means the guest must always come first and their needs, wants and preferences must be accommodated where possible.

VIPs and valet-serviced guests have a right to expect this treatment to a much greater extent than other guests.

It must always be remembered, staff are there to serve the guest, not to dictate the service provided.

The keys to achieving this are:

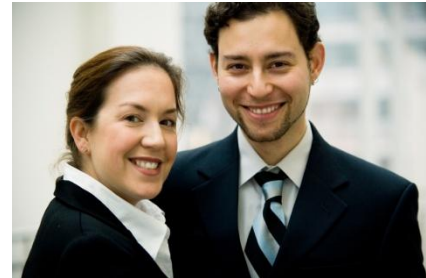
- Identify the required changes – make sure to never show annoyance or frustration with the required changes. Ask the guest or observe what is occurring to help identify when these changes are required
- Advise those necessary for delivering the products or services needing to be changed
- Monitor the changed service or product delivery to ensure it meets requirements
- Take further corrective action when necessary. If changes do not meet requirements, including apology to the guest.

### Examples of adjustments which may have to be made

The possible list of things that may need amending to accommodate valet-serviced guest need is limitless.

Anything for which plans or arrangements were originally made can need to be adjusted.

- Changes to original notifications for warning calls and wake-up calls
- Changes to breakfast arrangements in relation to:
  - Style – English, Continental or local
  - Time of service
  - Items ordered
  - Whether the breakfast will be in-room, outside or in the dining room





- Changes to transportation arrangements in relation to local trips and tours as well as forward travel plans.

Common changes are required to:

- Dates and times
  - Destinations including stop-overs
  - Numbers travelling
- Changes to function requests:
    - Food and drink
    - Numbers
    - Seating plans
    - Sequence and timing of function-related issues such as arrival of guests, speeches or entertainment
  - Changes to in-room furniture:
    - Removal of items not wanted by the guest
    - Introduction of additional items or furniture
    - Provision of replacement items to address broken, damaged or malfunctioning items
  - Meeting special requests for bar and food items:
    - Products for the in-room bar
    - In-room meals
  - Eliminating nominated aspects of standard service. It is possible the guest may not want to be provided with some standard aspects of service so be alert to this possibility. Respond accordingly by only providing what is required.



Some changes may involve other departments and the valet will need to inform relevant departments immediately of any changes.

## 3.8 Maintain guest privacy and confidentiality

### Introduction

Earlier notes have stressed the need for valets to maintain guest privacy and confidentiality.

This Section reinforces and extends these concepts.

### Privacy

Guest privacy refers to the right of the guest to:

- Enjoy their personal space and freedom in their room and elsewhere at the venue
- Be free from attention, interference and observation by other guests or members of the public.





To help ensure this, you will need to:

- Enquire when guests wish to be left alone and comply with these requirements.

Guests may wish time to themselves or require privacy to meet with business colleagues or spend with friends or family.

Some guests require privacy at regular times each day, and other guests will request it as they feel the need arises.

Guests commonly request privacy shortly after they have checked in and been roomed

- Never disclose the location or room number of guests to anyone
- Not allow others to enter the guest room. This includes preventing other staff entering rooms at times when the guest indicates they wish their privacy
- Divert the room telephone at times the guest wishes privacy
- Liaise with other staff – such as:
  - Security – who may man the door to the room to prevent unwelcomed access
  - Housekeeping – who may delay or re-schedule room cleaning and other associated activities
  - Front Office – who will hold deliveries rather than deliver them to the room.



## Confidentiality

Maintaining confidentiality is an absolute requirement for a valet. It is 100% non-negotiable.

Confidentiality means keeping matters to do with the guest to yourself.

### The need for confidentiality

Valets have access to a guest's personal and private life.

The guest may discuss private and personal business matters, activities or aspects of their private life in front of the valet or with the valet.

None of this information, or issues discussed, can be shared with anyone.

This means:

- Anything you hear from the mouth of the guest must not be repeated to anyone
- Anything you see in the guest room must not be told to anyone, unless it relates to illegal activity in which case Management are the only ones to be advised.

The valet, in some cases, may be asked to sign a confidentiality clause or contract that stipulates guest history, activities and other matters will be kept in the strictest of confidence.

This indicates how seriously some guests treat the matter of guest confidentiality.

Valets must be aware there are ever-present dangers of being sued by clients for breaches of confidence. This especially relates to business dealings or issues impacting on their personal reputation.

Every venue will have their own policies and procedures on this matter, but the intent is the same – to maintain the guest's trust in you and the venue by keeping confidential matters, confidential. In brief, anything said or done in the privacy of the guest's room is private and must remain confidential.

Where celebrities are staying in-house it is not unknown for media people to try to obtain 'inside information' about those guests. It is common for money to be offered as an inducement for you to tell. You must maintain your professionalism and refuse to disclose anything. You must quite simply 'say nothing'.

You must refuse to 'confirm or deny' anything put to you. Refer the person to Management, stating it is house policy for the venue never to discuss or disclose anything about *any* of its guests.

Any approaches made to you by anyone seeking information about a guest should be reported to Management or Security.



## 3.9 Assist guest with pre-departure and on-departure services

### Introduction

When a VIP guest is preparing to leave the venue and travel on, or return home, the valet will be engaged in a series of predictable tasks.

This Section identifies those pre-departure and on-departure tasks.

### Facilitating check-out

You will always be required to make the check-out of a VIP guest as quick and smooth as possible.

To accomplish this:

- Identify who will finalise the account. This finalisation requires them to check the charges made to the account, approve them for payment and pay the account
- For many valet-serviced guests it is often a Manager, agent or staff member who will do this
- Ensure all legitimate charges have been added to the guest account. This ensures the venue recovers all revenue to which it is entitled



- Liaise with Front Office regarding preparation and production of the final account. Verify charges listed or clarify matters where there is confusion over charges and whether or not they should be included on the account.

It is important a positive guest stay is not marred by argument over the charges applying to the stay

- Determine who will present the account to the nominated person who will finalise the account. VIP guests are commonly not required to check-out in the 'normal' way at Front Office.

The account is usually presented in-person to the guest in their room by venue Manager, Duty Manager or the Head Receptionist.

Where the valet presents the account, they must have a delegated scope of authority to waive charges if there is a query from the guest.



## Packing

At the appropriate time the valet may need to pack guest's luggage.

Sometimes this is not required as the guest or their staff will perform this task.

A general 'rule of thumb' is if the guest required you to unpack their luggage, they will want you to pack it on departure.

The following are some guidelines to follow when packing:

- Liaise with porters to arrange return of empty suitcases and bags to the guest room
- Do not start packing until you are fully prepared and aware of everything needing to be packed together with the associated luggage. When unsure, ask the guest what needs to be packed and what luggage they have to pack items into
- Even where you have been asked to pack for guests, they may nonetheless want to pack some things themselves
- Fold clothes according to venue requirements and procedures. Some properties have instructions on how they want items folded and packed.

Always make sure you have received venue training in this regard before packing guest clothes.

Ask a more experienced valet to help you the first several times you pack for a guest.

Where no advice or help in this regard exists:

- Pack shirts in folded pairs, reversed and toward each other
- Pack the front of garments toward the front and top of the luggage
- Place shoes into plastic bags inserting shoe-trees as appropriate



- Pack shoes with the soles flat against the sides of the luggage. Pack into plastic or shoe bags before packing into suitcases
- Pack luggage with heavy items at the bottom and lighter items on the top
- Complete the packing with a towel to cover all items.

Also see the following for direction and hints:

- <http://www.howdini.com/howdini-video-7257769.html>
- <http://blog.suitup.com/2009/10/04/how-to-neatly-pack-your-suitcase-suits-pants-socks-shirts-ties-belts-for-men/>.

## Arranging for luggage pick-up

As part of the departure procedures you may need to:

- Organise staff to remove packed cases:
  - Specify time for cases to be collected
  - Identify number of cases or number of trolleys required
  - Identify room numbers
- Indicate where luggage must be taken:
  - Direct to guest cars in the parking area or out the front of the venue
  - To luggage holding bays for later transport to coaches, cars or limousines or taxis
- Remove existing luggage tags or airline tags from individual items
- Arrange luggage tags on behalf of the guest
- Double-check all cases and bags are secure – closed, locked and otherwise secured in accordance with individual guest requirements.



When luggage has been collected you must make a check of all areas to ensure nothing is forgotten.

## Arranging to forward items

Before a guest departs you must speak with them or their representative to:

- Capture a forwarding address for mail, parcels, lost property
- Obtain contact details including telephone, cell phone, facsimile number or email address for follow-up as necessary
- Identify any expected items which may need to be forwarded and determine how they could or should be forwarded
- Explain charges inherent in forwarding items to the guest.



## Arranging accommodation

You may be asked by a departing guest to arrange accommodation for them although this is a relatively rare request as someone else has usually taken care of this.

If requested to arrange accommodation:

- Try to accommodate the guest in a property related to your venue so there are flow-on benefits in terms of revenue and occupancy
- Always remember to obtain appropriate discounts on behalf of the guest
- Capture relevant commissions for the venue.

Before making accommodation reservations, you will need to determine from the guest

- Location – the destination they require the accommodation
- Preferences for a specific venue. Many guests are repeat guests and prefer to stay at a venue they already know and have stayed in before
- Dates – identifying ETA and ETD. The number of night should also be identified to double-check arrival and departure dates
- Room type – never assume:
  - The guest will always want the best room
  - Valet service will be required
- Numbers – relating to:
  - Number of rooms required
  - Number of guests and names
  - Which guests will, where applicable, stay in the same rooms
- Guest details so that:
  - Pre-registration can occur
  - Accounts can be established
  - Guest history can be accessed
  - Method of payment can be identified
- Special requests.



In some cases you may be expected to use your common sense to answer some of the above questions – when in doubt:

- Check with the guest for clarification
- Book them into a property similar to yours with similar facilities and prices
- Speak with your Manager to get their advice.

## Providing general assistance

You can always expect to be called on to provide 'general assistance' when a guest is preparing to depart your venue, especially when they are leaving the country.

This information may relate to:

- Weather
- Travel times
- Legally required regulations and requirements relating to complying with and clearing immigration and customs
- Entry and departure taxes
- Organising transfers, movement of the guest and their luggage to airports, dockside or terminals
- Recovering taxes paid while staying in the host country
- Customs, language and details about the country they are about to visit.



Where you do not know the answer to queries raised by the guest:

- Ask Management
- Involve the Concierge
- Undertake internet research
- Telephone providers
- Read relevant documentation
- It is never acceptable to say "I do not know" and leave it at that.

The accepted procedure is to:

- Apologise for not knowing
- Capture details of what the guest wants to find out about
- Advise the guest you will make enquiries
- Do so
- Report back to the guest with your findings.





## Work Projects

It is a requirement of this Unit you complete Work Projects as advised by your Trainer. You must submit documentation, suitable evidence or other relevant proof of completion of the project to your Trainer by the agreed date.

3.1 Submit video or photographic demonstrating (in an actual or simulated situation) you have:

- Welcomed a VIP guest on arrival and started the process of establishing an appropriate rapport with them
- Advised the guest of the services available from you as a valet, and from the venue generally
- Arranged transportation of luggage to the guest room and its removal when unpacked
- Unpacked guest luggage
- Pressed one item of guest clothing
- Cleaned one pair of guest shoes
- Deal with a specific guest request
- Packed guest luggage including appropriate folding of clothes.

3.2. You have been asked by Management at your workplace to produce information that could be used by trainers at your venue to assist with training valets.

Management has asked you to provide three documents addressing:

- Delivery of enterprise-specific VIP treatment and services
- Adjustment of service delivery to suit guest needs and preferences
- Maintenance of guest privacy and confidentiality.

Prepare and submit these documents ensuring they reflect workplace-specific products or services, venue policies and procedures and generally accepted industry principles and practice.

## Summary

### Deliver valet services

When delivering valet services:

- Be present to meet and greet the guest and their party
- Establish a rapport and relationship from the start
- Advise guest of your role and what you are available to do for them
- Inform guest of services and products available to suit their identified and anticipated need
- Arrange and monitor the movement of luggage to guest room
- Unpack guest luggage under direction from guest or using initiative and common sense
- Clean, check and store guest luggage appropriately
- Maintain and monitor guest security (personal and property) at all times
- Be sensitive to the need for guests to do things themselves or to be left alone
- Prepare guest clothing for guests as directed or in accordance with accepted standards and protocols
- Press guest clothes where required or arrange for same
- Perform basic repairs or organise for repairs to guest clothing
- Arrange for laundering or dry cleaning of guest clothes as required
- Clean and prepare guest shoes as necessary
- Purchase clothing and personal items as required for the guest
- Deal effectively with guest requests ensuring no laws are broken and personal safety is not compromised
- Make reservations on behalf of the guest as requested
- Arrange for in-room and in-venue service delivery as required
- Ensure guest receives VIP treatment according to venue policies and individual guest requirements
- Modify all service delivery to suit notified or obvious guest needs or preferences
- Maintain guest privacy and confidentiality while they are at the venue and after they have departed
- Provide departure services such as packing, forward bookings, facilitation of account luggage movement and (where applicable) transfers.

# Element 4: Record valet services

## 4.1 Process billable charges

### Introduction

In order for the venue to recoup money from the guest, the valet is required to process billable charges.

This Section describes and identifies billable charges and explains how they may be processed.

### Facts about billable charges

Billable charges are any charges incurred by the guest while at the venue that can be legally, legitimately and ethically recovered from them. See below for examples of what these might be.

Billable charges may be recovered:

- Periodically:
  - Where the guest has an extended stay at the venue, management may require the guest to settle their account every, say, seven days in full
  - The venue may have a policy requiring the guest to settle their account whenever it reaches a nominated total
- When the guest departs as part of the check-out process, or by obtaining payment within a prescribed number of days after the guest has departed.



### Processing billable charges

Processing billable charges will often need to reflect the protocols for individual venues and the Front Office billing systems they use. It is for this reason it is essential all venue policies regarding processing charges must be adhered to.

Failure to comply with these requirements can mean the venue misses out on revenue it is entitled to.

Your on-the-job training will make you aware of what is required in this regard, but the following are key points generally applicable to processing billable charges:

- All legitimate charges must be processed by the valet.

If the guest is to be granted an exemption for a charge (a product or service is to be provided free-of-charge), then management should make this decision

- All billable charges must be supported by appropriate documentation. This paperwork explains and describes the charge and may contain a signature as evidence of the legitimacy of the charge.

Documentation may be a receipt or a docket

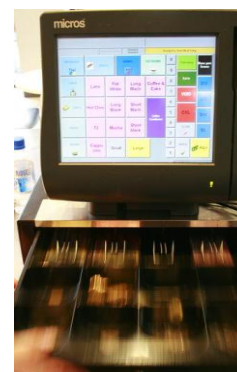
- All charges must be processed promptly. The standard requirement is to process charges as they occur. Some internal systems enable automatic posting of charges to accounts as they occur from linked point-of-sale terminals or registers.



From the valet's point of view, processing a billable charge means:

- Notifying Front office of the charge
- Advising of the room number and guest name
- Forwarding supporting documentation.

When Front Office has been notified they will update the guest account by posting the charge to the guest account.



## Examples of billable charges

There is potentially no limit to the nature of billable charges for a guest but the following indicate what may be charged by presenting the commonly involved charges:

- Room service charges – for in-room meals, snacks, and drinks
- Disbursements – any monies paid out by the venue on behalf of the guest will need to be recovered
- Meals and drinks – from venue bars, cafes, dining rooms, restaurants or similar
- Functions and parties – these can include smaller in-room events as well as larger functions conducted in function rooms
- Mini bar use – guests may be required to pay for items used from the mini bar but some VIP guests may have free access to all mini bar items. Check with management to see what applies in your venue. The fact is the requirement in this regard can vary with the individual guest.



For example, a high-roller in a 'comp' suite (complimentary, free-of-charge room) will not be required to pay for their use of the mini bar or some other charges normally applied to other guests.

In many venues a dedicated staff member may be responsible for re-stocking the mini bar and processing any charges arising

- Retail items – where the venue has retail outlets, purchases such as merchandise and souvenirs may also need to be charged

- Extra services – these can include:
  - Personal services – baby-sitting, massage
  - Business services – photocopying, interpreter and secretarial services
  - Transport, travel and tours
  - Laundry and dry cleaning
- Repairs, maintenance and cleaning. Where the guest has caused deliberate damage to venue property the property will usually seek to recover costs required to effect necessary repairs or cleaning.
 

Depending on the guest and the circumstances, management may seek to recover such costs even where the damage was accidentally caused.



## 4.2 Update guest history details

### Introduction

Guest history provides a valuable source of information about guests and needs to be updated whenever a guest stays at a venue.

This Section explains the importance of updating guest history identifying aspects needing to be addressed.

### Context of guest history

#### Benefits of maintaining guest history

Every time a guest using valet services stays at a venue, there is a need to update their guest history. This ensures the database remains current and can be used effectively to prepare for the guest's next stay at the venue.



It is important to create such a history because staff who served the guest last time they were at the property may not be there when they visit next time. The venue will always want to deliver the same high standard of service regardless of who the staff are.

Being able to refer to a comprehensive and up-to-date guest history enables the venue to provide more customer-focussed service and enhance the experience and satisfaction of the guest.

#### Format of guest histories

As already identified the guest history may be:

- An electronic file
- A paper-based document.

See Section 2.1 for details of the information fields a guest history may contain.

**Note:** it is important information about the guest is not limited by the automatic fields provided for in a guest history. There must always be provision to record important information not prescribed by these fields.

### Timing of updating guest history

Guest history may be updated on one or more of the following occasions:

- Before the guest arrives – on the basis of information provided as part of the reservation. It may be by the guest themselves or by their agent, manager or support staff
- During the guest stay – as the guest uses products, services and facilities and participates in local activities
- After the guest has departed – and all information relating to their stay has been compiled.

### Involvement in updating guest history

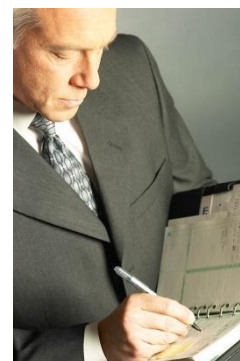
Updating guest history should embrace input from internal staff and external providers:

- Internal staff – these are the venue staff who had involvement with the guest or their party while they were at the venue.

These can include room attendants, bar staff, waiting staff, chefs and any staff at all levels who had contact with the guest or were responsible for product or service provision

- External providers – refers to outside businesses who provided products and services to the guest.

Contact should be made with them to ascertain useful contributions they may be able to make regarding additions to the guest history for future reference.



### Examples of guest history to be updated

While individual guest history systems will have particular guest history fields, the following will need to be addressed when guest histories are updated:

- Products and services provided – updates can require:
  - Time of use
  - Cost
  - Quantity
  - Preferences for types, styles, brand names of items, service style, sequence of delivery
- Facilities used – identifying:
  - What was used and when
  - Charges made if any
  - Amount of use
- Personal preferences – the guest history should be updated to reflect current:
  - Room number preferences. Some VIP guests specify a certain room every time they stay
  - Seating preferences for dining or entertainment





- External product or service providers, naming the organisations the guest prefers to do business with when dealing outside the venue
- Food and drinks detailing preferences for:
  - Menu items
  - Cocktails
  - Service
  - Serve size
  - Brand names
  - Special requests for sauces, ice, cutlery or glassware
- Packing of cases and bags on departure identifying:
  - Clothing folds for shirts, trousers, dresses
  - Separation and segregation of items
  - Preferences for how and where items are packed
- Tourist attractions visited and events attended including:
  - Dates
  - Time at each attraction
  - Transportation used
  - Activities undertaken and experiences
- Timing details:
  - Arrival time at the venue
  - Departure time
  - Dining times
  - Wake-up calls
  - Flight or travel time preferences
- Special occurrences. There is always a need to capture details in relation to:
  - Problems experienced – describing what happened, who was involved and how the situation was resolved
  - Complaints – indicating cause of the complaint and the resolution as well as details of the investigation and causal factors identified
  - Unusual circumstances – this may include details relating to theft of guest property, confusion over the account, any occurrence where internal Security staff were involved or external authorities had to be contacted.



The intention of this section is to highlight them for future stays, so appropriate action can be taken to prevent repeat instances.

## 4.3 Debrief with management

### Introduction

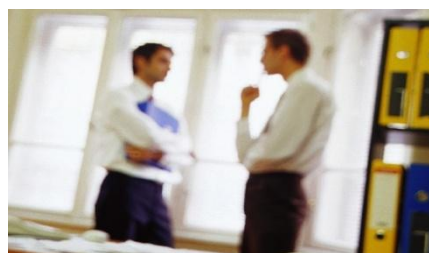
Standard operating procedure in most venues is for management to hold a de-briefing session with the valet when a valet-serviced guest has departed.

This Section looks at why the de-briefing is held and what it should address.

### Why hold a de-briefing session?

Management hold de-briefing sessions so they can:

- Gain an insight into the experience the guest had while at the venue. The valet is arguable in the best position to provide information on this topic given the close relationship existing between valet and guest
- Address issues arising or unresolved when the guest departed. Management may wish to contact the guest to resolve issues, apologise, make some other appropriate offer or gesture
- Determine whether existing policies and procedures need changing to better meet identified needs, wants and preferences of the guests on the basis of very recent feedback or observations.



Management may elect to include a wider scope of staff in their de-briefing such that the following may also be asked to participate and contribute:

- Security
- Food and beverage staff – bar staff, waiters
- Chefs
- Room attendants
- Porters
- Concierge.



### Topics to be considered

There is no limit to what can be discussed at these de-briefings but common topics include:

- Complaints:
  - What caused them
  - How they were resolved
  - Impact on the guest and their stay
- Compliments:
  - The product, service or staff members giving rise to same
  - Any action taken to notify relevant persons of the compliment

- Products and services, identifying issues needing to be addressed regarding the delivery of services or the provision of products to guests highlighting:
  - Changes needing to be considered
  - Outstanding products or instances of service delivery
  - Inappropriate or negative products or instances of service delivery
- Suggestions as they apply to:
  - Recommendations for revisions to existing protocols. This can apply to all aspects of a guest's stay including:
    - Pre-arrival activities
    - Registration and check-in
    - Delivery of services
    - Contact with and use of external providers
    - Account presentation and settlement
    - Pre-departure and on-departure activities
  - Recommendations for additions to products, services and facilities available to guests
  - Identification of emerging niche markets, based on feedback from the guest and personal observation, so the venue can capitalise on new opportunities.



## Work Projects

It is a requirement of this Unit you complete Work Projects as advised by your Trainer. You must submit documentation, suitable evidence or other relevant proof of completion of the project to your Trainer by the agreed date.

4.1 Prepare and submit checklists that could be used by valets at your workplace to ensure:

- Billable charges are correctly and effectively added to valet-serviced guest accounts in a timely manner
- Guest history details for a guest are updated to reflect a valet-serviced guest stay.

4.2. Submit video or photographic evidence demonstrating you have:

- De-briefed with Management at your workplace following your delivery of valet services to a guest.
-

## Summary

### Record valet services

When recording valet services:

- Ensure all billable charges are processed promptly
- Check all legitimate charges are processed
- Provide supporting documentation for all billable charges
- Liaise with Front Office regarding processing of billable charges
- Follow house policy or individual arrangements for particular guests when facilitating account settlement
- Update guest history for every valet-serviced guest stay before, during and after their stay
- Communicate with management when VIP guest has departed to identify action to take in response to issues arising or events occurring during the guest stay.





# Presentation of written work

## 1. Introduction

It is important for students to present carefully prepared written work. Written presentation in industry must be professional in appearance and accurate in content. If students develop good writing skills whilst studying, they are able to easily transfer those skills to the workplace.

## 2. Style



Students should write in a style that is simple and concise. Short sentences and paragraphs are easier to read and understand. It helps to write a plan and at least one draft of the written work so that the final product will be well organized. The points presented will then follow a logical sequence and be relevant. Students should frequently refer to the question asked, to keep 'on track'. Teachers recognize and are critical of work that does not answer the question, or is 'padded' with irrelevant material. In summary, remember to:

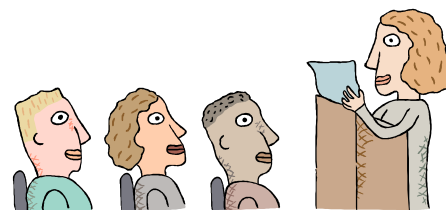
- Plan ahead
- Be clear and concise
- Answer the question
- Proofread the final draft.

## 3. Presenting Written Work

### *Types of written work*

Students may be asked to write:

- Short and long reports
- Essays
- Records of interviews
- Questionnaires
- Business letters
- Resumes.



### *Format*

All written work should be presented on A4 paper, single-sided with a left-hand margin. If work is word-processed, one-and-a-half or double spacing should be used. Handwritten work must be legible and should also be well spaced to allow for ease of reading. New paragraphs should not be indented but should be separated by a space. Pages must be numbered. If headings are also to be numbered, students should use a logical and sequential system of numbering.

### **Cover Sheet**

All written work should be submitted with a cover sheet stapled to the front that contains:

- The student's name and student number
- The name of the class/unit
- The due date of the work
- The title of the work
- The teacher's name
- A signed declaration that the work does not involve plagiarism.

### **Keeping a Copy**

Students must keep a copy of the written work in case it is lost. This rarely happens but it can be disastrous if a copy has not been kept.

### **Inclusive language**

This means language that includes every section of the population. For instance, if a student were to write 'A nurse is responsible for the patients in her care at all times' it would be implying that all nurses are female and would be excluding male nurses.

Examples of appropriate language are shown on the right:

Mankind	<i>Humankind</i>
Barman/maid	<i>Bar attendant</i>
Host/hostess	<i>Host</i>
Waiter/waitress	<i>Waiter or waiting staff</i>

## Recommended reading

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# Trainee evaluation sheet

## Provide valet services to guests

The following statements are about the competency you have just completed.

Please tick the appropriate box	Agree	Don't Know	Do Not Agree	Does Not Apply
There was too much in this competency to cover without rushing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Most of the competency seemed relevant to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The competency was at the right level for me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I got enough help from my trainer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The amount of activities was sufficient.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The competency allowed me to use my own initiative.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My training was well-organized.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My trainer had time to answer my questions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understood how I was going to be assessed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I was given enough time to practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My trainer feedback was useful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enough equipment was available and it worked well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The activities were too hard for me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The best things about this unit were:

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The worst things about this unit were:

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The things you should change in this unit are:

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William  
**Angliss**  
Institute

Specialist centre  
for foods, tourism  
& hospitality



**Australian  
AID** 