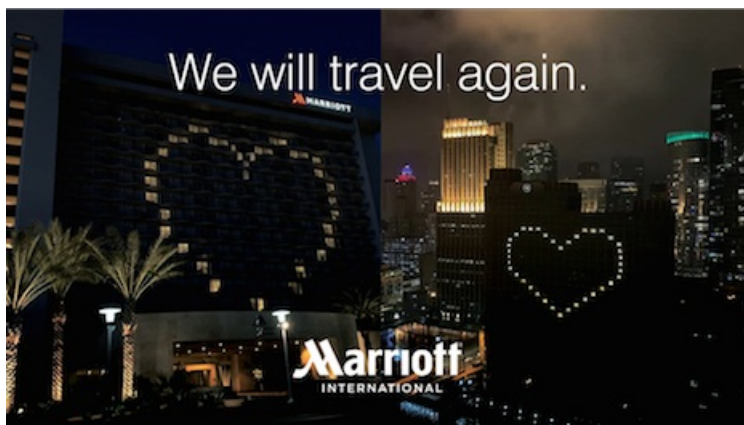


TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## Ritz-Carlton owner Marriott International installs new global cleanliness council for group hotels

April 24, 2020



*Marriott International is the world's largest hotel company, with brands such as Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, Bulgari Hotels & Resorts, Luxury Collection, St. Regis, W, Westin and Sheraton. Image credit: Marriott*

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Hotel chain Marriott International has introduced a global cleanliness council to promote higher standards of cleanliness as the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak ravages the travel and tourism business.

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The Marriott Global Cleanliness Council will focus on developing enhanced global hospitality cleanliness standards, norms and behavior designed to minimize risk and boost safety for guests and Marriott associates.

"We are living in a new age, with COVID-19 front and center for our guests and our associates," said Arne Sorenson, president/CEO of Bethesda, MD-based Marriott International, in a statement.

"We are grateful for the trust our guests have shown us through the years," he said. "We want our guests to understand what we are doing today and planning for in the near future in the areas of cleanliness, hygiene and social distancing so that when they walk through the doors of one of our hotels, they know our commitment to their health and safety is our priority.

"It's equally important to us that our associates know the changes we are making to help safeguard their health as they serve our guests."

**Marriott** is the world's largest hotel group, with brands such as Marriott, Ritz-Carlton, Bulgari Hotels & Resorts, Luxury Collection, St. Regis, W and Sheraton, among others. The company has furloughed most of its employees over the COVID-19 lockdowns worldwide that have shut hotels and restaurants.

Expert advice

Ray Bennett, chief global officer for global operations at Marriott International, will chair the new council.

The council also includes advisory members Dr. Ruth L. Petran, senior corporate scientist for food safety and public health at Ecolab, a global specialist in water, hygiene and infection prevention solutions and services; Dr. Michael A.

Sauri, infectious disease specialist at Adventist Healthcare; Dr. Richard Ghiselli, head of the School of Hospitality & Tourism Management at Purdue University; and Dr. Randy Worobo, professor of food microbiology in the Department of Food Science at Cornell University.

The company will also solicit advice from in-house and outside experts including senior leaders from across Marriott disciplines such as housekeeping, engineering, food safety, occupational health and associate wellbeing.

"Marriott has a long tradition of emphasizing cleanliness in our care of guest rooms and in the public spaces of our hotels," Mr. Bennett said in a statement.

"Through the council and scientific advice of experts, we are taking a thoughtful approach to set an even higher bar of cleanliness and develop new guest interaction protocols," he said.

"The Marriott Global Cleanliness Council is focused on more than just disinfection across the hotel, we are providing a holistic approach designed to take care of our guests and associates."

#### Tech help

Marriott will over the next few months deploy technology to counter the virus spread. This includes electrostatic sprayers with hospital-grade disinfectant to sanitize surfaces throughout the hotel.

Per the company, electrostatic spraying technology uses the highest classification of disinfectants recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) to treat known pathogens.

The sprayers rapidly clean and disinfect entire areas and can be used in a hotel setting to clean and disinfect guest rooms, lobbies, gyms and other public areas.

Also, Marriott is testing ultraviolet light technology for sanitizing keys for guests and devices shared by associates.

#### Clean sweep

Cleanliness changes put into place will be quite obvious to guests when they check into a Marriott-run property.

For example, surface areas in hotels' public areas and rooms will be treated with hospital-grade disinfectants and increased frequency. Disinfecting wipes will be placed in each room for guests' use.

To avoid person-to-person transmission, signage in lobbies will remind guests to maintain social distancing protocols. Furniture will be removed or re-arranged to give more space and partitions installed at front desks for guest and employee protection.

Additionally, employees will get masks and gloves, and more hand sanitizing stations will be installed at entrances to hotels and near front desk, elevator banks, fitness centers and meeting places.

#### Phone check-in

Another interesting development is the use of apps to check in.

Guests at more than 3,200 of Marriott hotels will be able to use their mobile phones to check-in, access rooms, make special requests and order room service that will be specially packaged and delivered right to the door without contact, the company said.

Marriott will follow a strict regimen of food safety protocols with new sanitation guidelines and training videos for operational staff that includes hygiene guidelines and disinfecting practices.

The company is modifying its operational practices for in-room dining and designing new approaches to buffets, both a major revenue stream for hospitality players.

INDEPENDENT AUDITS will verify compliance with the enhanced standards.

"Safety for our guests and associates has always been a top priority for Marriott and today that discussion of safety is in the context of COVID-19," Mr. Bennett said.

"We want our guests to know that we are doing everything we can to welcome them back to a safe and clean hotel environment when they start traveling again," he said.

*100 percent: The Stay, by The Ritz-Carlton*

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