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## Lodging Managers

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### Significant Points

- Long hours, including night and weekend work, are common.
- Employment is projected to grow more slowly than the average for all occupations.
- College graduates with degrees in hotel or hospitality management should have better opportunities for jobs at full-service hotels and for advancement than those without a degree.

### Nature of the Work

A comfortable room, good food, and a helpful staff can make being away from home an enjoyable experience for both vacationing families and business travelers. *Lodging managers* make sure that these conveniences are provided, while also ensuring that the establishments are run efficiently and profitably. Most lodging managers work in traditional hotels and motels, but some work in other lodging establishments, such as recreational camps and RV parks, inns, boardinghouses, and youth hostels.

Lodging establishments can vary significantly in size and in the number of services they provide, which can range from supplying a simple in-room television and a continental breakfast to operating a casino and accommodating conventions. These factors affect the number and type of lodging managers employed at each property.

The one person who oversees all lodging operations at a property is usually called a *general manager*. At larger hotels with several departments and multiple layers of management, the general manager and multiple *assistant managers* coordinate the activities of separate departments. (See related sections elsewhere in the *Handbook* on supervisors and managers of housekeeping and janitorial workers; human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists; financial managers; advertising, marketing, promotions, public relations, and sales managers; and food service managers.) In smaller limited-service hotels—mainly those without food and beverage service—one lodging manager may direct all the activities of the property.

Lodging managers have overall responsibility for the operation and profitability of the hotel. Depending on the hotel and the size of its staff, lodging managers may either perform or direct housekeeping, personnel, office administration, marketing and sales, purchasing, security, maintenance, oversight of recreation facilities, and other activities. They may hire and train staff, set schedules, and lend a hand when needed.

Within guidelines established by the owners of the hotel or executives of the hotel chain, lodging managers set room rates, allocate funds to departments, approve expenditures, and ensure that standards for guest service, decor, housekeeping, food quality, and banquet operations are met. Increasingly, lodging managers also are responsible for ensuring that the information technology common in today's hotels is operational. Some lodging managers, often called *revenue managers*, work in financial management, monitoring room sales and reservations,

overseeing accounting and cash-flow matters at the hotel, projecting occupancy levels, and deciding which rooms to discount and when to offer rate specials.

*Front office managers*, a category of lodging manager, coordinate reservations and room assignments and train and direct the hotel's front desk staff. They ensure that guests are treated courteously, complaints and problems are resolved, and requests for special services are carried out. At some hotels, they may greet the guests personally and provide them individual attention to see their needs are met. Any adjustments to bills often are referred to front office managers for resolution.

*Convention services managers* coordinate the activities of various departments to accommodate meetings, conventions, and special events. They meet with representatives of groups or organizations to plan the number of conference rooms to reserve, the configuration of the meeting space, and determine what other services the group will need, such as catering or banquets and audio, visual, or other electronic requirements. During the meeting or event, they resolve unexpected problems and monitor activities to ensure that hotel operations conform to the group's expectations.

Lodging managers may work with hotel sales and marketing directors and public relations directors to manage and coordinate the advertising and promotion of the hotel. They help develop lodging and dining specials and coordinate special events, such as holiday or seasonal specials. They may direct their staff to purchase advertising and to market their property to organizations or groups seeking a venue for conferences, conventions, business meetings, trade shows, and special events.

Lodging managers who oversee the personnel functions of a hotel or serve as human resource directors ensure that all accounting, payroll, and employee relations matters are handled in compliance with hotel policy and applicable laws. They also oversee hiring practices and standards and ensure that training and promotion programs reflect appropriate employee development guidelines.

Computers are used extensively by lodging managers and their assistants to keep track of guests' bills, reservations, room assignments, meetings, and special events. In addition, computers are used to order food, beverages, and supplies, as well as to prepare reports for hotel owners and top-level managers. Many



*Lodging managers may oversee individual departments, such as housekeeping.*

hotels also provide extensive information technology services for their guests. Managers work with computer specialists and other information technology specialists to ensure that the hotel's computer systems, Internet, and communications networks function properly.

**Work environment.** Because hotels are open around the clock, night and weekend work is common. Many lodging managers work more than 40 hours per week and are often on-call, which means they may be called back to work at any time. In some hotels and resort properties where work is seasonal, managers may have other duties less related to guest services during the off season or they may find work in other hotels or occupations.

The pressures of coordinating a wide range of activities, turning a profit for investors, and dealing with guests who sometimes are angry can be stressful. Managing conferences and working at the front desk during check-in and check-out times can be particularly hectic.

### **Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement**

Management trainees for larger upscale hotel chains almost always need a bachelor's or master's degree, preferably in hospitality or hotel management. If not coming from such a college background, experience working at a hotel is generally required to get a position as a lodging manager.

**Education and training.** Most large, full-service hotel chains usually hire people who have a bachelor's degree in business, hotel, or hospitality management for management trainee positions; however, a liberal arts degree coupled with experience in the hospitality field may be sufficient. At other hotels, especially those with fewer services, employers look for applicants with an associate degree or certificate in hotel, restaurant, or hospitality management along with experience. Formal internships or part-time or summer work in a hotel are an asset. Most degree programs include work-study opportunities.

Community colleges, junior colleges, and many universities offer certificate or degree programs in hotel, restaurant, or hospitality management leading to an associate, bachelor, or graduate degree. Technical institutes, vocational and trade schools, and other academic institutions also offer courses leading to formal recognition in hospitality management. More than 500 educational facilities across the United States provide academic training for prospective lodging managers. About 100 hospitality management programs are accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration. Hotel management programs include instruction in hotel administration, accounting, economics, marketing, housekeeping, food service management and catering, and hotel maintenance and engineering. Computer training also is an integral part of hotel management training due to the widespread use of computers and hospitality-specific software in reservations, billing, and housekeeping management. Lodging managers also need to know how to generate and read profit-and-loss reports and other business and economic data.

More than 450 high schools in 45 States offer the Lodging Management Program created by the Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association. This 2-year program offered to high school juniors and seniors teaches management principles and leads to a professional certification called

the "Certified Rooms Division Specialist." Many colleges and universities grant participants in this program credit towards a postsecondary degree in hotel management.

Hotel employees who do not have hospitality training or a college degree but who do demonstrate leadership potential and possess sufficient experience may be invited to participate in a management training program sponsored by the hotel or a hotel chain's corporate parent. Those who already possess the people skills and service orientation needed to succeed in hotel management can usually train for technical expertise in areas such as computer use and accounting principles while on the job. Trainees usually begin as assistant managers and may rotate assignments among the hotel's departments to gain a wide range of experiences. Relocation to another property may be required to help round out the experience and to help a trainee grow into a more responsible management position in a larger or busier hotel.

**Other qualifications.** Lodging managers must be able to get along with many different types of people, even in stressful situations. They must be able to solve problems quickly and concentrate on details. Initiative, self-discipline, effective communication skills, and the ability to organize and direct the work of others are essential for lodging managers. Managers must have a good knowledge of hotel operations, including safety and security measures, repair and maintenance, and personnel practices. Knowledge of hotel financing is essential to operate a hotel profitably.

**Certification and advancement.** Large hotel chains may offer better opportunities for advancement than small, independently owned establishments, but relocation every several years often is necessary for advancement. Large chains have more extensive career ladder programs and offer managers the opportunity to transfer to another hotel in the chain or to a regional or central office. Career advancement can be accelerated by the completion of certification programs offered by various hotel and lodging associations. Certification usually requires a combination of course work, examinations, and experience.

### **Employment**

Most lodging managers work in the traveler accommodation industry, including hotels and motels, although they can work for any business that provides room or shelter for people. Companies that manage hotels under contract also employ lodging managers. Lodging managers held about 59,800 jobs in 2008. Most lodging managers—almost half—worked in hotels and motels; almost as many lodging managers were self-employed, primarily as owners of small hotels and bed-and-breakfast inns.

### **Job Outlook**

Slower than average growth in employment will result as the lodging industry shifts to building more limited service hotels and fewer full-service properties that have more departments to manage. Those seeking jobs at hotels with the highest level of guest services will face keen competition as these jobs are highly sought after by people trained in hospitality.

**Employment change.** Employment of lodging managers is expected to grow 5 percent from 2008 to 2018, which is slower than the average for all occupations. Over the decade, travel and tourism is expected to grow, however, more new hotels will

## Projections data from the National Employment Matrix

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment, 2008	Projected Employment, 2018	Change, 2008-2018	
				Number	Percent
Lodging managers.....	11-9081	59,800	62,600	2,800	5

(NOTE) Data in this table are rounded. See the discussion of the employment projections table in the *Handbook* introductory chapter on *Occupational Information Included in the Handbook*.

be smaller limited-service hotels that will not have large staffs or need many managers. In addition, in order to cut expenses, some lodging places are streamlining operations and either eliminating some managers or requiring fewer to be available at all times. Chain hotels are increasingly assigning a single manager to oversee multiple properties within a region. Despite these cutbacks in management, larger full-service hotels, including resort, casino, and convention hotels that provide a wider range of services to a much larger customer base will continue to generate job openings for experienced managers and management trainees.

**Job prospects.** Job openings are expected to occur as experienced managers leave the labor force or transfer to other occupations, in part because of the long hours and stressful working conditions. Job opportunities are expected to be best for people with good customer service skills and experience in the food service or hospitality industries. People with a college degree in hotel or hospitality management are expected to have better opportunities, particularly at upscale and luxury hotels.

### Earnings

Median annual wages of lodging managers were \$45,800 in May 2008. The middle 50 percent earned between \$34,970 and \$62,880. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$28,160 and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$84,270. Median annual wages for lodging managers in traveler accommodations were \$45,380.

Salaries of lodging managers vary greatly according to their responsibilities, location, and the segment of the hotel industry in which they work. Managers may earn bonuses of up to 25 percent of their basic salary in some hotels and also may be furnished with meals, parking, laundry, and other services. In addition to providing typical benefits, some hotels offer profit-sharing plans and educational assistance to their employees.

### Related Occupations

Other workers who supervise or manage a business focused on customer service include:

- Food service managers
- Gaming services occupations
- Sales worker supervisors
- Property, real estate, and community association managers

### Sources of Additional Information

For information on the hotel and lodging industry, contact:

- American Hotel and Lodging Association, 1201 New York Ave. NW., Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005. Internet: <http://www.ahla.com>

Information on careers in the lodging industry and professional development and training programs may be obtained from:

- Educational Institute of the American Hotel and Lodging Association, 800 N. Magnolia Ave., Suite 300, Orlando, FL 32803. Internet: <http://www.ei-ahla.org>

For information on educational programs in hotel and restaurant management, including correspondence courses, write to:

- International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education, 2810 North Parham Rd., Suite 230, Richmond, VA 23294. Internet: <http://www.chrie.org>

Information on accreditation standards and a list of accredited educational programs in hospitality administration may be obtained from:

- Accreditation Commission for Programs in Hospitality Administration, PO Box 400, Oxford, MD 21654. Internet: <http://www.acpha-cahm.org/>

The Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) provides information on a wide range of occupational characteristics. Links to O\*NET appear at the end of the Internet version of this occupational statement, accessible at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/ocos015.htm>