



IN FRONT OF THE GUEST · SEASON 1 · MODULE 8: MAINTENANCE IN FRONT OF THE GUEST · LESSON 33

The Round That Prevents the Complaint

Reporting is professional.

Keeping quiet is sabotage.

In five lines

Corrective maintenance puts out fires; preventive maintenance keeps them from existing — and its cheapest tool isn't software: it's the daily round of eyes and ears. A twenty-minute walk with trained senses detects the hinge that is starting to complain, the timid drip, the flickering light, the smell that wasn't there yesterday. Every early detection is a complaint no guest will ever make. And the round has a second half without which it is worthless: the work order. What is seen and not reported is exactly the same as what is not seen — with the aggravating factor that someone knew. And so you know where the bar is: in the most distinguished hotels in the world, the standard is twofold — zero tolerance for visible defects and daily inspection, with resolution in under four hours from detection. You won't always have their means; always keep their clock in your head.

The script, step by step

- 1. Design your round by areas and senses.** A fixed route (public areas, entrances, mechanical rooms, one rotating floor a day) and a mental checklist by sense: what I look at (lights, seals, new stains), what I listen to (motors, drips, squeaks), what I smell (damp, burning, drains), what I touch (temperatures, looseness, pressures).
- 2. Look for the change, not the failure.** A failure shouts; a change whispers. An expert round compares with yesterday: the elevator's new noise, the stain that grew, the consumption that went up. Whatever changed without explanation is your work list for tomorrow.
- 3. A precise work order or nothing.** What, exactly where, since when, how urgent and whether it affects a guest or an arrival — the discipline of lesson 14, now from your side. A vague work order gets lost in the list; a precise one prioritizes itself.
- 4. The round faces the guest too.** You'll cross paths with guests all along the route: a greeting, giving way, tools kept discreet. And if a guest stops you with "Excuse me, in my room...", the response is the one from lesson 14: you take it, you channel it, you confirm who and when. For them, your coveralls are the whole hotel.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
Spare parts for what you detect	Detection is worth just as much: it is reported with its real urgency and safe containment is applied. Preventive work without spare parts still gains time — which is exactly what it buys: time for the part to arrive before the complaint does.
Time for the full round	It gets split up, not dropped: ten minutes of critical areas today, the rotating floor tomorrow. A short daily round is worth more than a long one that never gets done.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
Greet every guest along the route. Take ownership of whatever they tell you and channel it with a name and a timeframe.	Cross guest areas with tools on display, a radio at high volume or workshop talk.	Answer a guest with “that’s not my area”: you learned it in lesson 3 and lesson 14 — for them, departments don’t exist. And never disable or bypass a safety device “so it stops acting up”: that isn’t maintenance; it’s risk with your signature on it.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Doing the round with your feet and not with your senses: strolling isn’t inspecting.
- ◆ Normalizing the long-standing defect (“it always makes that noise”): what gets normalized stops being watched, and what stops being watched picks the worst day to break.
- ◆ Detecting and trusting it to memory: the work order is filed on the spot — a technician’s memory at the end of the shift is a sieve with good intentions.
- ◆ Measuring preventive maintenance by what it fixes: it is measured by what never happened — and that can only be seen if it is recorded.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“Reporting is professional.
Keeping quiet is sabotage.”**

This lesson’s exercise

Design your twenty-minute round of the public areas of your hotel (real or imagined): the route in order, what you look at, listen to and smell in each area, and the three spots where most complaints are brewing. In the answer that follows, I share my version — and we begin Module 9: Spa and Wellness.