

# American Hotel & Lodging Association

## Industry 911 Dial-Through Update

### January 2015

The American Hotel and Lodging Association (AH&LA) has worked aggressively with our members across the country to ensure that systems are in place for guests to directly dial 911 from all guestrooms. Since the tragic death of Kari Hunt Dunn in December 2013, this issue has been paramount for our hoteliers, who have made this an urgent priority to prevent future tragedies. To that end, properties have taken immediate steps to upgrade or replace their existing phone systems to ensure that all guests are safe and secure and have access to direct dial 911 from their rooms in the event of any emergency.

Nine of AH&LA's largest member chains were contacted by the Federal Communications Commission in January 2014 to inquire about this issue. Since that time, those nine as well as AH&LA's other member chains have taken action to implement direct dial 911 at their owned and managed properties, as well as to encourage their franchisees, which they do not own or operate, to do the same. Led by AH&LA, the industry has worked hard to educate all properties, including franchisees and independent properties, on the need to make the switch to directly dial 911 as quickly as possible.

The detailed actions of 10 of AH&LA's largest member chains, which represent almost 40 percent of U.S. lodging properties, are included in the specific industry update examples below. This includes 18,506 (88.5%) franchised properties and 2,413 (11.5%) owned or managed properties. For each of these 10 chains, nearly all have implemented direct dial at their owned and managed properties and for the remaining few properties, that process will be completed soon. Additionally, more than half of the chains have updated their brand standards to ensure that guests can dial 911 directly from their rooms and reach emergency services personnel, while the remaining chains are actively evaluating an update to brand standards.

In short, through AH&LA's and our members' efforts, the following has been achieved or is in progress:

- Nearly 100 percent implementation of 911-direct dial access for the owned and managed properties of 10 of AH&LA's largest member chains; the few remaining owned and managed properties are expected to complete this process soon;
- More than half of these 10 member chains have undergone the rigorous process of updating their brand standards to require direct dial 911;
- Ongoing and regular education to general managers, owners, and independent properties and operators regarding the urgency to implement direct dial 911 and the best practices necessary to do so swiftly;
- Creation of and ongoing collaboration with an industry taskforce to share information and best practices with all our member companies and hoteliers; and
- Conducted an industry-wide webinar in June 2014 attended by hundreds of hoteliers, to provide updates on progress and share valuable and concrete information for properties still working to implement direct dial 911 from their guestrooms.

This issue remains an urgent and pressing one for not just our member chains but all of AH&LA's members, which are taking sustained steps to continue to educate their properties about the importance of implementing direct dial 911. AH&LA continues to urge all members to keep pace on the

progress and momentum made thus far and provides ongoing counsel to ensure that, as an industry, we move towards full implementation of direct dial 911.

## **Specific Industry Update Examples**

Our industry is making progress toward full implementation of direct dial 911. Below are examples from 10 of AH&LA's largest member chains regarding their latest updates to implement 911 direct dialing from guest rooms.

### **Best Western**

Guest health, safety, and welfare are the top priorities at Best Western International, Inc. ("Best Western"), an Arizona non-profit membership association. As each Best Western hotel is an independently owned and operated property, Best Western has continued to educate its member hotels with regard to 911 telephone dialing in hotel guest rooms and has proactively addressed the matter. In 2014:

- Best Western educated its member hotels with regard to the matter at its seven (7) District Meetings, which were conducted across the United States, and which were attended by over 2,200 hotel operators.
- At its Annual Convention in October 2014, Best Western continued to educate its members with regard to this important matter. The 2014 Annual Convention was attended by representatives of approximately 1,700 Best Western branded North American hotels.
- Best Western advised its member hotels of the American Hotel & Lodging Association's industry recommendation to ensure that direct dial 911 is available from each guestroom phone.
- Best Western engaged its endorsed telephone system vendors, so that member hotels can configure or upgrade their telephone systems to provide direct dial 911 capabilities.
- Best Western amended its brand requirements for new hotels such that all new Best Western branded hotels must, prior to opening and operating, have a hotel telephone system that will connect a guest to emergency services personnel and/or a hotel employee when 911 is dialed on a guest room telephone, without using an access code.

Best Western will continue to discuss the matter in member communications, encouraging member hotels to research their telephone systems, including by contacting system manufacturers, and to take steps to ensure emergency services personnel and/or a hotel employee answers the telephone call if 911 is dialed from a guest room. The subject will once again be addressed at each of Best Western's seven (7) District Meetings in 2015.

Best Western is committed to guest health, safety, and welfare. Best Western will continue its focus on and efforts related to 911 dialing.

### **Carlson Rezidor**

All of the company's owned and/or managed hotels can dial 911 directly. In addition, more than 180 franchise properties reported that 80 percent can dial 911 directly and the hotel is notified a call has been placed. The company is providing information to its properties regarding how to work with their telecommunications vendor to ensure that a guest is able to dial 911 directly and that the hotel is notified. The company plans to survey the franchised properties on their progress in Q1, 2015, and expects to see significant adoption of direct dial capabilities. Finally, the company has established a new

brand standard requiring that direct dial 911 be in place at all franchised select and full service properties.

#### **Hilton Worldwide**

As of today, 99% of our owned and managed hotels are now dialing 911 directly (up from approximately 50% in April). The remaining 1% of properties are working on replacing their PBX systems as the systems are too old to reprogram/upgrade, and expect to have the necessary changes completed in 2015. In addition, we updated our brand standards to require franchisees to reprogram/upgrade their systems to ensure that guests can dial 911 directly from their guest rooms.

#### **Hyatt Hotels**

At Hyatt, the safety and security of our guests and associates is a top priority. We have been working diligently with our managed properties to ensure that 911 pass through has been activated. We are pleased to report that all of our managed properties in the United States have such technology in place and functioning. With respect to our franchised locations, although we neither manage nor control such properties, we sent them a communication earlier this year recommending that they work through their IT vendors to ensure that 911 pass through is operational. Additionally, we are in the process of amending our brand standards for our franchised properties to require that they utilize such technology. This new brand standard will be in place in 2015.

#### **InterContinental Hotels Group**

At IHG guest safety and security remain a top priority. Our managed estate is 100% compliant with all the necessary upgrades to provide direct emergency dialing. We also continue to move quickly to provide value and guidance to our franchised estate. Many of the franchised hotels already had the full emergency dialing capabilities. For our franchised estate, 927 properties did not have direct 911 dial features. To date our WARM team (hotel operations team for performance support) has contacted 100% of these properties. Of the 927, 824 have completed all necessary measures and the remaining 103 hotels will be making all of the necessary upgrades in the first quarter of 2015.

#### **LaQuinta Inns & Suites**

One hundred percent of the 353 corporate managed properties and one hundred percent of franchise hotels currently have direct dial 911 in place. All of our 846 total properties utilize telecommunications systems that allow the caller to connect directly with the emergency personnel when 911 is dialed. In addition, the company has made direct dial 911 capability part of its brand standards.

#### **Marriott Hotels**

Guest safety and security has always been a top priority at Marriott. As noted previously, as of July 31, 2014, phone systems at all of Marriott's approximately 650 owned and managed hotels were enabled to dial 911 directly from guest rooms to reach emergency personnel. Further, greater than 75% of our franchised hotels have phone systems similarly enabled to reach emergency personnel by dialing 911 directly. Marriott has implemented a brand standard requiring phone systems at both managed and franchised hotels in the U.S. to be able to dial 911 directly and reach emergency personnel and, as such, we expect that all franchisee phone systems will be able to dial 911 directly not later than the end of 2015. In addition, Marriott has begun the process of ordering and replacing faceplates on guest room telephones at owned and managed hotels that may have outdated information on how a guest can reach emergency services. The company expects those to be replaced in 2015.

### **G6 Hospitality: Motel 6/Studio6**

All of the Company's corporate owned/operated hotels provide the guests with the ability to directly contact 911 emergency assistance from the room by dialing 911. The Company communicated with its franchisees to make them aware of the importance of and the need to ensure that their guests have the same capability. We requested that they immediately review their current phone system to evaluate the capability of their system and, if necessary, to take the appropriate steps to upgrade their phone system to ensure that their guests can directly contact 911 emergency services by dialing 911. The Company mandated that any necessary upgrades had to be made by June 30, 2014. The Company communicated with its franchisees again in December 2014 reminding them of the mandated compliance and advising franchisees to consider this a brand standard.

### **Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.**

To achieve compliance at all its hotels, whether owned, managed or franchised, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. recently released its previously announced 2015 Welfare & Security Brand Standard requiring 911 direct dial-through capability to all Starwood-branded properties. We are pleased that earlier in 2014, we were able to report that 100% of our owned and managed properties in the U.S. allow 911 direct dialing to reach a Public Safety Answering Point.

### **Wyndham Hotel Group**

Safety and overall experience of guests is a top priority for Wyndham Hotel Group which conducted an initial survey of its hotel brands' owned and managed hotel properties to determine whether their telephone systems have the ability to directly dial 911 without use of a leading number. As of this date, 100% of the Company's owned and managed hotel properties are now configured to allow guests to directly dial 911. Wyndham Hotel Group also sent a notice to its franchisees urging them to view AH&LA's webinar which provided valuable resources regarding reconfiguring telephone systems. The Company is also considering other measures to encourage franchisees to review their telephone systems and ensure that guests dialing 911 are able to reach emergency assistance without the use of a leading number.

## **AH&LA 911 Dial-Through Industry Recommendation**

The safety and security of hotels guests is paramount, no matter where they stay. AH&LA encourages all lodging properties to immediately review their current telephone systems to ensure that when 911 is directly dialed, without using an access code, from a guestroom phone, the guest is connected to emergency services personnel and/or a hotel employee. To the extent changes to the system are not readily achievable, properties are encouraged to make efforts and develop policies that facilitate summoning emergency services without delay. Hoteliers are encouraged to evaluate their safety and security procedures, including contacting their telephone system providers. AH&LA is working with industry partners and allied members to create tools and resources to assist hoteliers, and will be providing regular updates on the industry's progress.

## **Issue Background**

As a result of the "Kari's Law" petition, the U.S. lodging industry convened a taskforce of more than 50 lodging executives with expertise in telecommunications and security. The industry views the safety and

security of guests and employees as a top priority, including the ability for guests to dial 911 directly from a guestroom, and is working closely with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), as well as Congress, phone system vendors, and other interested stakeholders, including other industries impacted by this issue to ensure it is addressed across the board.

In March, AH&LA conducted a survey of the 52,500 U.S. properties regarding current emergency dialing procedures. Of the 6,000 properties that responded, 32 percent of independent properties and 45 percent of franchised properties indicated guests can directly dial 911 from all guestrooms. Thousands of hotels already utilize direct dial, and thousands more continue to aggressively implement that option. Member chains continue to make progress on their owned and managed portfolios to ensure the direct dial option is available in all properties, and are communicating with and educating their franchisees on the importance of and process for implementing it. Furthermore, many member chains are now including direct dial 911 capability as part of their brand standards.

AH&LA is collaborating with FCC Commissioner Pai and his staff regarding emergency dialing procedures. Efforts have been focused on how to support the FCC's outreach to phone system vendors, and working with these vendors to make the necessary resources available to installers and end-users. To that end, AH&LA also is providing tools to assist properties in ensuring direct 911 dialing procedures, including a Webinar comprised of representatives from the industry's top phone system vendors hosted in June 2014 that discussed the changes required to implement direct dial and how members can accomplish those changes. The Webinar, which continues to be available on AH&LA's website to all members, also helped connect franchisees and independents to the correct installers in their region.

## **About AH&LA**

Serving the hospitality industry for more than a century, the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) is the sole national association representing all segments of the 1.8 million-employee U.S. lodging industry, including hotel owners, REITs, chains, franchisees, management companies, independent properties, state hotel associations, and industry suppliers. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., AH&LA provides focused advocacy, communications support, and educational resources for an industry generating \$155.5 billion in annual sales from 4.9 million guestrooms.

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