

### **Hotel guests rank cleanliness, safety as top two priorities**

PHOENIX (AP) — If the first thing you do upon entering your hotel room is grab the remote and turn on the TV, you might want to rethink your habits.

TV remotes are among the dirtiest things in a hotel room, but because the dirt usually isn't visible, people don't think about it. A stray hair on the bed or in the bathroom is much more likely to elicit an "eew" from guests and result in complaints to management.

For hotels, **cleanliness might be considered next to godliness, or at least profitability.** Cleanliness is one of hotel guests' top two priorities — the other is safety — according to Jim Champlin, general manager at the Best Western Grace Inn in Ahwatukee, who takes particular interest in keeping rooms ship-shape.

If a guest perceives the room isn't as clean as expected, "it's very hard to undo that," he said.

From a study of Tucson hotels, University of Arizona microbiology Professor Chuck Gerba found TV remotes hold more than batteries. He said he has even found fecal bacteria on remote controls.

Mel Duchin of Colonia, N.J., saw something he didn't expect when the elementary school music teacher visited the Phoenix area recently for a continuing education course. He said he watched housekeepers at his Hilton Garden Inn room in Scottsdale rinse water glasses in the sink, dry them with a bath towel, return them to the countertop and place paper lids on them.

"You think they're sparkling brand-new and clean and sanitized; they're not, it's a fallacy, they're misleading the public," Duchin said.

Technically, that would be a violation of health codes dictating how glasses should be cleaned: in a dishwasher or three-compartment wash-rinse-sanitize system.

Hilton Hotels Corp. spokeswoman Agnes Sibal apologized for the incident described by Duchin.

"It's just unfortunate that this particular incident occurred," she said. "The cleanliness of the guest rooms is a high standard (at Hilton)."

Housekeepers follow cleaning guidelines, and all rooms are inspected before check-in, Sibal said.

Will Humble, bureau chief for epidemiology and disease control with the Arizona Department of Health Services, said there's a wide range in the vigorousness of cleaning staffs. "(But) most of them are pretty good."

County health officials try to inspect the state's 1,277 public accommodations once a year.

Health violations could result in a warning to correct the problem and a probationary period to get it fixed, or suspension of the operating permit until the problem is corrected. Failure to correct could result in permit revocation.

Humble reported five enforcement actions in the state last fiscal year: three in Navajo County and one each in Maricopa and Gila counties. There were 13 the prior year.

Maricopa County has had four enforcement actions in the past two years, all small motels or inns, said Adam Kramer, county quality assurance officer.

Hilton's Sibal said guests should expect a clean room, no matter the price paid for it.

But UA's Gerba found a "statistically significant" relationship between a room's price and bacteria levels in a study of 12 Tucson hotels a decade ago. The pricier the room, the fewer bacteria found, he said.

**The researchers found fecal bacteria on TV remotes, toilet tank lids and on sinks and taps: places where moisture acts as a reservoir for bacteria.**

Gerba's best tip for travelers? **Bring alcohol gel to clean your hands after using items prone to bacteria.**

The state's chief for epidemiology and disease control Will Humble said, **one litmus test of a room's overall cleanliness is its mattress.** Lift the sheets. If it's stained, it could indicate the room's general sanitation, he said.

Like Gerba, Humble advised using common sense when evaluating a room.

"As with any kind of environmental sanitation issue, the customer's best tool is their own common sense," he said.

If something isn't right, complain to the manager, he said. Guests also can ask to see a copy of the latest health inspection and can complain to the county health department if they believe a problem continues.

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[http://web.ask.com/redir?u=http%3a%2f%2fwww.usatoday.com%2ftravel%2fhotels%2f2004-04-14-cleanliness\\_x.htm](http://web.ask.com/redir?u=http%3a%2f%2fwww.usatoday.com%2ftravel%2fhotels%2f2004-04-14-cleanliness_x.htm)

## Bed bugs threaten to put bite on hotel industry

May 12, 2005

By Paul Simao

ATLANTA (Reuters) - The quaint bedtime saying "sleep tight, don't let the bed bugs bite" has become a grim mission statement for even the finest hotels in the United States amid a resurgence of the tiny bloodsucking pests.

Rising complaints about these unwelcome guests that bite in the night are leading to red faces at reception desks and an increase in the number of help calls, according to pest control firms and entomologists.

Hotels battling infestations typically request discreet and immediate service, and for good reason. Even though they don't pose a health threat, bed bugs, which live off human blood, can take a nasty bite out of a hotel's reputation and business.

"If a facility is known to have bedbugs, it certainly is going to cut into their client base," said Frank Meek, technical director of Orkin Inc., a pest control firm that saw a **20 percent jump in bed bug-related calls in 2004.**

**Many came from the hospitality industry.**

Concerns about the wingless insects are such that the Atlanta-based firm, a unit of Rollins Inc., will soon begin offering hotels and motels as well as private homes a preventive treatment that it says will ensure a bed bug-free environment for one year.

**Besides embarrassing hotel managers and leaving guests itchy and squeamish, bed bugs can trigger lawsuits. A number of companies have been sued by guests who complained of being bitten by the insects.**

**Even upscale hotels are not immune to litigation, and bug specialists say the pests can thrive even in a spotlessly clean room.**

In 2003, a Mexican businessmen sued the Helmsley Park Lane Hotel in New York after he and a companion allegedly suffered numerous bedbug bites to their torsos, arms and necks while staying at the property, which overlooks Central Park.

Helmsley Enterprises Inc., the owner of the hotel, settled the suit quietly last year. Stopping short of confirming bed bugs had been a problem, Howard Rubenstein, a company spokesman, said the hotel had not had any problems with bed bugs since the lawsuit.

## A RESILIENT FOE

Although bed bugs can prosper in almost any type of building, hotels and motels are particularly vulnerable because of the transient nature of their clients and the ease with which the insects travel in luggage, clothing and furniture.

Oval-shaped and less than a quarter of an inch long, the brown-colored insects like to settle close to their food source, often hiding out under mattresses and bed frames, in crevices and behind picture frames.

Once attached to a sleeping human, they use a barbed proboscis to bore through the skin and suck their blood meal. **They can go months without feeding, patiently awaiting a new host or travel companion.**

Tamara Shipley became both in 2003. The 38-year-old business consultant discovered that her Atlanta home had become infested shortly after she returned from business trips to Miami and New York and believes the bed bugs came home in her luggage.

"I know for certain that I got them in a hotel, and I stay in nice hotels," said Shipley, who was bitten extensively in her bed for two weeks. "They just don't walk into your house. You bring them in from somewhere else."

## A DISEASE THREAT?

Entomologists are not sure what has caused the recent surge in bed bugs. Some believe it is linked to a reduction in the use of powerful pesticides that once kept the insects at bay.

Although common in many countries, bed bugs were all but eliminated in America in the late 1940s and 1950s when the insecticide DDT was used to rid infestations in hotels, houses and boarding rooms.

DDT was banned in the 1960s for environmental reasons.

More recent changes in the way pest control is conducted also may have played a role in the bed bug's return.

**Unlike in the past, when exterminators used products and methods designed to kill a broad spectrum of insects -- cockroaches, bedbugs and ants for instance -- today's pest controller is more likely to target one particular species.**

**The result is that other pests often survive.**

Although divided over why bed bugs are thriving, experts agree that the insects are not a public health threat.

Unlike mosquitoes, which can transmit malaria, yellow fever and West Nile virus, bed bugs have not been linked to anything more serious than the itchy, red welts that often appear on a victim's skin.

"There are no studies that have been done that show they vector anything," said Bill Brogdon, an entomologist with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Hepatitis B has been specifically looked for and the studies have been negative so far."

But that is cold comfort to Shipley and the growing number of hotel guests who are finding that a chocolate mint is not the only surprise awaiting them in their beds. "It really freaked me out to know I got it in a hotel. It's not something you think about," she said.

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## Is Your Hotel Room Clean?

**For most people, having a clean hotel room is an absolute "must," no matter the price of the room.** However, hotel guests have varying standards of cleanliness and so do hotel staff members. And because hotel chains include both corporate-owned and franchised, independently-owned hotels, cleanliness levels can vary greatly between individual hotels in a hotel chain. In other words, it's a good idea to do some research before you book a room at any hotel.

If you have access to a AAA guidebook, check the rating of the hotel you are considering. Members can get hotel information on AAA's Web site.

Get opinions from people who have stayed at the hotel in the past.

Call the hotel and ask how long it's been since the hotel was remodeled, and what exactly was done in the remodeling. It's a good sign if a hotel is willing to spend money to improve appearance and cleanliness.

Ask the reservationist to put a note in your reservation stating that you want the "cleanest room in the facility." Let them know that if the room isn't clean, you will promptly request another room.

Remember, just because you've been assigned a particular room, it doesn't mean you have to accept it. If more people complained about inadequate accommodations, quality would improve.

### Room Cleanliness Checklist

Here are a few things to check as soon as you enter your room. Naturally, all hotels will show some signs of wear and tear. If things just aren't clean, however, go back to the front desk and insist on a clean room.

Check the phone receiver first. This is one place many housekeepers don't clean, and thus should be the first place you look. If the phone receiver is clean, you stand a good chance the rest of the room will be clean, too.

Bathroom - Inspect the towels to make sure they're clean. Inspect the sink, paying close attention to the rim area. Check the toilet to make sure it has been cleaned properly.

Inspect the bathroom floor, shower curtain, and bathtub.

Bed - Check to see if the sheets have been pressed. If the sheets appear rumpled, the maid may have skipped changing the sheets. Pull back the bedspread and check the underside for stains.

Check the walls, carpet, and furniture for excessive stains.

Check behind doors and in closets, where housekeepers are less likely to clean thoroughly.

<http://web.ask.com/redir?u=http%3a%2f%2fwww.traveldirt.com%2fHotels%2fcleanroom.htm>

By Josh Sens

They bid her good night, told her to sleep tight, but neglected to mention the bedbugs that bite. Erin Sturges woke the next morning, after itching all night, in her rented room in a **well-known motel chain**. Red bumps developed on her neck and face a week later. Her skin was crawling—and so was something on the sheets. "Bugs," says Sturges, a sales representative who lives in Berkeley, Calif. "It was like something out of Stephen King. I wanted to scream."

Sturges complained to the manager, who reimbursed her for her room but not for her visit to the doctor. She had contracted scabies, not to mention a case of the heebie-jeebies that lingers to this day. "Now when I'm traveling **I can't help wondering," Sturges says, "how clean, really, is this room?"**

It's a question that occurs to many of us when we pull off the road and stop for the night. Sure, lots of places leave the light on. But how can we really tell if they've changed the sheets?

The short answer is we can't. There are no specific cleanliness standards issued by most counties or cities, though many states do have health requirements. In California, for example, if a hotel or motel lacks sufficient lighting, windows, or heating or is infested by vermin, it can in theory be shut down.

Enforcement is another matter. There's no one-stop shop that regulates hotels and motels by cleanliness alone. "A lot of it is guest driven," says Jim Abrams, president of the California Hotel & Lodging Association. "The marketplace often dictates what a hotel does."

So do common sense and common decency. It's standard practice, Abrams says, for hotels and motels to wash and change sheets between guest stays. (In some states, it's also the law.) Vacuuming, cleaning bathrooms, providing fresh towels—all are a widespread part of daily routine, according to Abrams. They are, for example, at the Renaissance Parc 55 in San Francisco, where director of housekeeping Jeanne Gafar says her staff regularly cleans curtains and wipes down counters and telephones with disinfectant; bedspreads are washed at least 10 times a year. Other hotels contacted for this story said they do the same. "We also pay very close attention to what guests tell us," Gafar says. "We read those little cards for their suggestions and complaints."

Hotels that ask for feedback might not always like what they hear. Ten years ago Chuck Gerba, an environmental microbiologist at the University of Arizona, conducted a study of hotel cleanliness. The results? Well, let's just say that bacteria you'd expect to find in the toilet often turned up on the TV remote control. "Generally, what we found is that the more you paid for your room," Gerba says, "the better the chance it was going to be clean. There's a direct relationship."

It's possible, Gerba says, to catch an unfriendly bug from a dirty hotel room—but you're unlikely to get anything much worse than a stomachache or a cold. Just to be safe, Gerba travels with disinfecting wipes so that he can clean surfaces on the spot. Travelers who don't feel like going to that trouble should consult guidebooks like those put out by AAA, whose hotel ratings are based in part on cleanliness.

To qualify for a single diamond in AAA's One Diamond to Five Diamond rating system, a hotel must meet "basic cleanliness standards," says Kelly Bell, the California State Automobile Association's manager of approved accommodations. That means vacuuming, cleaning bathrooms, and changing sheets regularly, especially between guests.

"If it meets our standards," Bell says, "that doesn't mean you're never going to find a hair in the sink or crumbs under the bed. But it does mean we think the place is pretty clean."

Even so, Bell admits, the **first thing he does when he checks into a room is pull the bedspread off the bed.** "Are you kidding?" he says. "You never know what people have done on those things."

First published in May 2003.

[http://web.ask.com/redir?u=http%3a%2f%2fwww.viamagazine.com%2ftop\\_stories%2farticles%2fhow\\_clean03.asp](http://web.ask.com/redir?u=http%3a%2f%2fwww.viamagazine.com%2ftop_stories%2farticles%2fhow_clean03.asp)



## **Hotel guests list cleanliness of room among chief concerns**

**A recent study finds overall sanitation is up in rooms, but travelers still look for spotless stays.**

By Kathy Doheny / Health and Fitness News Service

A market research company for the hospitality industry in the Bay area of California recently asked business and leisure travelers how their hotel stay was. Among their complaints: bloody towels, bird fecal matter on a lampshade, used condoms in the bathroom and a missing toilet tank top.

Such scenarios are uncommon, but going on the road for business can be stressful, even without worrying whether your airline seat, rental car and hotel room will measure up to your hygiene standards.

Did someone clean the hotel sink? Is the room carpet clean enough to pad around on without socks? And do you dare stretch out on the bedspread, not knowing when it was last laundered?

**Cleanliness is high on the wish list of most business travelers**, says Jonathan Barsky, a partner at Market Metrix in San Rafael, Calif., which provides market research to the hospitality industry. **In his quarterly Hospitality Index survey, encompassing about 35,000 consumers, he includes cleanliness as one of several measures of customer satisfaction.**

In his 2004 third-quarter survey, Barsky found levels of cleanliness improving overall, except for extended-stay hotels. Scores for extended-stay hotels, one of the fastest-growing segments of the industry, have declined slightly, says Albert Lin, a consultant for Market Metrix.

Besides the aforementioned gripes, Barsky has heard hotel guests complain about pet hair on furnishings, leftover food, blood stains on bedding, water leaks in the bathroom and plumbing that's awry.

But less-than-sterile conditions are more of an aesthetic problem than a true health hazard, say infectious disease experts, adding business travelers who are generally healthy have little to fear from everyday dust and dirt.

The hair in a sink looks disgusting, but you're probably not going to catch anything from it, says Dr. Aaron Glatt, an infectious disease specialist and chairman of the department of medicine at Our Lady of Mercy Medical Center in New York City.

Bloodstained materials or used condoms, he says, are another matter, and if you encounter either, ask to change rooms or move to another hotel.

Cold viruses can live hours or longer, he says, so you might infect yourself by touching dirty door handles or other surfaces.

How clean is the bed cover?

If a hotel is not completely smoke-free, you can at least ask for a smoke-free room. Several U.S. cities now have laws that restrict the number of rooms that can be used as smoking rooms, Frick says. Another trend he's noticed: Hotels are keeping nonsmoking rooms nonsmoking and not switching smoke-free rooms into smoking rooms if needed.

To find a smoke-free hotel room, visit the organization's Web site, <http://www.no-smoke.org> and click "Smokefree Travel" (under Learn More). Or try a link maintained by a Texas nonsmoker, <http://www.smokinghurts.com> . Frick recommends double-checking smoke-free policies with the properties listed.

Besides fretting about cigarette odor, many travelers wonder about the cleanliness of hotel bedspreads.

These days, chances are better that the bed covering has been cleaned recently, says Joseph A. McInerney, president and chief executive of the American Hotel and Lodging Association, a trade group.

That's partly because more hotels have switched from traditional bedspreads to duvet covers in an effort to raise standards of cleanliness, he says.

"Duvet covers are easier to change and are typically cleaned every day," McInerney says. Bedspreads may be cleaned much less often.

Although the AHLA sets no requirements, it does suggest standards of cleanliness, McInerney says. Among them: The room should be vacuumed and dusted and the bathroom facilities cleaned daily, floors should be washed between guests' stays, and the phone and remote control wiped down.

If the room isn't clean, ask for a new one immediately, McInerney says. "Don't wait until they send someone to clean the room you're in. Just say, 'This room is unacceptable. I would like to change rooms.'"

To improve your chance of getting a clean room, rental car or airline, check out results of surveys such as those by **Market Metrix, which ranks chains in all three industries for cleanliness**

## Take clean-up supplies

Hotel and car rental company officials say they are listening to travelers' requests for clean environments -- and consumer advocates say there is much a business traveler can do to upgrade the cleanliness of the environment on the road if the hospitality industry falls short.

Stowing a few clean-up supplies in your luggage can't hurt, says Dr. William Schaffner, an infectious disease specialist and chairman of the department of preventive medicine at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, Tenn. "Take along some wipes," he says. "Any kind is fine."

If the rental car steering wheel looks grimy, you can clean it. If there's a little crud in the sink, you're ready to banish it.

Take some foot powder to sprinkle on your feet after showering, to help dry them quickly and decrease the chances of getting athlete's foot, which is more likely to occur when the area between the toes remains moist, he says.

Schaffner also recommends frequent hand-washing to stay healthy on the road.

## Traveling abroad

Overseas, operators of car rental companies also try to address the cleanliness issue. For instance, in Paris, Avis uses a "Fresh Air" freshener in cars, says spokesperson Mariana Field Hopkins. They can't guarantee cars are smoke-free but try to be sure they're free of odor when cleaning between renters, she says. At the London Avis on Balderton St., they use a variety of fragrances to be sure cars are odor-free.

For the smoke-free status of bars and restaurants around the world, travelers can check [http://www.no-smoke.org/pdf/internationalbars\\_andrestaurants.pdf](http://www.no-smoke.org/pdf/internationalbars_andrestaurants.pdf), posted on the Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights Web site.

## Top hotel chains

Mandarin Oriental...98.6

Hard Rock Hotels\*...94.8

Venetian...94.8

Staybridge...93.9

Navy Lodge...93.6

\*non-casinos

Travelers can request a smoke-free hotel room overseas, as well, but operators say they can't guarantee no one has smoked in the room before, says Hopkins, who also represents the Gleneagles Hotel in Auchterarder Perthshire, Scotland.

<http://www.detnews.com/2005/lifestyle/0505/27/D04-194910.htm>

## Leakage concept traces customers' tracks to other hotels

Oct 4, 2004

By: Jonathan Barsky, Albert Lin  
Hotel & Motel Management

### Author Information

Jonathan Barsky, H&MM Columnist

Market Metrix developed the "brand leakage" concept to quantify and evaluate the brand-switching habits of hotel customers. This critical measure is integrated within quarterly Market Metrix Hospitality Index reports, enabling subscribers to **track customers' travel activity** over time to see if they remain loyal, switch to another brand or try another brand and then switch back.

For example, Best Western loses most of its defectors (9.2 percent) to Comfort Inn. The **Hilton brand loses its biggest slice (10 percent) to the Marriott brand** and Hampton Inn gives up 8.3 percent of its switchers to Best Western hotels.

Separating repeaters, loyal customers who return to a brand, from switchers, guests who stay at different hotel brands, reveals important differences between these groups.

Albert Lin, H&MM Columnist

Compared to all hotel segments, fewer luxury hotel guests switch brands. Conversely, upscale hotel guests represent the biggest percentage of switchers and are the least brand loyal.

Overall satisfaction for switchers is lower than for repeaters. Although this might not be surprising, it is especially pronounced for luxury hotel brands where defecting guests are far less satisfied with their hotel stay compared to guests who continue to stay at the same brand. Interestingly, repeaters in the luxury segment rated their stays 4 points higher than switchers and paid \$28US more than switchers. This indicates that **satisfied guests are less price sensitive and highlights the monetary value of delivering customer satisfaction to luxury hotel guests.**

In the luxury segment among leisure travelers, overall satisfaction was 4.5 points higher among repeaters and these loyal customers paid \$37US more for their experiences. This also suggests that satisfying leisure travelers can pay off handsomely with higher rates and more repeat guests.

Luxury hotel guests: repeaters pay \$28US more

For luxury hotel business travelers, the difference between the price paid by repeaters and switchers nearly disappears, but the big difference in satisfaction remains. This implies that winning back business travelers to luxury hotels is based on improving the guest experience rather than on lowering prices.

Reliable information that can help explain why customers actually switch can offer valuable insight into keeping them from leaving. Armed with this information, brands can create marketing strategies to recapture lost customers, promotions to woo back defectors, and products and services to specifically address competitor offerings. Knowing the sequence of brand choices that customers make can offer insight into where to build hotels, what brands to include in a portfolio and what business affiliations would exploit these travel patterns.

The MMHI is a quarterly report of customer satisfaction with hotel, airline and car rental companies based on 35,000 in-depth consumer interviews. It ranks top hotels by categories, such as luxury and economy. [hmm@advanstar.com](mailto:hmm@advanstar.com)

[Jonathan Barsky and Albert Lin work for Market Metrix LLC \(www.MarketMetrix.com/\)](#), a firm that provides customer and employee programs for the hospitality industry. For more information, call (800) 239-7515.

## Internet Access and Cleanliness Top Guest Demands for a Hotel Room

NEW YORK, Nov. 8, 1999 - When it comes to hotel and motel guest rooms and restrooms, one thing is clear—people want them to be clean.

**Nine out of 10 people interviewed for a new survey said they would be more inclined to choose a hotel if it offered a more hygienic guestroom via antibacterial products, no-touch fixtures, better laundering and stringent cleaning standards.** An even greater number (92 percent) said that a dirty public restroom in a hotel or motel would give them a negative impression of the property as a whole.

“Clearly it pays to make guest room and restroom cleanliness a top priority, given its potential impact on consumer choices and overall impressions of a hotel or motel,” said Debbie Mueller, lodging segment marketing manager for Kimberly-Clark Corporation.

The survey was conducted for the International Hotel/Motel Restaurant Show, being held at the Javits Center in New York City through November 9th, by Opinion Research Corporation International on behalf of Kimberly-Clark.

[http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PressReleases1999\\_4th/Nov99\\_KMB.html](http://www.hotel-online.com/News/PressReleases1999_4th/Nov99_KMB.html)

## **Air quality at hotels**

Air Quality Becomes

An Issue With Hotels

By THOMAS GOETZ

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

From The Wall Street Journal

Neicei Degen walked into her hotel room at Hilton Washington & Towers looking forward to a relaxing week in the capital.

And then she walked right out again.

The problem, the Peabody, Mass., administrator says, wasn't the glitzy decor or the limited view. It was the air, which she describes as a musty blend of stale air and cleaning fumes. "I didn't know what the blazes hit me," the admittedly chemically sensitive Ms. Degen says. "It was a beautiful hotel room, but I had to get out of there."

Ms. Degen was on to something most travelers never suspect: Hotels might be adding Internet lines and snazzing up suites, but air quality isn't getting nearly as much attention. Experts say it may sometimes cause everything from headaches to fatigue; indeed, clinics from San Francisco to Boston specializing in travel health say almost **25% of patients who are frequent hotel guests now complain about air quality**. At Travel Health Services, a clinic in Manhattan, patient complaints range from kitchen fumes to bad ventilation, says medical director Bradley Connor, who adds that the number is growing every year. It's such an issue that some companies- and even a few travelers- are hiring environmental consultants to check out hotels before they check in.

<http://travel.wsj.com/n/SB929720974527797797-main.html>

<http://web.ask.com/redir?u=http%3a%2f%2fwww.flyertalk.com%2fforum%2farchive%2findex.php%2ft-286844>

Bathroom Is Barometer of Hotel Cleanliness According to New Survey  
**A Clean Room and Bathroom Is the Top Wish for 50 Percent of Travelers** and  
Bathroom Is the First Place Most Guests Go After Checking In

Press Release: Kimberly-Clark Professional  
November 8, 2002

ROSWELL, GA -- How do guests gauge a hotel's cleanliness? By its bathrooms, according to a national survey released yesterday.

When asked how they determine if a hotel room is clean, nearly three-quarters of respondents said it was by the condition of the bathroom. To top it off, when given a choice of what they would most like to find after arriving in a hotel room, a truly clean room and bathroom was the number one pick of half of those surveyed. Cleanliness ruled over in-room amenities such as a whirlpool or spa (23 percent), a fully connected "office" (13 percent), a book and video library (6 percent), a working fireplace (3 percent), and milk and cookies (3 percent).

The survey of 618 adults, all of whom visited a hotel within the past year, was conducted by Opinion Research Corporation on behalf of Kimberly-Clark Professional.

Further underscoring the importance of bathrooms was the finding that 84 percent of respondents inspected the bathroom and supplies -- such as toilet paper and facial tissue -- within 15 minutes of entering a hotel room. Fifty-five percent examined the bathroom immediately after entering.

#### Examining Product Quality

Which products do hotel guests check for quality first? For half it's soap and other amenities, while 29 percent look at the toilet paper. Fifty-eight percent of those surveyed said they would prefer to find a brand name facial tissue in their hotel rooms.

**What bothers hotel guests the most? Dirty hotel room bathrooms, according to 28 percent of those surveyed. This was followed by odors (23 percent) and a malfunctioning climate control system (20 percent). Last on the list were low-quality amenities or a lack of them (9 percent), carpet burns or stains on the floor (8 percent), lack of supplies in the restroom (5 percent), and holes in the curtains (2 percent).**

Overall, respondents did not rank hotel rooms high on the cleanliness scale. **Forty-one percent said hotel rooms looked clean but probably weren't**, while 37 percent said most hotel rooms were not as clean as their own homes. Only **18 percent of respondents judged hotel rooms to be cleaner than their homes.**



Common areas, such as the lobby, meeting spaces and restaurants, were considered the cleanest areas in most hotels, according to 43 percent of respondents. After this were the public bathrooms (30 percent), followed by the guest rooms and sleeping areas (16 percent), and the closets (9 percent).

Source: Kimberly-Clark Professional

<http://web.ask.com/redir?u=http%3a%2f%2fwww.thetimesharebeat.com%2f2002%2ftl%2fnov%2f1108-05h.htm>

## Analysis Shows Surge In Online Travel

December 17, 2004

Nielsen//NetRatings, which measures and analyzes Internet audience, says its figures show that 23 percent of Americans, or **68 million unique visitors, flocked to online travel destinations during November 2004, making up 46 percent of all active Web surfers.**

In comparison, there were 60 million Web users who visited online travel sites in November 2003, growing 13 percent year-over-year. The company says the volume of traffic and annual growth underscore the Internet's role in helping consumers make travel preparations for the holiday season.

Online consumers spent \$919 million on travel during November 2004, jumping 11 percent from the \$828 million spent in November 2003, according to the Holiday eSpending Report by Goldman Sachs, Harris Interactive and Nielsen//NetRatings.

In November, MapQuest ranked number one in online travel destinations with 31 million unique visitors, while Expedia followed with 14 million visitors. Travelocity drew 11 million online surfers, while Orbitz.com and Southwest Airlines rounded out the top five online travel destinations with 11 million and seven million unique visitors, respectively.

"While retailers are in the spotlight during the holiday months, the revenue and traffic generated from online travel destinations should not be overlooked," said Heather Dougherty, senior retail analyst, Nielsen//NetRatings. "During this November, much of the online travel spending stemmed from lower to upper middle class households."

Those with household incomes of \$50,000-\$74,999 comprised 28 percent, or the largest group of online travel visitors, during November 2004, while those with household incomes of \$25,000-\$49,999 made up 20 percent of online travel visitors. Following closely in third place, online surfers with household incomes of \$75,000-\$99,999 comprised 19 percent of those visiting online travel destinations.

"Our research shows that those living in household incomes of \$75,000 or more tend to favor brand-specific travel Websites over any other category of travel sites, while those earning \$75,000 or less tend to visit multi-category travel sites such as Expedia and Travelocity where one can comparison shop," said Dougherty. "Clearly, those with higher household incomes extend their loyalty online to their frequent travel programs."

**Figures quoted in US currency**

[http://www.consumeraffairs.com/news04/online\\_travel.html](http://www.consumeraffairs.com/news04/online_travel.html)

## More Consumers Plan Holiday Travel

December 13, 2004

Hotels, airlines and rental car agencies will be bustling this holiday season, with 36% of nearly 16,000 U.S. consumers planning to take a long-distance trip of 250 miles or more, according to a consumer survey of holiday spending plans and trends commissioned by Deloitte & Touche USA LLP.

In the organization's first survey tracking consumers' tourism and hospitality plans for this holiday season, nearly half (46%) of those respondents traveling are staying at least one night in a hotel. Interestingly, 47% of those planning to increase their holiday spending this year are also planning on taking a long-distance trip, while more than half (55%) of those consumers polled that earn more than \$100,000 in household income plan to travel as well.

"As part of our nineteenth annual holiday survey, we measured consumers' total spending plans for this holiday season. Second to purchasing gifts, socializing away from home is the next largest category that will capture the greatest percent of consumers' spend this holiday season," noted Tara Weiner, vice chairman and national managing partner of the consumer business industries practice at Deloitte & Touche USA LLP.

"Over the years, we've been monitoring this trend toward increased spending on services and experiences during the holidays. This is the first year we have specifically asked about travel plans, and the responses suggest that many consumers will indeed be spending a good part of their holiday budgets on services related to long- distance travel."

The survey was conducted online by research firm Ipsos-NPD from October 13 through October 25 and the survey's margin of error is +/- 3 percentage points.

"This bodes well for a spending increase in the travel industry these last two months of the year," said Adam Weissenberg, national managing partner of Deloitte & Touche USA's tourism, hospitality and leisure group. "Thanksgiving was a very good holiday for the industry, hitting a peak not seen in 4 years, and I would expect to see continued increases in the domestic leisure travel segment in 2005. While the industry has suffered a series of blows over the past couple of years, there is a great deal to be optimistic about."

For leisure travelers, location and price are still their number one factors when choosing a hotel, while brand (36%), service (34%) and loyalty program (20%) were other major factors. Those in the \$100,000 household income bracket are more apt to favor loyalty programs, with 34% citing this as a factor.

"There is a message here for the industry, in that **high net-worth consumers** are continuing to embrace loyalty programs. The survey results show that those earning above \$100,000 in household income, on average, belong to 2 hotel and airlines loyalty programs -- more than double the average for all other consumers. While this should not be a surprise, the **industry needs to further enhance its customer programs to hit this profitable niche**," said Weissenberg.

**The rapid growth of the Internet for leisure travelers continues, as 67% of consumers are extremely or very likely to use the internet to book or research their trip.**

"While these numbers are very favorable to the travel segment as a whole, I believe that consumers will find that bargains are getting harder to find as the industry rebounds," said Weissenberg. "As some of the market leaders have recognized, the industry should look to upgrade today's transaction processing capabilities into intelligent platforms comprising customization, relationship management, feedback and cost elimination. This will give the traveler better value, more individual service, more efficient travel plans and a more pro- active approach to handling delays and cancellations."

Additional results from the survey show that gift giving is also being influenced by the travel and hospitality sectors. More than a third of respondents expect to give at least one gift card for a restaurant meal as a present this year, while 12% plan to give a vacation or trip. Nearly a quarter 23% of consumers in households earning \$100,000 or more plan to give a vacation as a gift.

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