

## **These hotels can kill you (SERIOUSLY!)**

When was the last time you felt unsafe? Chances are, it may not have been that long ago. Your personal safety is nothing to mess with. Neither is the safety of attendees at your event. We address safety more in one week than we did in a year's time a decade ago. That's why we jumped into action last year when we were at a hotel that did not make guest safety a priority.

For those of you who wonder if a site inspection is worth it, they always pay off. While doing our boring and tedious safety check during a hotel site inspection for an upcoming client event, our staff realized first hand why we do them. They spotted blocked fire exits on each floor. We immediately darted for the front desk. The general manager was unavailable. Our staff then requested a meeting with security. As security approached us, their attitude demonstrated they were bothered we interrupted them. After explaining the situation, both security guards were rude and placed blame on a contractor who left the soda and ice machines there. They added they didn't know when they would be back to move them.

With anger rising because of lack of accountability, and our patience running thin, our event planners explained different options that were dismissed by the hotel. The staff once again said there was nothing that could be done until the contractor came back, whenever that would be. They actually had the nerve to blame this on the contractor, citing this was "not a hotel issue." Of course this was on the hotel! It was not an option to leave other guests in a precarious situation, and we demanded that the front desk manager immediately call the general manager. We wanted them to address how this situation was being resolved as our staff needed to rush off to the airport.

While we'd like to report that this was handled appropriately, we sadly didn't get the results we had hoped for. We weren't willing to have it on our company conscience that guests get trapped in stairwells during a fire, so we had stayed involved, escalating it as needed.

Who is to blame? Hotel Management! Management should not transfer blame, treat guests like this or put guests in harm's way — ever! It's hard to monitor how a hotel is managed, yet in this case, it was necessary for the hotel to retrain their staff on procedures to ensure their guests were safe at every corner and in every stairwell.

For your next event, don't skip conducting your own site inspection for any area you need explored and don't allow anyone else to override your judgment call.