

Bally's Atlantic City Resort

Reducing complaints and costs while increasing cleaning fee revenue

Property Type: Casino Hotel

Location: Atlantic City, NJ

Size: 1,205 Rooms



Challenges

- When guests complained about unauthorized smoking after check-in, the hotel would have to switch them to different rooms and take the affected room(s) out of service for costly and labor-intensive cleaning
- The casino hotel required physical proof of smoking to charge the cleaning fee
- Hotel staff were not finding proof of smoking until after guests checked out, losing the opportunity to charge the cleaning fee(s)

Results

- Bally's generates significant cleaning fee revenue from FreshAir Smoking Alerts
- Bally's now has the evidence needed to effectively charge their cleaning fees and win potential chargebacks
- Bally's rapid response to unauthorized smoking enables timely cleaning fee charges while the guests are still on property and before more damage is done from continued smoking
- With reduced guest complaints and extra cleaning costs and labor, Bally's is also saving money and adding to the overall return on investment

"This has been a revenue generator for our hotel, the smoking violations have added thousands to our monthly bottom line."

- Trinity Updegrave, Director of Hotel Operations

Bally's
ATLANTIC CITY

Interview with Trinity Updegrave, Director of Hotel Operations

Trinity Updegrave, director of hotel operations at Bally's Atlantic City Resort, continuously fielded complaints from guests about tobacco and marijuana smells in his smoke-free rooms.

"Guests were complaining about the rooms smelling like smoke after check-in," said Updegrave. "In some cases we'd have to move the guest to another room, and we'd have to service the original room again, costing extra money for labor."

Bally's attempted to charge the offending guests for cleaning fees but struggled to collect the physical proof needed to successfully charge. Evidence was found almost always after a guest checked out and their credit card had been released. Guests who violated the smoking policy were simply not getting caught.

Complaints about smoking appeared frequently in the hotel's online reviews. The negative reviews undermined the hotel's promise of cleanliness and demonstrated how a hotel's reputation could sustain costly and long-lasting damage from unauthorized smoking.

According to a recent industry study about smoking in hotel rooms, negative online reviews can hit a hotel's bottomline for years to come, and the actual costs of smoking can add up quickly. The study found cleaning and property damage can cost four to five times more than the average industry cleaning fee, and reputational harm was the largest hidden cost of smoking.

Updegrave and his team at Bally's knew they had to do something to solve the smoking problem. They turned to FreshAir Sensor to tackle the property's unauthorized smoking challenges.

Using FreshAir Sensor's patented molecular sensor technology, Bally's is now able to immediately detect burned tobacco and marijuana with molecular monitoring in individual rooms and suites. When smoking occurs, the system sends smoking alerts to hotel management.

FreshAir Smoking Alerts are time-stamped, scientific proof of smoking, discreetly sent to hotel staff, enabling Bally's to take timely action.

"Guest violations are now charged while the guest is still on property, so we can contact or lock a guest out with declined credit holds," said the director of hotel operations. "Guests are notified as soon as they smoke, not at the end of their stay which could give them multiple smoking opportunities."

The ability to effectively charge cleaning fees while guests are still on property turns smoking incidents from an operational expense into a viable and valuable revenue stream for the casino hotel.

"The revenue generated pays for the device and monitoring, deep cleaning labor, and general cleaning of the room (curtains and other fabrics). Another benefit is the amount of service recovery we are saving on complaints," said the director of hotel operations.

Since working with FreshAir Sensor, the reduced guest complaints and costs of switching rooms and compensating guests enable Bally's to save money and achieve an even better return on investment from the specialized FreshAir sensor technology.

The benefits of installing FreshAir Sensor at Bally's improves all aspects of their room operations. The revenue generated from immediate smoking detection and cost savings from fewer complaints generate positive return on investment. For Trinity Updegrave, the reasons for recommending FreshAir are simple: "FreshAir pays for itself, and the guests have a better room."