



## RESTRICTIONS IN F&B OUTLETS

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### INTRODUCTION

Restriction always rings a bell in everybody's mind, whether it's guest or the staff of the outlet. The question is, which kind of restrictions do we have in F&B outlets and who are the person who have to obey the restriction.

"Rules are meant to be broken". This famous phrase applies to some restrictions but in most cases, especially legal restrictions, they are very strictly followed!

Restrictions may be divided into two broad classifications:

1. Legal
2. House rules

**Legal restrictions** are mandatory and are strictly adhered to by everyone. They are same for all and have no discrimination at all.

**House rules** on the other hand, are the restrictions applied by the Hotel Management. These restrictions are results of one incident or the other and mostly applied for the ease of the guests and also put place oneself separate and unique in the market by setting up new trends and benchmarks in this industry.

Restrictions are subject to various fluctuations. It changes with time. The factors, which affect restrictions, are, fashion statement of people, way of living, their approach, different cultures, other psychological factors and other changes in the country or surrounding.

This may be explained with the help of the following example; Oberoi hotels started as **high class sophisticated** business hotel. To give this a complete look, all Restaurants and F&B outlets had a dress code. For Taipen, Authentic Chinese Restaurant, all guest had to be formally dressed for dinner. In case they were not formally dressed they were provided with a dinner jacket by the restaurant. Even till date Taipen has dress code, but from formals the dress code has changed to "**smart casuals**".

So, no restriction is fixed. They are flexible & change their nature with time! As and when changes or modification needs to be done, they are done for the convenience of guest, staff and the business.

Restrictions are also affected by the technological developments. Many restaurants don't allow usage of cellular phones.

### LEGAL RESTRICTIONS

#### Service Time Of Liquor:

A guest asks for an alcoholic beverage and is denied the same by the hotel authorities. Guest gets irritated, but the hotel authorities are firm on their decision and say they are helpless. But, why? When the hotel has beverage, which is meant for guest consumption, why the guest was denied the beverage?

In Delhi, the Government of NCT of Delhi gives license to sell and serve liquors. The Government has also fixed the timings for service of alcoholic beverage. In case the timings are not followed, the license will be cancelled and the person responsible is subject to legal action. The time for last order to serve alcohol in **NCT of Delhi is 11:45 pm.**

Another interesting feature of the F&B outlets is, that they don't serve alcoholic beverage to **people below 25 years** and sometimes even the **entry is prohibited** in outlets serving alcoholic beverage. The question is: when the hotel exists to make profit and profit can be made by selling the beverage, then why people below 25 years are not served the alcoholic beverage?

**Punjab Prohibition Act** states that alcoholic beverage can't be served or sold to people below 25 years. The act also states that no lady should serve alcoholic beverage.

**La Rochelle, The Oberoi New Delhi:** Children are not allowed to enter the restaurant. **La Rochelle** being a restaurant, why does the hotel management doesn't allow children in the restaurant? The answer is very simple, one has to cross wine lounge before entering **La Rochelle**. Since children are not allowed in a wine lounge, they can't even enter the restaurant!

Government has also applied a restriction on serving alcohol on national holidays and other holidays as and when stated by the Central Govt. or the State Govt.

**Hotel's Approach:** The hotel doesn't ask the person for any age proof. At the same time, the staffs employed are sharp enough to guess the approximate age of the guest and then react accordingly. Hotel staff has to be firm & polite with the guest on these issues.

### **Maximum Retail Price Issue:**

Government of India has passed an act stating that, no item having **Maximum Retail Price (MRP)** can be sold for more prices than the MRP printed on the label. This act covers all the soft drinks can, Indian mineral water bottles, Indian can and bottled beer sold in the hotels. Then *why are the hotels charging more than the MRP? Or, why are guest paying willingly? Isn't the hotel authorities' liable to legal action??*

The act passed by the Government, after huge hue and cries by the HRACC members, has been amended. A clause has been added, which states that the hotel can charge more if added service has been attached to it. Hotels never serve mineral water bottles as it is! Mineral water is always served to the guest in a basket with the seal broken. Soft drinks can are opened before presenting to the guest. Beer bottle is opened and the beer poured in the beer goblet. All these are added service, and the hotel has all right to charge more than the MRP.

### **Beef/Tenderloin:**

Around two years back the Government passed an act, asking no hotel in India to serve Beef under the name of either **Beef or Tenderloin**. The hotels protested concerning the stock, which they had in hand. Government allowed the hotels to exhaust their current stock. Most of the hotels have not exhausted their stock till date!

### **Taxes Payable By The Hotel:**

#### **CENTRAL GOVT. TAXES-**

1. Hotel Expenditure Tax- Currently abolished.
2. Service Tax @ 8%.
3. Tax on items like cakes & pastries @8%.

#### **STATE GOVT. TAXES-**

1. Sales Tax on Food & Beverage
2. Luxury Tax on Rooms.
3. Entertainment Tax on live Performance.

For hosting the live performance the hotel has to take permission from the Local Authorities and license from the State Govt.

### **Licenses Required By F&B Outlet:**

1. For Live performances.
2. For holding banquet functions.
3. Liquor service license.
4. Food license.
5. Weights & Measures license.

## **HOUSE RULES**

### **Allowing Pets In The Restaurant:**

Pets are strict no-no in all F&B outlets. This restriction is quite old. This restriction was applied due to the havoc created by guest's pets in the restaurant or the hotel. Thus there is no signage outside any F&B outlet saying, "**Pets are not allowed**", because this restriction is very old.

<b>Source (of the restriction):</b>	Frequent guest complaints
<b>Time Period:</b>	Not known (quite old)
<b>Staff Approach:</b>	Strictly adheres to it
<b>Guest Attitude:</b>	Positive response

### **Use Of Cellular Phone:**

Restrictions are also effected with the technological advancement. Not using cellular phones in restaurant is restriction these days. Whereas, use of cellular phones was not considered informal, because it was more of status symbol. But, with the upgrading of technology, cellular phones have become very common. Their usage in any F&B outlet generally annoys other guests. So to avoid the guest complaints, most F&B outlets have signage outside the main door, saying. **“As a courtesy to other guests please don’t use your mobile phones”**. This is again a restriction on the guest. Let’s see what are sources of this restriction and what is the guest attitude towards such restriction.

**Source:** Guest comment cards, guest complaints, staff observation  
**Time:** Almost five Years  
**Indication:** Signage outside the main entrance of the outlet  
**Staff Approach:** Very flexible  
**Guest Attitude:** Negative Response  
**Instance:** Recently an incident happened in The Belvedere at The Oberoi, New Delhi. A guest got a call on his cell phone and he started talking. The manager asked the guest to be subtle while talking, but the guest got annoyed and left the hotel. As a result Mr. P.R.S. Oberoi had to personally apologize to the guest.

### **Indoor Air Quality:**

A very recently highlighted and observed factor by the management and the guest. The hotels say they have different smoking and non-smoking zone, but they forget that the A/C and exhaust ducts are not separate. Even though the hotels say that they have separated smoking and non-smoking zone, in reality this doesn’t hold much truth. Anyway, all outlets have smoking and non-smoking tables and the guest is asked his/her choice of table at the time of entering the outlet or at the time of taking the table reservation.

**Sources:** Environmental health organizations, Guest comments  
**Time:** 5-6 years  
**Staff Approach:** Neutral (doesn’t make much difference to them)  
**Guest Attitude:** Positive  
**Instance:** Earlier in Taipen, The Oberoi, New Delhi the smoking zone was near the main entrance. The idea was that, the smoke would travel out of the main door. But, a guest complained that what is the use of having separate smoking and non-smoking zone, when he had to cross the smoking section. The very Same day the smoking and non-Smoking zone were changed In the restaurant.

### **Reserved Tags:**

Taking a reservation on the phone for a table in the restaurant is very common in all leading hotels and is an extra benefit to the guest. Generally tables reserved have a reserved tag on them and are not given to other guest. But when the guest pressurizes the restaurant staff for the table, then the staff reacts according to the situation.

**Sources:** Guest requests  
**Time:** Very old  
**Staff Approach:** According to Situation  
**Guest Attitude:** Positive

### **Allowing Fire Arms:**

All the F&B outlets say they don't allow firearms. This is true in mostly all cases. But what if the Prime Minister of India goes to a restaurant for dinner? Security guards will be around him, that too with arms. So this restriction varies with the profile of the guest. In normal case, no guest is supposed to enter the F&B outlet with firearms.

### **Restricted Areas For Food Service:**

A restriction that stops the guest from having F&B in any area of the hotel. Most of the hotels, in normal case don't serve F&B to the guest in certain areas of the hotel like Lobby, Corridors, and Gardens etc.

According to the management of **The Oberoi, New Delhi**, they don't want their lobby to smell of food, so they don't serve food. According to **Le Meridien, New Delhi**, Lobby is a place of high movement. So it's very unhygienic to serve food.

There are other hotels too voicing similar opinion. Hotels have more or less similar reason for not serving food in other areas of the hotel.

These were few of the most interesting legal and house restrictions in the F&B outlet. There are many more restrictions. These restrictions may be different in different states, regions and different conditions. But with reference to Indian hotels, the above discussed restrictions holds most importance!!!!

The table shown below does a comparison between the **Restrictions** and their applications

<b>Restrictions</b>	<b>The Oberoi, New Delhi</b>	<b>Le Meridien, N. Delhi</b>	<b>Uppal's Orchid, N. Delhi</b>	<b>Grand Intercontinental, N. Delhi</b>	<b>Leela Kempinski, Mumbai</b>
Allowing pets in restaurants	***	***	***	***	***
Use of cellular phones in restaurants	**	*	*	*	*
Maintaining Indoor air quality according to ergonomics	*	*	***	*	*
"Reserved" tags	**	**	**	**	**

Time of service of liquors in restaurants	***	***	***	**	***
Type of footwear / dress code	**	*	*	**	**
Allowing fire arms	**	**	**	**	**
Restricted areas in hotel for the service of food & beverage	***	*	***	***	***
Dry days in your outlets	***	***	***	***	***

**KEY:**

\*\*\* - Very stringently followed

\*\* - Flexible

\* - Not followed

**SUMMARY:** Restrictions are those, which evolve in a system itself & dissolve in it gradually. Some are short lived while stay forever & become part & parcel of the operations, which with time starts reflecting the outlook & perception of the hotel in the market. In some hotels, these restrictions sometimes take for of *don'ts* or *must*. As what we observed during our field research, that restrictions nowadays are posed as request to the guest. That means the **R (restrictions)** is substituted with **R (request)**. i.e. **R and R** gets exchanged very often.

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