

Japan Hotel Insights

Safety & Security Expert Review

High Safety & Security Standards In Japanese Hotels

Editorial by Martin Anderson

Japan has seen a growth in tourism over the past five years, with visitor numbers doubling in the last decade. This along with major events, Rugby World Cup in 2019 and the upcoming Summer Olympics in 2020, has all added to an increase in hotel development. Local and international brands have sprung up during 2019 and more are scheduled to open in the first quarter of 2020 to cope for the forecasted 40 million visitors expected this year.

Amongst the international brands is Fraser Property which is working with Japan's premier developer Sekisui House Ltd to develop a mixed user property in Akasaka, the diplomatic centre of Tokyo and Japanese hotel chain APA Group which has rapidly expanded its midrange chain to over 300 properties.

Safety and security in the hospitality sector is of a high standard. It is not always seen or overt, which is in line with the level of threat in the country. Japan has always been seen as a safe destination to visit. It has a low crime rate, open and friendly people and as Japan only has a self defence force, it has not been involved in any conflict since the second world war, which means it has not been drawn into the conflicts that have engulfed many nations in recent years. This has allowed Japan not to be target by external threats of terrorism that has swept the globe.

Japan has had its internal struggles with extremist groups over the years, with the most devastating recent event being the sarin attack on the Tokyo subway system by the extremist group Aum Shinrikyo in 1995 leaving 13 dead and over 1000 injured.

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The bigger battle that Japan has to relentlessly struggle with is that from mother nature. Japan faces the ongoing attack in the form of

Earthquakes, Typhoons, Monsoon Flooding and Tsunami.

These attacks are so regular that it appears to go unnoticed by the greater population as they go about their everyday.

This is due to the planning and reaction being well rehearsed, with most utilities back up and running in days even though the full effect will take months to restore.

This was the case during the Rugby World Cup final rounds, when on the October 12th when Typhoon Hagibis made land fall in the greater Tokyo area. The next day the power was restored, streets were clean and the games went ahead. The damage sustained that day is still being restored.

Complacency is the greatest threat

The greatest threat to the **Japanese Hospitality** industry is complacency and the lack of self compliance. Crime in hotels is relatively low, safety and security features are of a high standard and most hotels have had them incorporated at the design phase.

Fire regulations are well developed and emergency and disaster planning and information is well signed, including pre earthquake warning systems that transmit to all smartphones (which nearly gives you a heart attack when it goes off at 3am "Warning tone" then "**Geshin, Geshin desu**").

! EMERGENCY ALERTS

03:24

Emergency Alert

緊急地震速報

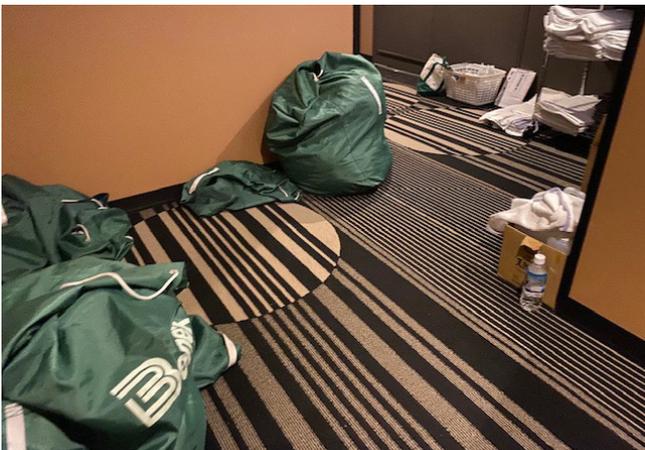
千葉東方沖で地震発生。強い揺れに備えて下さい (気象庁)

The things that put all residence and guest at risk is the small practises that are slowly introduced and become common practise.

Once the practice as been in place for long enough, the discretion becomes overlooked and part of the normal. We would have all seen them or have a look and you will find them, corridors overly crowded with housekeeping trolleys and cleaning bags that restricts escape routes, fire equipment and fire stairs obstructed, surveillance equipment not maintain, access control that allow non guests free access to guest floors and lack of training to emergency response or dealing with a rise in a threat level.

The hospitality industry relies on self regulation

We need to train our staff to be able to identified safety practices that place all at risk and for management to adopt best practise to lower the risk from crime and to design safety practices that enhance the guest experience.



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About the Author

Martin has over 33 years of work experience in the security and hospitality sector. His experience in hotels ranges from auditing, front of house and management positions for major five-star hotel chains where he managed properties in New Zealand and Australia for nearly ten years.

Over the years, he has been heavily involved in volunteer emergency response groups, which lead him to working in the safety & security sector around the world, working through Australia, New Zealand, into Asia, the middle East and Europe.

He has held positions in fire and rescue services as a station officer, an on-road ambulance officer, a helicopter rescue crewman and a member of the response team following the Christchurch earthquakes.

Today he works for the Corporate Protection Australia Group and he is the Port Facility Security Officer, overseeing the counter terrorism compliance for the Brisbane Cruise Terminal. Martin travels frequently between Japan - *his adopted home* - and Australia and he is part of the Sky Touch Asia Team in East Asia.

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