



HOTEL FRONT DESK AGENT (NOC 6435)

Job Definition¹:

Hotel Front Desk Clerks make room reservations, provide information and services to guests and receive payment for services. Hotel Front Desk Agents typically perform guest functions such as selling rooms; taking, modifying and cancelling reservations; and processing guest arrivals and departures. In addition, Hotel front desk agents are required to manage financial transactions, use technology, communicate well, and oversee areas of guest security and safety. They are employed by hotels, motels and resorts.

Additional Occupational Information²:

Hotel front desk agents are at the centre of property operations. They are often the first and last contact with guests; therefore, hotel front desk agents should be outgoing, flexible and able to deal with the public, maintaining their professional composure when resolving problems. They are required to develop guest loyalty by not only meeting but by exceeding guest expectations.

Overview:

This Occupational Language Analysis (OLA) presents Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) competencies and typical listening, speaking, reading and writing tasks performed at a competent level by hotel front desk agents. The tasks are illustrative only, and do not provide a complete sample of what a hotel front desk agent does on the job. Other essential skills such as numeracy and computer skills are beyond the scope of the OLA. The OLA was validated by a panel of people employed in the occupation and by CLB experts. It was developed by CLB experts using three key resources:

- the *Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000*, Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks and Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- the *National Occupational Standards for Front Desk Agent (2nd Edition)*; Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council
- the *Essential Skills Profile for Hotel Front Desk Clerks (NOC 6435)*, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

For a more complete picture of the competencies that are needed to perform this occupation, refer to the source documents.

¹ *Essential Skills Profile for Hotel Front Desk Clerks (NOC 6435)*, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, and *National Occupational Standards for the Canadian Tourism Industry: Front Desk Agent (2nd Edition)*

² *National Occupational Standards for the Canadian Tourism Industry: Front Desk Agent (2nd Edition)*

How to Read this Occupational Language Analysis:

The titles, numbers and sequence of categories are based on the Canadian Language Benchmarks 2000, which address four major skill areas Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing. CLB competencies (language descriptors) are entered at the left margin and followed by a number indicating the benchmark level (1 - 12) for each competency. Sample occupational tasks (descriptors of work/job tasks) drawn from the Essential Skills Profile or the National Occupational Standards are indented and italicized underneath each competency and referenced to their source, as follows:

Task Source	Reference	Example
Essential Skills Profile	ES + the first letters of the profile section	(ES-DU) = Essential Skills Profile, Document Use section
National Occupational Standard	NOS + the section/subsection	(NOS-B2.5) = National Occupational Standard, Major Category B, Skill 2; Subskill 5)

Comparative Ratings:

The following chart compares typical and most complex essential skills ratings for bartenders, based on the Essential Skills Profile, to the corresponding range of CLB ratings, as suggested in the *Canadian Language Benchmarks and Essential Skills Comparative Framework*³. These are general ranges and there may be some language tasks that fall outside of this range.

Skill Area	Typical		Most Complex	
	Essential Skills	CLB	Essential Skills	CLB
Speaking	1 - 2	5 - 8	1 - 2	5 - 8
Listening	1 - 2	5 - 8	1 - 2	5 - 8
Reading	1 - 3	3 - 9	2 - 3	6 - 9
Writing	1 - 2	4 - 7	1 - 2	4 - 7

Common Performance Conditions:

Condition	Description
Purpose	- taking, modifying and canceling reservations; processing guest arrivals and departures; selling rooms; overseeing areas of guest security and safety; promoting the local region
Audience	- hotel guests/clients (some of whom may not speak English well), co-workers (working closely with all other departments), supervisors, other service providers in the community and region
Context	- work independently with frequent interruptions; often in a noisy, fast-paced environment at the center of property operations. While work tasks are often routine and predictable, there are also frequent unique tasks which arise. Often required to multi-task.
Topic	- generally immediate, concrete, familiar
Mode	- most often face-to-face or on the telephone

³ *Canadian Language Benchmarks and Essential Skills Comparative Framework*, Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2005

I. Social Interaction

Interpersonal Competencies

Greet, introduce self and ask about the other person. (CLB 3)

- ❑ *greet guest: welcome guest to property; address by name or title, if known (NOS-D1.2)*
- ❑ *greet guests, smile, make eye contact, use name if known (NOS-B3.2)*
- ❑ *greet guests in a friendly and approachable manner as they enter the hotel (ES-OC)*

Open, close and respond to short casual small talk. (CLB 4)

- ❑ *offer assistance, e.g. ask if guest services attendant could help with luggage (NOS- D1.2)*
- ❑ *wish guest a good stay and offer to be of further assistance while guest is in property (NOS- D1.2)*

Take leave appropriately. (CLB 4)

- ❑ *thank guest for stay and invite to return (NOS-D2.2)*

Leave a short simple message. (CLB 4)

- ❑ *give guests any messages being held (NOS-D1.2)*

Make or cancel an appointment or arrangement. (CLB 6)

- ❑ *ask client directly if (they) can make booking for dates requested (NOS-C1.4)*

Express/respond to apology, regrets and excuses. (CLB 6)

- ❑ *acknowledge concern, apologize for inconvenience (NOS-B4.1)*

Respond to a minor conflict or complaint. (CLB 8)

- ❑ *interact with customers to resolve service problems (ES-OC)*
- ❑ *ensure guest's satisfaction, for example, handle and follow up on guest's concerns (NOS-A1.3)*

Comfort and reassure a person in distress. (CLB 8)

- ❑ *respond to medical emergencies, e.g. reassure guest, empathize (NOS-F1.5)*

Conversation Management

Encourage others in a conversation by showing interest. (CLB 5)

- ❑ *express genuine interest in meeting, helping and interacting with others (NOS-A1.3)*

Confirm own comprehension. (CLB 7)

- ❑ *repeat [wake-up call] information back to guest to verify details (NOS-E3.4)*
- ❑ *reword or repeat message, if necessary (NOS-A2.6)*
- ❑ *paraphrase or ask questions to confirm understanding and clarify information (NOS-A2.4)*

Phone Competencies

Answer the phone briefly according to the situation. (CLB 5)

- ❑ *answer [phone] promptly and professionally (NOS-E3.1)*
- ❑ *process calls, e.g. direct to appropriate department (NOS-E3.1)*
- ❑ *answer phones to make reservations, transfer calls (ES-OC)*
- ❑ *answer the phone while serving guests at the front desk. They remember callers' requests until there is an opportunity to write them down (ES-SUM)*

Take phone messages with three to five details. (CLB 6)

- ❑ *answer phones to take messages as required (ES-OC)*
- ❑ *complete phone message forms (ES-W)*

Take live phone messages with five to seven details. (CLB 7)

- ❑ *offer to take message if call cannot be completed (NOS-E3.1)*
- ❑ *request and legibly record: caller's name and telephone number; name of person message is intended for; message; time and date of call. Verify information by repeating details back to caller (NOS-E3.3)*

Carry on a brief phone conversation in a professional manner. (CLB 8)

- ❑ *process wake-up calls, e.g. obtain information, verify information, call at appointed time (NOS-E3.4)*

II. Instructions

Give sets of simple everyday instructions and directions. (CLB 4)

- ❑ *direct guest to room (NOS-D1.2)*
- ❑ *know how to operate in-room safe: answer guest's questions about use of safe (NOS-E5.2)*

Give/pass on instructions about an established familiar process or procedure (technical and non-technical). (CLB 8)

- ❑ *inform guests about safety measures and procedures (NOS-F1.1)*
- ❑ *describe how to use portable fire extinguishers (NOS-F1.4)*

III. Suasion (Getting Things Done)

Request, accept or reject goods or services, assistance or offer in a service or sales situation. (CLB 4)

- ❑ *inform guest of hotel foreign currency exchange rate (NOS-E6.3)*
- ❑ *inform other departments of early and late check-outs, e.g. guest services, housekeeping (NOS-D1.4)*

Call for emergency assistance. (CLB 5)

- ❑ *follow fire emergency procedures, e.g. notify fire department (NOS-F1.2)*
- ❑ *contact trained personnel through emergency number, e.g. 911 (NOS-F1.5)*
- ❑ *call security department or police if security problems or concerns arise (NOS-F2.1)*

Make a simple formal suggestion; provide reason. (CLB 6)

- ❑ *suggest events and attractions that meet guest's needs (NOS-B3.1)*
- ❑ *may be unable to check a business person with a confirmed reservation because the hotel is overbooked. They tactfully explain the situation to the customer and monitor the room availability after the 6:00 p.m. release of non-guaranteed rooms. If necessary, they obtain a room for the client at another hotel (ES-TS)*
- ❑ *if authorization [for credit card] is declined: inform guest [and] arrange for alternate form of payment (NOS-D1.2)*

Request a word. Ask for and respond to recommendations or advice. (CLB 7)

- ❑ *interact with supervisor to receive instructions and refer problems which they are not authorized to handle (ES-OC)*

Make an extended suggestion on how to solve an immediate problem or make an improvement. (CLB 7)

- ❑ *deal with disgruntled guests who were not told in advance that they would be charged for any mini bar items used. They explain the policy, and, if necessary, offer a good will gesture such as a discount, to make amends (ES-TS)*
- ❑ *may respond to a late-night complaint that the room heater is not working when they cannot offer another room because the hotel is full. They assess possible solutions, such as providing extra blankets or offering one night free, gauging what would satisfy the guest (ES-TS)*

Indicate problems and solutions in a familiar area. (CLB 8)

- ❑ *notify maintenance of potential hazards, for example:, frayed electric cords, loose flooring, faulty alarms (NOS-F1.1)*
- ❑ *inform guests about safety measures and procedures: ask guest to use double locks on room doors; encourage guest to ask questions, e.g. ask to see employee's identification (NOS-F1.1)*

Propose/recommend that certain changes be made in a familiar area. (CLB 8)

- ❑ *in response to a medical emergency, provide input to prevent reoccurrence (NOS-F1.5)*

Negotiate a "mutual interests" solution to a problem. Get a concession from the other party through logical argumentation. CLB (CLB 11)

- ❑ *may receive complaints about excessive noise on one of the floors. They first speak to the offending parties to enlist co-operation in reducing the noise. If the problem persists they may opt to evict the group, enlisting security or police assistance if the guests become unruly (ES-TS)*

IV. Information

Presentations

Describe and compare people, places etc. (CLB 6)

- ❑ *be familiar with specific events and attractions around property and area, describe main features, for example, hours and days of operation, costs (NOS-B3.1)*

Describe a simple process. (CLB 6)

- ❑ *explain tax exemptions and non-resident refunds (NOS-D2.2)*

Describe, compare and contrast in detail two events, jobs or procedures. (CLB 7)

- ❑ *provide necessary information to group leader or entire group, for example: directions to facilities and rooms; luggage handling procedures; location of information board; guest restrictions, e.g. use of telephones (NOS-D1.4)*

Interaction One-on-One

Ask for and provide information related to routine daily activities (e.g., personal, family, others, work). (CLB 5)

- ❑ *interact with customers to check them in and out (ES-OC)*
- ❑ *ask guest for feedback (NOS-A1.3)*
- ❑ *operate as a team member e.g. ask for assistance when needed (NOS-A1.7)*

Ask for and provide detailed information related to personal needs, varied daily activities and routine work requirements. (CLB 7)

- ❑ *answer questions accurately, or take responsibility for getting correct information for guest (NOS-A1.3)*
- ❑ *report damaged or malfunctioning equipment to supervisor (NOS-E1.1)*

Ask for and/or provide detailed information related to personal needs, varied daily activities and routine work requirements. (CLB 8)

- ❑ *orient new employees (ES-WWO)*
- ❑ *assign routine tasks to other workers (ES-WWO)*
- ❑ *liaise with other departments, for example: ask sales department about upcoming promotions and events; ask food and beverage outlets about special promotions, e.g. daily specials (NOS-E4.3)*

Discuss options. (CLB 8)

- ❑ *check in groups. When group arrives: verify with group leader: number of guests in group and specific room requirements; rate, method of payment and billing instructions determine how incidentals will be paid for, e.g. applied to group's bill, applied to individual guests; food and beverage information, e.g. use of vouchers, meal plans; departure information: date and time of departure, baggage handling arrangements, need for wake up calls (NOS-D1.4)*

Provide, obtain and discuss detailed complex information and opinions with individuals in order to coordinate teamwork assignments/tasks. (CLB 9)

- ❑ *inform other workers or demonstrate to them how tasks are performed (ES-WWO)*

Interaction in a Group

Participate in a small group discussion/meeting on non-personal familiar topics and issues: express opinions, feelings, obligation, ability, certainty. (CLB 6)

- ❑ *attend staff orientation (NOS-A1.9)*
- ❑ *interact with co-workers to exchange information, discuss problems and coordinate work (ES-OC)*

Participate in a debate/discussion/meeting on an abstract familiar topic or issue. (CLB 8)

- ❑ *participate in staff meetings to discuss hotel policies and offer suggestions to improve guest services (ES-OC)*
- ❑ *participate in formal discussions about work processes or product improvement (ES-WWO)*
- ❑ *attend staff meetings and training sessions (NOS-E4.3)*

Express and analyse opinions and feelings. (CLB 8)

- ❑ *have opportunities to make suggestions on improving work processes (ES-WWO)*

Skill: Listening

I. Social Interaction

Identify indicators of communication problems. (CLB 3)

- *use listening skills: confirm that message is understood (NOS-A2.4)*

Identify factual details and inferred meanings in dialogues containing compliments, invitations, and offers; discussion of interests, likes/dislikes and preferences. (CLB 5)

- *respond to guest's concerns, e.g. listen to and empathize with guest (NOS-B4.1)*

II. Instructions

Understand a range of spoken everyday instructions on step by step procedures. (CLB 5)

- *obtain authorization [for credit cards]: follow instructions of authorization center, if necessary (NOS-D1.2)*

Follow an extended set of multi-step instructions on technical and non-technical tasks for familiar processes or procedures. (CLB 8)

- *determine operating guidelines [to operate office equipment]: attend training sessions; obtain assistance from supervisor or co-workers (NOS-E1.1)*
- *review safety guidelines of property, for example: participate in fire drills and training sessions (NOS-F1.1)*

Integrate several pieces of detailed extensive oral information to carry out multi-step complex instructions for a familiar process or procedure in a demanding and stressful situation. (CLB 10)

- *follow fire emergency procedures: follow instructions of emergency personnel; assist with building evacuation; answer guest enquiries (NOS-F1.2)*

III. Suasion (getting things done)

Demonstrate comprehension of details and speaker's purpose in suggestions, advice, encouragements and requests. (CLB 6)

- *repeat information back to guest to verify details (NOS-E3.4)*
- *determine nature of [guest's] concern by obtaining facts, e.g. time, place (NOS-B4.1)*

Evaluate the validity of a suggestion or proposed solution. (CLB 8)

- *participate in staff meeting to discuss hotel policies and offer suggestions to improve service (ES-OC)*

IV. Information

No communication tasks for this category were found in the source documents. These tasks may, in fact, exist for this occupation and will require individual assessment in each work context.

Skill: Reading

I. Social Interaction Texts

Get information from personal notes, e-mail messages and letters. (CLB 4)

- ❑ read incoming faxes/e-mails from clients to make reservations, ensuring that all the required information is provided (ES-R)

II. Instructions

Follow an extended set of multi-step instructions for established process. (CLB 8)

- ❑ review safety guidelines of property, for example: read operations manual (NOS-F1.1)
- ❑ read [operating] manual supplied by manufacturers [and] follow manufacturer's instructions to: operate equipment, e.g. keyboard, printer (NOS-E1.1)
- ❑ follow operating guidelines for [office] equipment, for example: facsimile machine, two-way radio/paging system, computer, computerized room card maker, telephone system (NOS-E1.1)
- ❑ clean and perform basic maintenance (of office equipment) according to operating guidelines (NOS-E1.1)

III. Business/Service Texts

Find information in formatted texts: forms, tables, schedules, directories. (CLB 4)

- ❑ refer to phone books, look up addresses for guests (ES-R)
- ❑ read computer generated lists to allocate guest rooms. The lists indicate whether the rooms are vacant, occupied or being cleaned (daily) (ES-R)
- ❑ for traveller's, personal or company cheques, ensure: signatures on cheque match those on identification; date on cheque is correct; cheque is payable and acceptable to property (NOS-E6.4)

Get information from short business brochures, notices, form letters and flyers. (CLB 4)

- ❑ read memos to get information, such as information on new programs for frequent guests and the availability of computerized games for children (ES-R)
- ❑ review information lists, for example: VIPs and guests with special needs (NOS-E4.4)

Identify factual details and some inferred meanings in moderately complex business/service texts, including formatted texts. (CLB 5)

- ❑ access information on room availability from hotel computer systems (ES-FI)
- ❑ refer to events calendars to respond to guests' requests for specific information on special events and attractions (ES-FI)
- ❑ check movie listings in newspapers to advise guests of details as requested (ES-FI)
- ❑ review information lists, for example: daily community events (NOS-E4.4)

Identify factual details and some inferred meanings in moderately complex texts containing advice, requests, specifications. (CLB 6)

- ❑ read function schedules to answer questions from guests or visitors about location and time of meetings or social functions (ES-R)
- ❑ read log books at beginning of every shift to obtain information on special requests, incoming groups or issues that need attention (ES-R)

Find two or three pieces of information in moderately complex formatted texts. (CLB 6)

- ❑ check cancellation policy and inform caller of charges, if applicable (NOS-C2.3)
- ❑ review information lists, for example: catering functions summary (NOS-E4.4)
- ❑ check housekeeping reports for discrepancies in room status (NOS-E4.6)
- ❑ check status of out-of-order rooms, e.g. refer to maintenance reports (NOS-E4.6)

IV. Informational Texts

Informational texts

Use standard reference texts: dictionaries, maps and diagrams, graphs. (CLB 4)

- *use maps to direct guests to various locations (ES-R)*

Show comprehension of a one-page moderately complex descriptive/narrative text on a familiar topic. (CLB 6)

- *read newsletters and pamphlets to provide guests with the latest information on tourist attractions and events (ES-R)*
- *at beginning of shift: check for information updates, for example: room availability; sales status; posted notices; log book (NOS-E4.2)*
- *read memos and staff bulletin boards (NOS-E4.3)*

Demonstrate comprehension of a cycle diagram, flow chart and a timeline/schedule. (CLB 6)

- *check availability chart or screen for requested dates (NOS-C1.2)*

Demonstrate comprehension of moderately complex tables, graphs, diagrams, and flow charts. (CLB 7)

- *compare past, current and future numbers of reservations and guests at the hotel to note changes (ES-N)*

Demonstrate comprehension of factual details and inferred meanings in an extended description, report or narration when events are reported out of sequence. Draw conclusions. (CLB 8)

- *read training manual or employee handbook (NOS-A1.9)*

Information Literacy/Reference and Study Skills Competencies

Access and locate three or four pieces of information in on-line electronic reference sources (e.g., World Wide Web, library databases), if available, or from print reference sources. (CLB 7)

- *use internet: research information for guests (NOS-E2.3)*

Access/locate several pieces of information in on-line electronic reference sources. (CLB 8)

- *use internet: maintain current list of company and/or tourism web sites (NOS-E2.3)*

Skill: Writing

I. Social Interaction

Convey a personal message in a formal short letter or note, or through e-mail, expressing or responding to invitations, quick updates, feelings. (CLB 5)

- *send e-mail messages to clients (ES-CU)*

II. Recording/Reproducing Information

No communication tasks for this category were found in the source documents. These tasks may, in fact, exist for this occupation and will require individual assessment in each work context.

III. Business/Service Messages

Fill out forms. (CLB 5)

- *prepare charge slips for services, such as couriers and faxes, and post them to guests' accounts (ES-N)*
- *complete computerized forms to make reservation, noting information such as guests' names, the number of rooms required and any special requests (ES-W)*

Convey business messages as written notes. (CLB 5-6)

- *record Lost/Found items, include: date, location, description of item, name, address, and phone number (NOS-E5.4)*
- *use word processing, for example, to prepare faxes to provide guests with requested information (ES-CU)*

Fill out moderately complex forms. (CLB 6-7)

- *complete occurrence report forms to describe serious complaints or major incidents such as fire in a room (ES-W)*
- *complete reservation forms to process reservations, noting relevant personal and financial information (ES-R)*
- *complete arrival document: fill in reservation information, making necessary changes; obtain guest's signature [and] additional information, e.g. make, year and license number of automobile (NOS-D1.2)*
- *complete registration form [to] secure [or] access guests' valuables in safety deposit boxes or in common safe (NOS-E5.2)*
- *use reservation software to check in guests and prepare invoices when guests check out, keying in responses or highlighting a choice (ES-CU)*

Convey business messages as written notes to pass on routine information, make requests, or respond to recommendations and warnings. (CLB 7)

- *write faxes to confirm reservations and responses to requests regarding the availability of wheelchair accessible accommodations (ES-W)*
- *log guest's concerns and actions taken (NOS-B4.1)*
- *prepare deposit sheets at the end of their shift (ES-N)*
- *write reports to explain the rationale for providing guests with discounts or complimentary rooms (ES-W)*

Convey business messages as written notes, memoranda, letters of request, or work record log entries, to indicate a problem, to request a change, or to request information. (CLB 8)

- *prepare financial summaries (ES-CU)*
- *[record] log book entries: guest concerns and follow up required or completed; billing equipment or security problems, e.g. guest key restrictions (NOS-E4.1)*
- *respond to medical emergencies [and] document: name of person reporting emergency; date and time of emergency; nature of emergency; time emergency personnel were called and arrived; details of incident (NOS-F1.5)*

IV. Presenting Information and Ideas

Write a paragraph to relate/narrate a sequence of events; to describe a person, object, scene, picture, procedure or routine; or to explain reasons. (CLB 5)

- *maintain log book to pass information to co-workers on the next shift (ES-W)*

For more information about:

Canadian Language Benchmarks or Occupational Language Analyses

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Registered in Ottawa this 8 day of May 2005