

# The Holiday Scams Restaurants Can Refuse to Serve

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LOSS PREVENTION & SECURITY  
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## 1. Slip & Fall Incident

A “Slip & Fall” incident from a customer who was “about to buy something” or “just using the restroom.” These incidents usually have no 3rd party witness or the witness is the person with the claimant.

### ACTION STEPS:

- A.** To ensure the proper safety of all customers and employees, ensure Wet Floor signs are in place and in use when a spill has occurred and/or mopping is taking place. All spills and melting ice on the floor should be dried immediately. Employees should always keep floors clean and clear of obstructions. Be sure to remove the Wet Floor signs once the floor is dry. Employees should immediately report any trip hazards with steps, mats, floors and doors in the store to the supervisor for immediate correction or removal.
  - B.** Follow all incident procedures if a “slip & fall” is reported. Do not share any information about policies, CCTV, cleaning schedules, previous incidents, etc. with the customer. Get them the proper and appropriate medical assistance and refer them to the supervisor for any additional information.
  - C.** Do not provide the customer with any copies of the incident report or claim form. The supervisor will make note of any witness statements, if possible, in an area away from the injured customer.
  - D.** Call 911 immediately if needed or requested by the customer.
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## 2. A Foreign Object or unknown substance found in food or beverage.

### ACTION STEPS:

- A.** In rare instances a customer will report broken glass, or hair or a plastic object in their food or beverage. To prevent these instances, employees should ensure all food prep areas are kept clean, sanitary and free of all non-food items. When an incident like this is reported, the employee should attempt to retrieve the foreign object or food/beverage and hold for the supervisor to review. The employee should offer to remake the item and refer the customer to the supervisor for follow up. Provide any first aid or call for medical assistance as needed or requested.
  - B.** If the customer returns to the restaurant or to a different location the next day, or later in the week to make a report and request a refund, ask for a receipt or other information (day, restaurant location, description or name of cashier, etc.) to verify purchase. Only give a cash refund if approved by the supervisor.
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## 3. Lost or Stolen Item(s), value greatly exaggerated

### ACTION STEPS:

- A.** The customer should call the police immediately to report the incident. CCTV footage is not available for public review. Share video with the police only or as directed by your supervisor.
- B.** Preventative steps include reminding customers to:
  - i. Never leave personal property unattended
  - ii. Be aware that purses or bags hung over chairs are high risk
  - iii. Closely monitor persons loitering around the lobby, dining area or restrooms who have not purchased any food or beverage

- iv. Discourage all loiterers and trespassers from being on the property or in the restaurant
  - v. Call the police if someone refuses to leave premises after causing a disturbance or not making any purchase after an extended time.
- C.** Do not pay any money from the store for a lost or stolen claim. Refer the customer to the supervisor and complete any necessary forms.
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#### **4. Incorrect Change / Claim of Short Change**

##### **ACTION STEPS:**

- A.** Customers sometimes claim they were given the incorrect change or short changed. "I paid with a \$20 bill, not a \$10 bill" or "I am \$5 short in change." Any claim of incorrect change should be reported to the supervisor on duty immediately and if, possible, the register should be audited to determine if it is over. Only the supervisor should be making any determination if money should be given back to the customer.
- B.** To prevent short change claims, the cashier should always follow this cash handling policy:
- i. When tendering cash, always place the bill "portrait" face up on the register ledge
  - ii. Count the change back to the guest ("Your change is six dollars and eighteen cents") as the bills are handed to the guest, "Here is five, six dollars and eighteen cents."
  - iii. Drop the change into the guest's hand at once.
  - iv. Place the bill into the register and completely close the drawer after each transaction.
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#### **5. Fake Inspectors / Unauthorized Visitors**

##### **ACTION STEPS:**

- A.** Employees should not grant back-of-house access or admittance to any inspector, technician contractor, vendor or any other person without the proper authorization from the supervisor AND a valid work identification or badge.
- B.** If an employee finds an unauthorized person in the back of house area or office, ask them to leave while retreating away from the person. Call the police immediately if they refuse to leave.
- C.** Never confront or engage an intruder, have all employees and customers safely leave the area and call police to file a report after the intruder has left.
- D.** Always keep the safe locked and secured when not in use.
- E.** Do not keep any personal items or valuables unsecured. Employees should only take to work what is needed for their shift. Computers, laptops, electronic devices, and phones should be stored in a secured car, pocket or at home while working.
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#### **6. "System Down" or "Utilities Payment / Problems" Phone Calls**

##### **ACTION STEPS:**

- A.** A bank or utility (gas, electric, water, etc.) will never call the restaurant directly and demand payment for services or request personal and/or customer credit card information. Any demands for payment for claims of late payment, or information to process credit cards because the system is down should be referred to the supervisor.
- i. Ask the caller to hold for manager confirmation.
  - ii. Ask caller for their name, company they work for and call back information.
  - iii. Do not comply with any of the caller's demands without speaking to a supervisor. Many pranksters have called restaurants with false claims of gas leaks or other immediate dangers resulting in serious damages to the property and injuries to customers and employees.