



Ask Gail

by William D. Frye, Ph.D., CHE

It is amazing what some guests leave behind when they check out!

Another great article from *The Rooms Chronicle*, the #1 journal for hotel rooms management! ***Important notice: This article may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher or the author.*** College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Niagara University, P.O. Box 2036, Niagara University, NY 14109-2036. Phone: 866-Read TRC. E-mail: editor@roomschronicle.com

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Dear Gail:

What are the most common items left behind in hotel rooms by guests? I ask this because it seems that our housekeepers continue to find various items of odd and unusual nature.

Vanessa J.
Fresno, CA

Dear Vanessa,

TRC researchers spoke with a number of our housekeeping contacts in the field and did some research on this topic. At one time, the most recurring items were clothing. Typically, it was stray socks under the bed or caught between the bed linens, nightgowns left hanging on the back of the bathroom door, or damp bathing suits left hung to dry in the bathtub, but obscured by a shower curtain.

In today's world of technologically dependent travelers, it seems that the most predominant items left behind are cell phone charging cords and electrical power cords for laptop computers. These items are easy for guests to miss as frequently the cords are plugged into an electrical outlet behind or underneath a desk or nightstand.

And then there are certain items of questionable nature that are still left behind today as in previous years; namely, adult magazines, prophylactics and birth control devices/pills. One may question whether these types of items were left behind intentionally so as not to be found by a traveling person's spouse upon returning home, or whether they were just considered "expendable."

Of course, today's guests still leave behind the occasional contact lenses, eyeglasses, personal toiletries, errant clothing, and half-eaten pizzas. Certainly, one can assume that the pizzas were intended to be disposed of. One executive housekeeper reported finding a boa constrictor snake lurking under the bed. Yes, it was a pet mistakenly left by a guest. Another reported that a family forgot to check out with their dog. I suppose when guests start leaving their children behind, then we should really be concerned ... or at least charge their credit card for another night's stay! ✧