





Avani hotel staff demonstrate their contactless greetings

in all key areas of hotels.

“We are reinforcing our existing protocols for addressing public health issues,” said a spokesperson for Hong Kong’s Ritz-Carlton hotel. “Additional preventative measures include implementing strict food handling processes and tableware disinfection, providing more hand sanitizers, requiring all associates to wear masks when on duty and arranging for temperature detection in common areas.”

Singapore, which was placed under a ‘circuit breaker’ lockdown on April 7, is looking forward to a return to business sometime after June 1.

Marina Bay Sands says it will be rolling out hygiene protocols including the sanitisation of all key cards, the use of hospital-grade disinfectants for in-room cleaning and limiting pool capacity.

Singapore’s National Environment Agency introduced a SG Clean initiative in February to instil a ‘keep clean culture’ in the city state. The certification system sets rigorous cleaning and sanitisation standards; before the circuit breaker was introduced, 85 hotels had been accredited. Assessment and certification will continue once the circuit breaker has been lifted.

Internationally, Avani Hotels & Resorts has launched an AvaniSHIELD programme across its portfolio. All 32 properties in 18 countries

will gradually adopt this menu of heightened hygiene standards.

Initiatives will be driven by new technology, such as digital check-in and check-out, replacing face-to-face concierge with live chat apps, copper protection coating of high touch surfaces and introducing High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) grade purifiers into guest rooms.

Rooms will be cleaned, sealed and left to ‘rest’ for 24-hours between guests and Ultra Violet C sterilisation boxes will be used to disinfect key cards, stationery and other high touch objects. Disinfectant processes will be set-up to sanitise incoming luggage and staff will be asked to use contactless greetings, such as bowing or placing a hand over the heart.

“Our life has been impacted, but our spirit to travel will never fade,” said Javier Pardo, Avani’s vice president of Operations.

He added that Avani is also taking advantage of this breathing space to review environmental initiatives, such as a zero-trash programme and carbon footprint reduction measures.

Hospitality brand Accor is partnering with insurance group AXA to offer medical support to its 5,000 worldwide properties.

The partnership is set to swing into action in July and means guests will be able to take advantage of free medical teleconsultations

around the world, with access to tens of thousands of vetted medical professionals with a wide range of language abilities and areas of expertise.

“This distinctive partnership with AXA which we have been working on for several months makes even more sense in today’s context,” said Sebastien Bazin, chairman and chief executive officer of Accor. “In an increasingly complex environment, our 300,000 team members on the ground will be able to assist our guests and ensure their safety during their stay, turning our hotels into shelters.”

So while changes are afoot and hotel

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holidays won’t be quite as they were, on the whole the ‘new normal’ is looking very manageable. We will all need to ‘do our bit’, but, taking in the view from a sunny Hong Kong pool deck, things ain’t looking too bad.