

How should I tactfully ask visitors to sign in and wear a badge?

Question: "I am the receptionist for a large assisted living facility. Visitors must sign in at the reception desk and then wear a visitor badge. People do not like this and have told me it's none of my business who they are or why they want to visit. I explain that it is for the visitor's safety as well as that of our residents. Any ideas or suggestions how best to handle this?" — *Gwen O'Brien*

Comments

Our receptionist experiences this type of response as well... company policy states that if a visitor does not show government issued ID and sign in, they are not allowed in our building. Once she explains that to the visitor, they sigh loudly, go back outside to retrieve their ID and comply with our policy.

Posted by: Becky | August 29, 2008 at 01:12 PM

Have signage created that tells visitors what is expected of them. Have the rest of the employees (the ones they are coming to visit) start mentioning to their visitors that the company is reinforcing or has created a new policy and they will need them to comply. Don't take it personally. When they say it isn't your business you should tell them it is your job.

Posted by: Donna | August 29, 2008 at 01:13 PM

I would explain to them that it is for fire safety. If there is a fire or a fire drill you need to know who is in the building at that time. This way you know for sure everyone is safe.

Posted by: Jenni | August 29, 2008 at 01:13 PM

We have limited public access to our administration area. When we have visitors, who are required to sign in and get badges, we often have resistance to the process. Our receptionists tell the guest that it is company policy that all visitors sign in and be badged. If there is further resistance, we simply refuse to admit them. Fortunately for our company, we have extensive surveillance and that itself is a good motivation. Yet and still, I suggest that your receptionist be assertive, professional and if there is resistance at that level, then reception should have upper management backup which can be summoned to offer assistance.

Posted by: gamehen | August 29, 2008 at 01:13 PM

At one job the insurance company required it. That way if a visitor got hurt or claimed to have been hurt while on the premises, we had proof that they were either in the building or not at that time.

I would simply say that the company's insurance policy required it.

Posted by: anon | August 29, 2008 at 01:24 PM

Tell them it's to comply with the security policy and program. These days, you can't be too careful!

Posted by: | August 29, 2008 at 01:30 PM

We are a government agency and we actually were running into this problem also. We have a sign made stating we are a secured facility. Proper ID and information will be required before entering. We still get a few who will question us but we cannot issue a badge unless we know who they are and where they are going and the nature of their visit. Our receptionist is great in handling this professionally and tactfully and the sign did help ALOT.

Posted by: | August 29, 2008 at 02:03 PM

All visitors to our record management company must sign in, show ID and leave all cameras and phones at the front desk. Sometimes people are annoyed because they left their ID in the car -- but that only happens the first time they visit us! I have many signs up and we point to them, share that our certification in our industry requires this amount of security. Our receptionist keeps a cheerful banter going, but NO ONE gets past her!

Posted by: Melanie | August 29, 2008 at 02:18 PM

At the previous company I worked for all visitors were required to sign in, receive a badge and to be escorted while in the facility. Fortunately it was easy to enforce the signing in and receiving a badge because we had a door between the waiting room and the work area and the receptionist had to "buzz" you in. We never had anyone complain about signing in - there was a sign on the outside door stating "please sign in at the receptionist desk".

If you are getting complaints I would simply but firmly state that it is company policy that all visitors sign in so we know who is in the building at any given time. Do not make any exception - that is where you start to run into trouble.

Posted by: tlg | August 29, 2008 at 02:34 PM

We work in an environment which has confidential technology. Visitors must sign in and wait for the host to accompany them out of the lobby area. I joking tell visitors that this so we will know how many extra body parts to look for in case of an explosion. I really don't have a problem with visitors signing in. My biggest problem is with visitors who drop in without an appointment, especially the ones who say " I know he said he was too busy to see me today, but I was in the area anyway and thought I would check."

Posted by: SSB | September 02, 2008 at 03:19 PM

I would just state that it is the company policy and your responsibility is that are visitors sign in and receive a visitors pass and that you apologize for any inconvenience. Each company has their own reasons depending on the type of work they do, but I would bet money they sign in at other companies too :)

You can always fall back on the in case of an emergency the rescue team will need to know who is in the building, and that is true

Posted by: | September 02, 2008 at 03:33 PM

From the other side of the coin...why I dislike signing in, especially at a customer or supplier location: I don't like that my competitors may see that I was on the premises and that I supply parts or are receiving services from the company I am visiting. In my industry, it can be advantageous to have that anonymity. I would be so much more receptive and comfortable if I could fill out a stand-alone form to hand over (or drop in a box) rather than putting my info in a book that all the world can see. I have never had a problem with wearing a badge. Just a little insight...for what it is worth.

Posted by: Julie Hartmus | September 05, 2008 at 03:38 PM

I like all of the previous information. In a nutshell: have signs made and prominently displayed; have the person in your company who will be seeing this visitor forewarn him/her that it is a requirement of the company to sign in and get a badge so that person will need to bring to the reception area a picture ID; explain that without the ID and without signing in properly, there will be NO entry and stick to it; remind the person about fire issues, insurance issues, and security issues in this day and age.

Posted by: Bonnie | September 07, 2008 at 12:25 PM