

Reclassification of hotels: Some procedural key points

All hotels who are already classified in any of the star categories should be aware of all procedures for reclassification and should take care that they are fully complied with. Any amendments in the guidelines or changes in the procedure are always carried in the Newsletter section of FHRAI Magazine. These should not only be read carefully but copies should be maintained in the file. In this connection, we are bringing to your notice Circular Nos. 6-HRACC(3)/87 and 22-HRACC(1)/87 dated 11th October, 2001 which were carried in the November-December 2000 issue.

We have recently seen some letters from the Department of Tourism whereby certain hotels have been declassified and have also been given a showcause notice for explaining the position. This has happened in some cases because those hotels did not apply for reclassification prior to three months of expiry of the last classification. In some cases, an inspection was carried out by the Hotel Restaurant Approval and Classification Committee (HRACC) who gave some instructions for compliance, like making up of some shortcomings, but a compliance report was not sent in the stipulated time. In such cases the hotels are being de-classified and removed from the list of classified hotels. Please bear in mind the following points in this connection:

1. If your hotel has already been classified there is always a date up to which the classification is valid. You must apply for reclassification in the prescribed proforma including a demand draft of the requisite amount three months prior to this validity date. The application for reclassification should be sent not within three months, it should be sent three months prior to the validity date.
2. If the hotel has been inspected and some shortcomings have been pointed out there is always a letter from the Department of Tourism pointing out shortcomings and giving the specified time for compliance. You must take it seriously and send a compliance report within the stipulated time. We understand this time is determined in consultation with the hotel and there should be no problem in making the compliance. If, however, there is any problem or unavoidable circumstances, the hotel must approach the DOT for an extension of the time giving full reasons for the same.
3. If the Inspection Committee finds shortcomings which are considered serious and hotel is declassified or downgraded through a letter from DOT, then the hotel will stay de-classified or downgraded. It is, however, free to reapply for classification for the desired category again. There is no fixed time after which the application can be submitted from the date of the rejection letter. The hotel can reapply whenever it is ready for satisfying the committee for the desired category. However, in such cases a fresh application, needs to be submitted, and the prescribed fee will have to be paid again. This will not be required in those cases where a compliance report was asked for the shortcomings and the hotel was not declassified as such.
4. The prescribed application format also requires that all NOCs e.g. trade licence, fire safety certificate etc must be submitted with the application. If they are not complete or are not revalidated, they can also be shown at the time of inspection. In fact, HRACC gives a further period of 15 days for submitting the revalidated licences/NOCs.
5. If the hotel applies within the stipulated time i.e. three months prior to the validity date, and the inspection is done subsequently or the approval letter is sent after the due date the hotel is classified from the date of the validity of last classification. Even if the compliance report has been asked and the hotel has not received an approval letter or a provisional approval, the hotel will still be reclassified from the date of last validity so long as compliance is made to the satisfaction of DOT. If, however, the hotel applies after the date of validity of the last classification, then the reclassification may be granted from the date of the inspection and not from the date of last

validity. If there are any gaps when the hotel remains declassified any consequences for it will have to be borne by the hotel.

6. The DOT circular No.22-HRACC(1)/87 dated 11th October, 2000 says that the hotel must be prepared for inspection once it applies for classification/reclassification. Such an inspection can also be done within the three months of the validity date even if the hotel has not applied for reclassification. However, in case of application, the hotel is not allowed to ask for deferment of date of inspection for any reason. The idea is that the hotel must keep its facilities and services up to the mark and there is no reason for not being prepared for inspection. Even if some renovation is going on in the hotel the HRACC can take that into account and it need not be an adverse factor for judging the hotel as per the guidelines.

7. The same guidelines and all the above instructions also apply to 1,2 and 3 star hotels for which inspections are done by the State Level Committees under coordination of the concerned Regional Director.