

International SPA Association's

Global Best Practices

For the Spa Industry



INTERNATIONAL SPA ASSOCIATION®



www.experienceispa.com

As the voice of the spa industry, it is critical for the International SPA Association (ISPA) to recommend best practices to encourage spas to work towards and maintain a high level of professionalism. As the spa industry expands globally, consumers expect a consistent and satisfying experience. As outlined in this document, one crucial element to becoming a great spa is providing an excellent experience.

In order to ensure that all member spas provide quality service to their guests, ISPA has adopted these global best practices. ISPA, as your global partner in wellness, puts forth these best practices for review and implementation to its diverse audience and membership.

These best practices are meant to provide guidance to all spas globally and are not regulated by ISPA. This document will be updated and changed as needed. ISPA values the diverse and rich spa cultures around the world, and acknowledges that many recommendations in this document are subject to local interpretation, laws and customs. It is recommended that all spas check with their local, state and federal authorities to comply with local laws.

Definition of Spa

Spas are places devoted to overall well-being through a variety of professional services that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit.

Included in the Global Best Practices:

- Human Resources and Staff
- Safety: Facility
- Safety: Staff
- Safety: Guests
- Guest Relations
- Service and Guest Experience
- Accounting and Business Practices
- ISPA Code of Conduct and Ethics
- Sustainability
- Resources

Human Resources and Staff

- Staff, when hired, are provided with a staff handbook, the content of which is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.
- Staff, when hired, are provided a full orientation and tour of the spa facility.
- Staff is provided with and/or given access to regularly updated treatment procedures and product manuals for all treatment modalities, including the spa's menu.
- Staff is given a position/responsibility description, including physical requirements, upon hire.
- Staff members are provided with at least one annual evaluation of their job performance. A 90-day evaluation is also recommended.
- Regularly scheduled team meetings are held to keep all staff up-to-date on company policies, procedures, and training opportunities, as well as the performance of the facility.
- All specialized staff, such as fitness instructors, personal trainers, massage therapists, estheticians, nail technicians, hairstylists, nutritionists, physiologists, psychologists and medical technicians, comply with applicable international, federal, state and local regulations with regard to licensing, registration and appropriate certification and education.
 - **Resource:** *ISPA Spa Operations Manual*
- During operating hours, it is highly recommended that at least one scheduled, on-site staff member has current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automatic external defibrillator (AED) certification, as well as first aid certification.
- The human resources director (or equivalent) measures turnover rates of spa positions and conducts confidential exit interviews. This information is shared with spa management and used to improve operational practices.
- An organizational chart showing clear reporting relationships is kept current and made available to all staff.
- Staff is hired without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicapping condition, marital status or political affiliation.
- Staff is provided with appropriate benefits and corresponding information that could include vacation, sick leave and medical time off.
- Staff is provided with a safe location to store their personal belongings while in the workplace.

Safety: Facility

- A first-aid kit is properly stocked and readily available at all times. Staff is aware of first-aid kit locations.
- In compliance with international, federal, state and local regulations, fire extinguishers are available. Staff is aware of all extinguisher locations and is trained on their proper use.
- A written emergency plan is posted in plain view at all appropriate staff stations. Routine evacuation drills are regularly scheduled. The plan includes standard emergency procedures for specific incidents such as power outages, fire, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes and other natural disasters as well as criminal and/or acts of terror. Phone numbers of local police, fire and emergency medical assistance are visible and easily accessible.
- A safe exit plan from each room is established and posted within full view of all occupants.
- All procedures for cleaning and maintenance are in accordance with applicable international, federal, state and local regulations, and complete with appropriate manufacturer's guidelines.
- All floor surfaces (e.g., pool areas, wet treatment rooms and locker rooms) are designed and constructed to accommodate the intended activities for each area, and promote safety.
- Signage is posted to alert and educate guests about possible risks and practices as needed in areas such as: exercise studios, pools, wet areas, saunas, steam rooms, whirlpools, racquet sports courts and any other potentially hazardous area.
- The spa has an ongoing monitoring system for ensuring appropriate control of temperatures in all areas where guests are exposed to high thermal stress (e.g., saunas, steam rooms, whirlpools and exercise rooms).
- The spa's facilities and operating procedures are in written form, updated regularly and shared with staff. These procedures comply with all applicable international, federal, state and local regulations.
- If the spa includes fitness and weight training equipment, well-trained staff is available to provide assistance and instruction in the proper and effective use of such equipment.
- The spa has a current risk management program in place that is communicated to management and staff, and updated on a consistent basis.
- The spa has an up-to-date file of all MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheets) for all chemical products used within the spa. This includes cleaning products as well as spa treatment products. The information is readily available to all staff.

- It is the responsibility of the spa to provide clean, fresh, healthy water for all guest experiences and to comply with local regulations.
- The spa facility is maintained in a clean and sanitary condition to prevent illness and/or disease.

Safety: Staff

- During hours of operation and for all physically challenging, supervised activities held both on and off site, it is highly recommended (or as required by local laws) that at least one scheduled staff member has current CPR, AED and first aid certification.
- Staff members who perform advanced techniques and/or use advanced technology are appropriately trained and use equipment in compliance with the manufacturer's instructions and guidelines.
- There is appropriate supervision for medical spa procedures in compliance with international, federal, state and local regulations,
- Products, equipment and instruments used in spa services and treatments are cleaned, disinfected, stored and used in compliance with the manufacturer's instructions and guidelines. Staff is trained on how to handle products and provide first aid if needed.
- MSDS are provided for all treatment and chemical products.
- Clean and sanitized equipment, instruments and supplies are provided for each guest (e.g., sheets, towels, etc.).
- The spa has a current policy and procedure in place regarding sexual harassment. This includes among staff members and also by guests.
 - **Resource:** *ISPA Risk Management for Spas Course*
- The spa has employee rights posted in staff common areas (complies with all international, federal, state and local regulations).

Safety: Guests

- Guests are safe from having items stolen and will not be harassed or sexually assaulted.
- If alcohol is served within the spa, there is appropriate consideration and awareness to limits served as well as consideration of appropriate government licensing needed.

Guest Relations

- Written material is provided that accurately depicts the facility and all its programs as well as rates, deposits, customary tipping and gratuities, cancellation policy and grace period for refunds.
- Spa guests are given an orientation and tour of the spa as soon as possible upon arrival.
- Guests complete a confidential screening questionnaire and/or have a verbal dialogue with their provider regarding any potential contraindications to services.
- Confidential guest information is filed properly and complies with all international, federal, state and local regulations regarding the storage of such information.
- All guest history and information is considered private and confidential, and such information is not disclosed by the spa or its co-workers without the proper consent of the individual, unless such a disclosure is legally required.
- Guests are able to express their concerns and suggestions regarding facilities, staff and programming through a feedback system designed to encourage guest feedback (e.g., comment cards). Feedback is regularly analyzed by spa management and used for process improvement.
- The spa promptly responds to guest complaints and works to resolve them in as timely and efficiently a manner as possible.
- Staff members clearly understand the spa's guest service processes and goals.
- Staff members recommend a home care regimen (products and usage) based on their spa experience.
- The spa has current liability insurance or the equivalent for the purpose of guest protection.
 - **Resource:** *ISPA Risk Management for Spas Course*
- Spa programs are flexible to accommodate a variety of individual goals and needs.
- Spa programs and menus are designed to encourage health-enhancing activities and wellness while acknowledging the guest's current health status.
- Spa facilities and services are accessible to guests with disabilities as appropriate.

Service and the Guest Experience

- Staff members are courteous, helpful, knowledgeable and articulate.
- Staff is committed to anticipating the guests' needs and serving them.

- Staff believes in the concept of spa wellness, and is willing and able to share these philosophies with guests.
- Staff members guard the guest's privacy and modesty through proper draping techniques during spa treatments, and provide gender-specific changing areas when applicable.
- Staff is attentive to preserving the spa environment and atmosphere at all times.
- Potential enhancements to the service/guest experience could include a relaxation area, wet area, swimming pool, fitness equipment and classes, café, locker room and product amenities, hot tub, co-ed facilities, retail boutique, meditation area, steam room, sauna, wellness education, as well as outdoor elements such as gardens, labyrinths and hiking trails.

Accounting and Business Practices

- The spa complies with all international, federal, state and local regulations relating to accurate financial reporting.
 - **Resource:** *ISPA Uniform System of Financial Reporting for Spas*
- The spa provides fair wages to all employees based on legal requirements.
 - **Resource:** *Wagewatch*
 - **Resource:** *ISPA Compensation Workbook*
- The spa will incorporate sound accounting practices in the following areas:
 - Retail management
 - Professional inventory and product portion control
 - Budgeting (annually, monthly)
 - Forecasting
 - Yield management
 - Payroll processing

ISPA Code of Conduct and Ethics

- Spas observe the ISPA Code of Conduct.

Although there is a wide array of spas around the world, each offering a unique experience, all are devoted to enhancing overall well-being through a variety of professional services that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit. To enjoy your spa experience to the fullest, observe the ISPA Code of Conduct, act responsibly and be aware that common sense and personal awareness can help ensure your satisfaction, comfort and safety, as well as that of others. The Code of Conduct is available in English, French, Traditional Chinese and Simplified Chinese.

As a Spa Guest, it is your responsibility to:

- communicate your preferences, expectations and concerns;
- communicate complete and accurate health information and reasons for your visit;
- treat staff and other guests with courtesy and respect;
- use products, equipment and therapies as directed;
- engage in efforts to preserve the environment; and
- adhere to the spa's published policies and procedures.

As a Spa Guest, you have the right to:

- a clean, safe, sanitary and comfortable environment;
- stop a treatment at any time, for any reason;
- be treated with consideration, dignity and respect;
- confidential treatment of your disclosed health information;
- trained staff members who respectfully conduct treatments according to treatment protocols and the spa's policies and procedures;
- ask questions about your spa experience; and
- information regarding staff training, licensing and certification.

Officially endorsed and prepared in partnership by: International SPA Association and Resort Hotel Association.

- Spa is guided in all activities by truth, accuracy, fairness and integrity.
- Spa pledges support to ISPA and agrees to pursue and support its objectives.
- Spa pledges to keep informed on the latest techniques, developments and knowledge pertinent to professional improvement.
- Spa assists fellow members in reaching personal and professional fulfillment.
- Spa utilizes every opportunity to enhance the public image of the spa industry.

Sustainability

- When possible, the spa has in place policies and procedures to protect the environment, thus protecting our planet for the future.
- To grow this industry toward a deeper connection with the natural laws of nature, the spa embraces the three pillars of sustainability: **planet, people and prosperity**.

Planet

It is the spa's purpose and responsibility to work with the natural world to promote its healing properties while conducting business in a way that sustains the life of the planet and thus humanity.

People

To serve others, the spa staff members must keep themselves physically, mentally and spiritually healthy by maintaining their overall health and well-being.

Prosperity

Member spa supports sustainability through education on more efficient uses of energy and resources, thus lowering the cost of operations.

Resources

- **Certified Spa Supervisor Program**
 - www.experienceispa.com/education-resources/educational-programs/certification
- **Spa Retail Management**
 - www.experienceispa.com/education-resources/educational-programs/spa-retail-course/
- **Risk Management**
 - www.experienceispa.com/education-resources/educational-programs/risk-management/
- **SPA: A Comprehensive Introduction**
 - www.experienceispa.com/education-resources/publications-courses-studies/comprehensive-introduction/
- **USFR—Uniform System of Financial Reporting for Spas**
 - www.experienceispa.com/education-resources/publications-courses-studies/financial-management/
- **Compensation Workbook**
 - www.experienceispa.com/education-resources/publications-courses-studies/compensation/
- **Wagewatch**
 - www.experienceispa.com/education-resources/publications-courses-studies/compensation/
- **Spa Operations Manual**
 - www.experienceispa.com/education-resources/publications-courses-studies/operations/
- **Job Bank**
 - www.experienceispa.com/education-resources/jobbank/
- **National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork**
 - www.ncbtmb.org

- **American Massage Therapy Association**
 - www.amtamassage.org
- **Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals**
 - www.abmp.com
- **United States Board of Cosmetology**
 - www.experienceispa.com/education-resources/facts-and-figures/cosmetology-boards/
- **Green Spa Network**
 - <http://greenspanetwork.org/>
- **International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association**
 - www.ihrsa.org
- **IDEA Health & Fitness Association**
 - www.ideafit.com
- **Ideas for spas to be green and sustainable**
 - LED light bulbs
 - Filtered water instead of bottled water
 - Corn-based cups rather than plastic cups
 - Organic detergents and cleaning products
 - Organic treatment products
 - Re-usable implements that can be washed and sanitized
 - Purchase in bulk rather than small containers
 - Turn off lights in rooms that are not in use
 - Turn off all electronics, such as computers, at night
 - Natural chlorine generators or saline systems for pools and whirlpools
 - Bamboo or other sustainable-based elements used in towels and linens

About ISPA

Since 1991, the International SPA Association has been recognized worldwide as the professional organization and voice of the spa industry, representing more than 3,200 health and wellness facilities and providers in 83 countries. ISPA works to advance the spa industry by providing invaluable educational and networking opportunities, promoting the value of the spa experience and speaking as the authoritative voice to foster professionalism and growth.

Members encompass the entire arena of the spa experience, from resort/hotel, destination, mineral springs, medical, cruise ship, club and day spas to service providers such as physicians, wellness instructors, nutritionists, massage therapists and product suppliers.

For more information about the International SPA Association, please call 1.888.651.ISPA (4772) or visit www.experienceispa.com.