



# Choosing a Time Clock

A complete guide to the various types of time clocks & how to choose the right one for your hotel.

# Introduction

**Far too often, hotels overspend on labor.** Many times, it's due to flawed timekeeping procedures which leave room for transcription error, interpretation error and even intentional error – essentially company theft on the employee's part.

In addition to overpaying (or even underpaying) employees, faulty timekeeping methods run hotels the risk of not complying with labor regulations regarding proof of attendance. This is why it is vital to have a good time and attendance system in place, and an integral part of this is choosing the right time clock.



# Types of Time Clocks



**There are several time clock options available:**

## **Web-based time clock software**

With web-based time clocks, employees clock in and out using a designated computer at the hotel. Any computer can be used, as long as it has the ability to remain connected to the internet. The computer should be in a location that is easily accessible and will cause the least amount of disturbance to surrounding hotel employees. Multiple computers (or even tablets) can be used as well, as the data is collected in one central database.

Oftentimes, this is the most economical time clock option, and many time and attendance providers will offer a web-based time clock solution for free with the purchase of their time and attendance software.

As this is a web-based system, basic computer skills are required in order for employees to clock in and out. Staff members will also have to be able to memorize a username and password in order to log in to the system.

# Types of Time Clocks

## **PIN time clock**

PIN time clocks allow employees to clock in or out of each shift using their personal identification number (hence where the acronym PIN came from). This time clock is one of the most affordable options for hotels who choose to use a physical time clock rather than a web-based option.

PIN time clocks require a phone line connection to transmit punches; many hoteliers will connect the device to a fax machine.

## **Magnetic swipe**

Magnetic swipe cards work just like credit cards – hotel staff members swipe their individual card through the reader to clock in or out. Each employee's card has a unique number encoded in the magnetic strip, so when the card is swiped, the clock can detect exactly who is attempting to punch. This is the most popular time clock among Hotel Effectiveness customers.

Magnetic swipe time clocks require an Ethernet connection to transmit employee punches, and sometimes require assistance from an internet service provider for connection and/or firewall issues.

## **Proximity badge**

Proximity badge time clocks are a fast and easy way for employees to clock in and out. They simply bring their card within a few inches of the badge reader and the clock will register the punch.

Like the magnetic swipe time clocks, this time clock requires an Ethernet connection to transmit employee punches.

\* \* \*

**Do you have problems with employees clocking in for one another, aka buddy punching? Turn the page for our solution!**

# Types of Time Clocks

## **Biometric time clocks**

Biometric time clocks are the most advanced options available for keeping track of employee time, and typically the most costly up front. These Ethernet-connected time clocks are able to detect the exact employee who is clocking in or out using their own physical features. This eliminates costly buddy punches, as employees will no longer be able to clock each other in or out fraudulently – potentially saving hotels money in the long run if there is an issue of buddy punching.

One factor to consider, however, is some employees don't like this method, as they see it as an invasion of their personal security.

Two of the most common biometric time clocks are fingerprint clocks and hand punch clocks.

## **Fingerprint time clock**

Fingerprint time clocks are biometric clocks that allow staff members to clock in and out using exactly what you would expect – their fingerprint. Employees simply press a button for either clocking in or out, then place the tip

of their index finger on the reader. Once their print is recognized, their punch is confirmed.

Since no two people have the same fingerprints, the time clock knows precisely who is clocking in or out, so there is no need for employees to enter pin numbers or any other unique identifiers. However, it is important to note employees who perform a significant amount of labor with their hands (ie. housekeepers, housemen, and maintenance employees) may have difficulty using this time clock, as their fingerprints tend to become worn and unrecognizable at times. In these situations, managers can create an exception to allow those employees to clock in and out with a PIN.

## **Hand punch time clock**

Hand punch time clocks are biometric clocks that measure the unique shape and size of staff members' hands. This includes length, width, thickness and surface area. The hand punch clock does not consider fingerprints, so unlike the fingerprint clock, employees who perform manual labor will not have an issue clocking in or out.

# Questions to Ask Yourself When Shopping for a Time Clock



## **How many employees at my property will need to punch in and out?**

It is important to consider the number of employees you have working at your hotel (as well as how many you anticipate having if you will be experiencing growth). The most obvious reason is to figure out how many time clocks you will need to have at your hotel. It is also extremely important because some time clocks can only handle a limited amount of employees, so it may be necessary to purchase a more advanced time clock if you have a larger number of employees.

## **What is my budget?**

The price of time clocks vary greatly, with web-based time clock options being the most economical and biometric time clocks being the most costly. In order to help reduce the cost up front, we offer a lease as well as a lease-to-own option if customers prefer not to purchase our time clocks out the gate.

# Questions to Ask Yourself When Shopping for a Time Clock

## **Do I have employees working at multiple properties?**

If you have employees that work at multiple locations, you will need to have a time clock for each property at each location. For example, if the employee's home property is property A but they go over to work at property B periodically, there will need to be a separate time clock designated for property A at property B's location for the employee to clock in and out.

## **Do I have problems with buddy punching?**

The only way to combat buddy punching is by using biometric time clocks. Although they are more expensive upfront, they will save you money in the long run.

## **What type of connection do I need in order to transmit punches to my time and attendance system?**




All time clocks, with the exception of the PIN clock, require an Ethernet connection in order to function. PIN time clocks require a phone line connection.

## **How do I get my employees set up and ready to begin clocking in and out?**

Each employee needs to be enrolled into your hotel's time clock system in order to begin punching. For the web-based time clock software, PIN time clocks, magnetic swipe clocks and proximity badge clocks, managers enroll each employee via the time and attendance system. With the biometric time clocks, managers must enroll each employee at the time clock with the employee present.





# Time Clock Options We Offer

	<b>Web Clock (Our most popular option; 35% of our hotels use Web Clock)</b>		
	<p><b>How It Works</b></p> <p>With Web Clock, your employees clock in using a designated computer<sup>1</sup> at your hotel. You may use any computer, or multiple computers, as long as they have an internet connection.</p> <p>Employees are prompted to enter a code (typically the last 4 digits of their SSN) and a password to clock in and out.</p> <p><sup>1</sup>A tablet or an iPad may also be used; only accepts punches from your hotel's IP address</p>	<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ No time clock hardware to buy or install</li> <li>✔ Punches are transmitted immediately to our servers</li> <li>✔ Highly secure - it only accepts punches from your hotel's unique IP address</li> <li>✔ Can be set up at multiple locations on property</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Requires staff to have access to a computer or other device with internet connection</li> <li>✔ Some staff may require training in basic computer skills</li> <li>✔ Web Clock is a website, so if the internet goes down, Web Clock is not accessible</li> </ul>
	<b>Punch Clock 1 (20% of our hotels choose this option)</b>		
	<p><b>How It Works</b></p> <p>This entry-level time clock is similar to a credit card reader that plugs into a phone line (often plugged into the fax machine).</p> <p>Employees can either clock in using a PIN number or you can purchase magnetic swipe badges.</p>	<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ An exceptional value</li> <li>✔ Extremely reliable and low maintenance</li> <li>✔ Plug-n-play installation</li> <li>✔ Easy for employees to learn to use</li> <li>✔ Stores punches even if it loses connectivity</li> <li>✔ Lifetime warranty</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Punches are transmitted 3 times per day rather than real-time (can be manually transmitted anytime)</li> <li>✔ Requires a regular analog phone line (can be shared with a fax machine) which may limit where you can locate this clock</li> </ul>
	<b>Punch Clock 2 (10% of our hotels choose this option)</b>		
	<p><b>How It Works</b></p> <p>Punch Clock 2 uses a standard Ethernet network port for internet connection. It includes an advanced processor and upgraded memory.</p> <p>Employees can either clock in using a PIN number or you can purchase proximity badges.</p>	<p><b>Pros</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Punches transmit real-time</li> <li>✔ Easy for employees to learn to use</li> <li>✔ Stores punches even if it loses connectivity</li> <li>✔ Usually plug-n-play installation</li> <li>✔ Lifetime warranty</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ If your network has a firewall, you may need to contact your network provider for assistance with connecting this clock</li> </ul>



# Time Clock Options We Offer

Finger Scan Clock (30% of our hotels choose this option)		
How It Works	Pros	Cons
 <p>This biometric fingerprint time clock uses a standard Ethernet network port for internet connection.</p> <p>Employees clock in by using their fingerprint. A built-in color screen helps employees position their finger correctly for an accurate scan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Eliminates employee 'buddy punching'</li> <li>✔ Punches transmit real-time</li> <li>✔ Stores punches even if it loses connectivity</li> <li>✔ Great value for a biometric time clock</li> <li>✔ Lifetime warranty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ If your network has a firewall, you may need to contact your network provider for assistance with connecting this clock</li> <li>✔ Managers will have to register each employee and each new hire's fingerprint in the clock</li> <li>✔ Some employees do not like biometric time clocks</li> <li>✔ Some housekeeping and maintenance employees may have poor quality fingerprints and could be required to use a PIN</li> </ul>
Hand Punch Clock (5% of our hotels choose this option)		
How It Works	Pros	Cons
 <p>This biometric hand punch time clock uses a standard Ethernet network port for internet connection.</p> <p>Employees clock in by using their hand. The system records and verifies an employee's punch by using hand geometry for the size and shape of their hand, not by their fingerprints.</p> <p>To reduce the potential spread of illness, this time clock integrates the platen, keypad and chassis with an antimicrobial agent to reduce bacteria build-up by up to 99.9% over a 24-hour period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ Eliminates employee 'buddy punching'</li> <li>✔ Easy for employees to learn to use</li> <li>✔ Punches transmit real-time</li> <li>✔ Stores punches even if it loses connectivity</li> <li>✔ Does not use fingerprint verification, so employees with poor fingerprints won't have an issue clocking in, like with Finger Scan</li> <li>✔ Lifetime warranty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✔ If your network has a firewall, you may need to contact your network provider for assistance with connecting this clock</li> <li>✔ Managers will have to register each employee and each new hire's hand in the clock to allow them to clock in or out</li> <li>✔ Some employees do not like biometric time clocks</li> </ul>

# Contact Us

**Contact Hotel Effectiveness at [answers@hoteleffectiveness.com](mailto:answers@hoteleffectiveness.com) or +1 (678) 325-1150 for more information about the time clocks we offer, as well as our suite of industry-leading labor management tools!**

Since 2007, Hotel Effectiveness is the only company that provides a complete suite of labor management products designed exclusively for the hotel industry. Their innovative approach and easy-to-use tools have helped hundreds of hotels achieve immediate results and incredible returns. From economy hotels to large convention hotels, their solutions are a fit for all types of properties. Hotel Effectiveness is used across every major hotel brand.

**Want to take an inside look at our software?**

**Schedule a Demo Today!**



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