

Statement from Applebee's President Mike Archer

I appreciate the chance to explain our franchisee's action in this unfortunate situation.

Please let me assure you that Applebee's and every one of our franchisees values our hard working team members and the amazing job they do serving our guests. We recognize the extraordinary effort required and the tremendous contribution they make, and appreciate your recognition and support of our colleagues.

At the same time, as I know you will agree, the guests who visit Applebee's -- people like you -- expect and deserve to be treated with professionalism and care in everything we do. That is a universal standard in the hospitality business. That includes respecting and protecting the privacy of every guest, which is why our franchisees who own and operate Applebee's have strict policies to protect personal information -- even guest's names.

With that in mind, here is what happened in St. Louis:

- A guest questioned the tip automatically attached to her large party's bill by writing: "I give God 10%. Why do you get 18?" on the check.
- A different server, who did not even wait on the group, photographed the receipt, posted the photo online and commented about the incident.
- The guest subsequently heard from friends who identified her from the posting, where her name is clearly visible, and the restaurant was notified. There was no further communication with the guest.
- The team member was asked about posting the receipt and admitted she was responsible.
- When she was hired, the team member was provided the franchisee's employee hand book which includes their social media policy and states:

"Employees must honor the privacy rights of APPLEBEE'S and its employees by seeking permission before writing about or displaying internal APPLEBEE'S happenings that might be considered to be a breach of privacy and confidentiality. This shall include, but not be limited to, posting of photographs, video, or audio of APPLEBEE'S employees or its customers, suppliers, agents or competitors, without first obtaining written approval from the Vice President of Operations." The policy goes on to specify "Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment."

- As a result of her admission to violating a clear company policy intended to safeguard guests, the team member is no longer employed by the franchisee.

Our franchisees are committed to acting in the best interests of guests and team members. This is a regrettable situation and we wish it had never happened. However, the disregard for an important policy left the franchisee no choice but to take the action they did. I recognize that you may still disagree with the decision, but I hope this may have provided some additional insight.

<http://news.applebees.com/2013-02-01-Statement-from-Applebees-President-Mike-Archer>