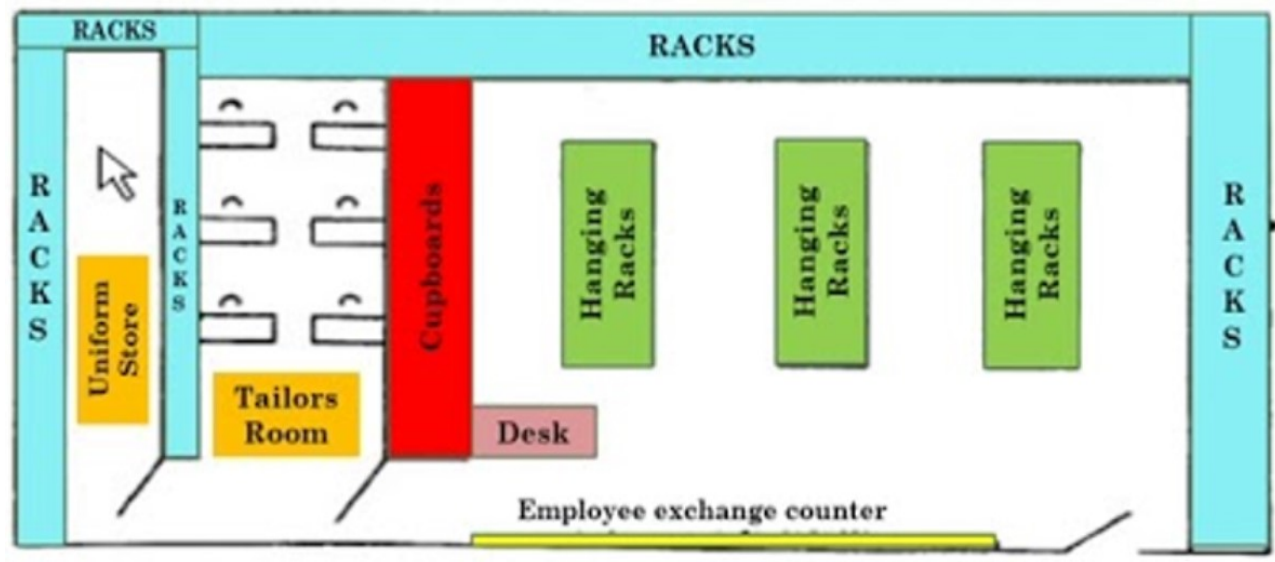


MODULE 3: STAFF UNIFORM

Providing uniforms for hotel staff is one way of ensuring proper grooming, thereby reflecting the standard of the hotel and creating a good impression on the guest. Having a uniform creates a sense of orderliness and enables the guest to identify staff and their position in the organization. To the employee, it is a status symbol, creating a sense of belonging and thereby boosting employee morale. Apart from the aesthetic appeal, uniforms are frequently designed to suit the task that is carried out.

Uniforms play a very crucial role in establishing and reinforcing the image of a hotel or restaurant. After all, other aspects of housekeeping are inanimate, material things. It is the people who bring warmth and friendliness into these spaces and these people are the employees of the hotel. Ill-conceived and poorly co-ordinate uniforms worn by hotel staff can create a jarring note in the entire image projected by the hotel.

Layout of Uniform Room



Equipment Used in Uniform Room

- Racks
- Mobile trolleys

- Ironing board with iron
- Hangers
- Work table
- Trolleys (for transporting uniforms)
- Marking machine
- Telephone
- Pen & pencil
- Computer system
- Supervisors desk
- Shelves

People working in the area

- Uniform room attendant
- Tailor
- Seamstress
- Uniform room manager

Activities of Uniform Room

1. **Selection of uniform:** Terry cots are the most popular choice of uniforms as they have the advantages of both natural & synthetic fibers. Suiting materials are used for trousers and skirts. Drill is the popular choice for cook's coats and aprons as it's cool, durable and easy to maintain. Gabardine or any suiting material may be used for chef's coat, as they keep up appearance.
2. **Establishing Par level for uniforms:** When deciding the number of sets of uniforms needed by staff, the following factors are to be considered:
 - **Uniform material:** the life expectancy of a uniform is between 12 – 18 months and the material is chosen should last for expected lifespan.
 - **Nature of job:** Some jobs in the hotel are stressful in nature. These jobs include the GRA's, houseman etc. These workers may require a change of uniform more often.

- **Frequency of laundering:** depending on how often the uniforms are sent to the laundry and whether laundry is in-house or a contracted service would influence the number of sets required.
- 3. **Issue of uniforms:** In case of new employees, uniforms are issued against uniform issue slips received from the personnel department. The employee is required to sign for his/her particular uniform. Then, the uniform is issued from the uniform room, where the name of the dept and items are entered in the register and signature of employees is taken.
- 4. **Collection of soiled uniforms:** When employees exchange their soiled uniforms with a clean one, their soiled uniforms are collected in the trolley.
- 5. **Counting and sorting of uniforms:** Soiled uniforms are counted for a number of sets and sorting is done on the basis of dept, designation and colour.
- 6. **Dispatch of soiled uniforms to laundry:** Once sorting has been done, uniforms are sent to the laundry.
- 7. **Receipt of fresh uniform from laundry:** when uniforms have been laundered, they are sent back to the uniform room for storage and reuse.
- 8. **Sorting of fresh uniform:** Sorting is done on the basis of dept, designation.
- 9. **Uniform storage:** Fresh uniforms received from laundry by linen room are stored according to DEPARTMENT'S NAME, EMPLOYEES DESIGNATION & SERIAL NUMBER OR GARMENTS COLLAR.
- 10. **Stocktaking:** Stock taking is a physical verification of all uniforms in the cycle at periodic intervals or when accounting books are closed at end of the year. Overages or shortages can be determined by variances in physical counts.

Uses or advantages of providing staff uniforms:

1. Hotel ensures a well-groomed appearance for staff.
2. They help to create an atmosphere. For example, a uniform may match the décor or the theme of the property.

3. They help identify the hotel staff and their position to the guest.
4. They help differentiate between staff and guests.
5. If made in the right design for work, they provide comfort for the staff.
6. They instill a feeling of belongingness and loyalty to the hotel among the staff.
7. They enhance the spirit of teamwork.
8. They allow employees to save money on working clothes and costs of laundering.
9. It is easier for staff to take up messy jobs when they know that their own clothes are not involved.
10. Some uniforms may have a protective role.
11. Some uniforms may confer prestige on the wearer.

Selection and designing of uniforms

Points to be considered while designing uniform:

- General profile of the employee
- Image and identity of the property
- Comfort in wear
- Purpose of work
- Appearance & style
- Climatic conditions of the place
- Budget & value for money
- Fabric
- Ease of availability of material
- Staff turnover

The following points should be kept in mind while designing uniforms –

1) Comfort (size and stitching)

Since the wearer has to wear the uniform for long hours, they should be most comfortable. It should be loose enough to allow the staff to perform all tasks efficiently without causing

impediments. Tight clothes restrict movement while causing continuous irritation and physical discomfort and result in reduced output and poor job performance. Staff whose jobs involve carrying heavy suitcases, balancing food trays, or any reaching, lifting and stretching need space or stretch room under the arms, across the back and around the waist and chest.

2) Practicality (usefulness of design features, pockets, etc.)

Besides comfort, certain other points need to be kept in mind. Pockets, collars, belts or sash designs should be carefully thought out. Restaurant staff needs pockets to be roomy enough for holding order-taking pads, etc. Straight pockets on the side, in jackets or trousers, are convenient since items do not crumble or break or spill out upon leaning or bending forward over a table or counter. Slanted pockets on the side seam are unsuitable for putting in the paper, etc. easily.

Collars and cuffs should be smooth and unpuckered, not too tight or stiff. Accessories should be avoided as far as possible since they make laundering difficult. They also have a tendency to get lost or misplaced creating an incomplete look appearing very shabby. Zips are more convenient than buttons and hooks. Trouser and shirt combinations work best for most strenuous jobs for both genders.

3) Durability and ease of maintenance (type of fabric used)

The type of fabric used will differ with the location of the employee. The requirements of a chef working in a hot kitchen will be different from those of a front office assistant in the air-conditioned lobby.

Various fabrics are available according to their launderability, comfort and ease of maintenance.

- COTTON – 100% cotton items are advisable for hot, uncomfortable areas especially kitchens since they ‘breathe’ and are cooler. Pure cotton is difficult to maintain so unions or blends of cotton and synthetics can be used.
- WOOL – is a requirement in cooler temperatures (air conditioning) and is indicative of status. Blended or pure wool can be used for suiting. This needs dry-cleaning and is therefore expensive to maintain. These are frequently used only for management positions.
- SILK – is another fabric commonly used for the female supervisory and management staff. It is commonly used for restaurant hostesses, front office staff and housekeeping supervisors.
- RAYON – is another popular fabric, especially when blended with other fibres.

- **NYLON** – has good washability but develops static, tending to stick to the body in hot areas as it allows no circulation of air.
- **TERRYCOT** – most popular choice for uniforms as they have the advantages of both natural and synthetic fibres.
- **DRILL** – drill cotton is the popular choice for chef coats and aprons as it is cool, durable and easy to maintain.
- **GABERDINE** – popular suiting material, as they keep up appearances.

4) Suitability (with regard to individual appearance)

The uniforms must be designed to suit the average individual rather than a specific body type. This means that the uniform should look equally attractive to a thin person, medium body type or a large-proportioned individual.

5) Appearance/Aesthetics (colours, design, styles)

The uniform must harmonize with the décor by blending or contrasting. The colour and style should coordinate with the ambience of the location or work area. For example, in the lobby, the uniforms of all the lobby staff should be coordinated with the décor and with each other.

6) Climate conditions of the place

7) Image and identity of the property

8) Budget and value for money

9) Ease of availability of fabric

10) Staff turnover. Uniforms should be re-designed periodically. This is so because wearing the same uniform for a long time becomes boring and monotonous for the employees and also present an unchanging monotonous environment for the regular guests as well. Also, when a hotel redesigns or adds an outlet with a changed or new theme, the uniforms need to be upgraded or designed accordingly. To keep track of designs used during various periods for various departments and different levels of staff, a Uniform Specification Card is used. This mentions the period during which a particular uniform design for a particular level of an employee of a department was in force and also defines the items (shirt, trousers, etc.), the fabrics, colour

contrast or combinations, the accessories (buttons, cufflinks, nameplates, cummerbunds, sashes, aprons), neckwear (cravat, ties, scarves), footwear (shoes, sandals, bellies), headgear (caps, turbans), as applicable.

Distribution

Following are the two ways for Exchange and distribution of uniforms to the staff

- A) Issuing uniforms to new employees
- B) Issuing uniforms to regular employees

A) Issuing uniforms to new employees

In the case of new employees, uniforms are issued against a specific authorization letter received from the personnel department. The employee is required to sign for his or her particular uniform. A UNIFORM ISSUE SLIP is provided to the employee by the personnel department to let him/her prove that he/she is a new employee in the organization. The uniform is then issued from the linen room, where the name of the department and the items issued are entered in the **uniform register** and the signature of the employee is taken.

Uniform register

**Taj Falaknuma Palace
Hyderabad
New uniforms issue register**

Name.....T.No.....U.No.....Dept.....

ISSUE DATE	ITEMS	EMPLOYEE SIGN.	L/K SIGN.	SHOES ISSUE	ISSUE DATE	EMPLOYEE SIGN.	L/K SIGN.	REMARK	HOD'S/ LAUNDRY MANAGER SIGN.
28.10.10	3 CHEF COT 3 PANT 3 APRON 3 CAPS			1 PAIR 8 No.	28.10.10			1 HANGER	

Uniform Issue Slip

Uniform Inventory Card	
Name _____	Date _____
Position _____	Dept. _____
Uniform _____	No. _____
<p>I understand that the uniform(s) issued me are my sole responsibility and that if I should change positions or leave the company, I will return the complete uniform(s). I authorize the company to deduct from my paycheck the cost of any missing items or the cost of repairing uniforms damaged from other than normal wear. I further understand that these uniforms will <i>NOT</i> be taken off hotel property at any time.</p>	
Employee Signature _____	
Housekeeping Signature _____	Date _____

B) Issuing uniforms to regular employees

There could be any of the following procedures involved:-

- **One on one basis:** Also known as clean for dirty basis. A uniform register is maintained by uniform staff.
- **Uniform Slip Method:** when employees deposit the soiled uniform and take the clean one on the following day, make out the uniform exchange slip in duplicate. Original slip is given to the employees and duplicate is retained in uniform slip book.
- **Master key to lockers:** Uniform attendant may be given a master key to all lockers so that at the convenient time, he can put the clean uniform and take the dirty, but this invades the privacy of employees.

- **Hanging soiled uniforms outside the lockers:** Employees hang their soiled uniforms outside the lockers and the laundry attendant can collect and replace them with the clean ones.

But in the majority of Hotels, uniforms are usually given to employees on a one-for-one basis, that is, one fresh uniform for a soiled one.

On leaving the hotel, an employee has to get a signature for ‘uniform clearance’ from the linen room supervisor, failing which the last pay cheque is withheld.

Uniform exchange procedure –

- A uniform register in which the movement of uniforms is recorded is maintained by the uniform room supervisor.
- Check the uniform being returned for any damage.
- Issue a fresh uniform strictly on a one-for-one basis (fresh for soiled).
- In some hotels, specific days may be stipulated for different departments for the convenience of uniform room.
- In case a soiled set is received and no clean uniform is issued simultaneously, a uniform exchange slip may be made out with the details of items turned in. Now, when the employee wishes to get a fresh set, he gives in the slip and receives the items stated in the slip.
- Employees should be responsible for keeping their uniforms in good condition. If the soiled uniform cannot be mended, the matter should be reported to the supervisor.
- Soiled uniforms are sorted as per item, department, fabric, the degree of soiling, etc. they are inspected, counted and dispatched to the laundry against a Daily Delivery of Uniforms Form giving details of items sent, received, the quantity and any balance still pending with the laundry.
- All uniforms should be discarded when found to be unusable and a proper record maintained to account for their absence during stocktaking.
- Uniforms should be inventoried at least quarterly.