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## **Module-1**

### **Introduction to Housekeeping Department**

#### **HOUSEKEEPING**

The housekeeping is the department of a hotel charged with cleaning and maintaining rooms and public spaces. From the time a guest checks-in in a hotel till he checks out, it is the housekeeping department which takes care of the guest by making his/her stay pleasant and comfortable.

The housekeeping crew is responsible for the daily cleaning of public rooms (lobbies, corridors, meeting rooms), private bedrooms and public washrooms. In addition, it handles the laundering of linens and guest laundry. Housekeeping also performs a minor security function by providing a "first alert" to potential guest problems while staff undertake daily guest bedroom cleaning.

#### **IMPORTANCE OF HOUSEKEEPING**

Housekeeping is an operational department in a hotel, which is responsible for cleanliness, maintenance, aesthetic upkeep of rooms, public area, back area, and surroundings. A hotel survives on the sale of room, food, beverages and other minor services such as the laundry, health club spa and so on. The sale of rooms constitutes a minimum of 50 percent of these sales.

- 1. Comfort:** Achieve the maximum efficiency possible in the care and comfort of the guests and in providing support services for the smooth running of the hotel. Every hotel spends a lot of effort in ensuring the quality of beds, mattresses, channel music, TV, air conditioner if applicable, attached bar etc. The comforts must be regularly maintained and should be properly functioning. It is the duty of the housekeeping department to ensure comfort and a welcoming atmosphere to the guests as well as strive to extend courteous, reliable and satisfactory service from staffs of all departments.
- 2. Cleanliness and Hygiene:** Ensure a high standard of cleanliness and general upkeep in all areas. Clean and well maintained areas and equipments create favorable a impression on the guest Hygiene is maintained especially in the wash rooms, toilets pool changing room, health club, etc.

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3. **Privacy:** The prime concern of any guest, irrespective of whether rich or poor, common man or celebrity, is privacy. Room windows are provided with curtains. Windows could normally overlook good scenic view, away from the prying eyes of others in the hotel or outside public. Housekeeping staffs ensure the privacy of the guests and they should be trained with proper procedures to enter the room.
  4. **Safety and Security:** Security is one of the prime concerns of a hotel guest. The housekeeping department staffs should ensure the safety and security of the guests with the help of security devices. They should also make sure that fire fighting equipments and emergency alarms are functional at all times. They should also ensure peace, quiet and noise free atmosphere in the area.
  5. **Decor:** Creating a pleasant and classy ambience is also one of the major concerns for a guest. This is not easy and requires a good eye for detail. This work is an art and the housekeeping staff is mainly responsible for creating a pleasant atmosphere.

## **FUNCTIONS OF HOUSEKEEPING**

Housekeeping department holds the responsibility of cleaning, maintenance and admirable upkeep of the hotel. The main functions of housekeeping are overall cleanliness, bed making, ensuring maintenance of the building and its infrastructure, laundry, linen management, key control, pest control, safety and security of the guests as well as the infrastructure and interior decoration. All this ensure the ambience and promotes a congenial environment. The basic function of the housekeeping is explained briefly:

### **1. Cleaning Rooms and Public Areas**

Housekeeping department cleans the rooms, wash rooms and wash basins in the room. Apart from cleaning the guest rooms, housekeeping department is also responsible for cleaning floor, terraces, elevators, elevator lobbies, corridors of guest floors, floor linen closets, mop and janitor's closets, service lobbies and service stairways, function rooms, shopping arcade, cabanas, bars, dining rooms, offices, uniform rooms, tailor rooms, upholstery, shops, store rooms and swimming pools. To be concise, the housekeeping department is responsible for the total cleanliness of a hotel.

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## **2. Bed Making**

A guest requires a comfortable bed to take rest, relax and enjoy. A bed that is well- made will provide the required comfort. Bed making is a skill that requires to be developed by the housekeeper, as it not only provides comfort to the guest, but also adds to the pleasant ambience of a guest's room. Guests should not be able to tell if anyone has slept in the room, so a clean environment and perfect bed making is major consideration of this department.

## **3. Linen Management**

One of the important jobs of the Housekeeping Department is clothes and linen management. This involves all functions from purchase of linen to laundering, storage, supplies and to condemnation. In a hotel different types of clothes and linen are used such as the bed sheets, pillow covers, napkins, towels, hand towels, table covers, curtains, cushion covers etc. All of these require regular maintenance.

## **4. Laundry Services**

It is the job of the Housekeeping Department to ensure clean and hygienic washing of all the linen items, and then distributing them to different areas of the hotel. The relationship between the housekeeping and laundry is significant for the smooth functioning of housekeeping services. One of the supporting roles of the laundry is to provide valet services to house guests.

## **5. Pest Control**

Pest Control is another major job of the Housekeeping Department. No matter how clean one keeps the surroundings, one cannot avoid the "uninvited guests" - the pests. It is not only embarrassing but also speaks badly of a hotel where one sees rats, cockroaches, and lizards running around. Therefore, pest control is one of the primary responsibilities of the housekeeping department.

## **6. Key Control**

Key control is one of the major jobs of the housekeeping department. The room keys have to be handled efficiently and safely before and after letting the room.

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## **7. Safety and Security**

The Housekeeping Department is responsible for maintaining a peaceful atmosphere in the hotel. If the guests and staff always fear for their safety and the safety of their belongings, the atmosphere will be very tense. Hence the housekeeping department staff should be aware of ways to protect himself and others, especially the guests around him and the property of the hotel from accidents and theft. Several accidents could occur at the place of work. These include fire accidents, falls, wounds, injuries, negligence in handling electrical equipment etc. It is important for all housekeeping personnel to know about first aid as they could be the first ones on the spot to give immediate attention to a guest and also an employee in trouble.

## **8. Interior Decoration**

Interior decoration is the art of creating a pleasant atmosphere in the living room with the addition of a complex of furnishings, art, and crafts, appropriately combined to achieve a planned result or design. These arts and crafts have to be well maintained by the housekeeping department.

## **9. Room Maintenance**

Good housekeeping department is just as responsible for the hotel's maintenance as an engineering department. In an ideal environment, the housekeeping staff and managers should act as the eyes and ears of the engineering department. If damaged or broken items are not reported, they can't be fixed. Proper maintenance will make the perception of cleanliness easier to maintain and reduce guest complaints.

## **10. Flower Arrangement**

Decorating flowers is a creative and stimulating art which often carries a message or theme. Flowers and indoor plants add color and beauty to a room. Florist supervisor be responsible for preparing and supervising the flower requirement for the outlets, guest rooms and public areas as requested or specified.

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## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOUSEKEEPING AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS**

The Housekeeping Department should co-ordinate and ensure maximum co-operation with other departments to provide high quality service. To be successful, a well planned work schedule should be prepared so as to ensure minimum disruption to the guests and work flow of other departments. The senior housekeeper is responsible for ensuring this by supervising a group of staff or working closely with staff from other departments.



### **🚦 Front Office**

Co-ordination with the Front Office is one of the crucial features of housekeeping operations. As soon as there are guest departures, the Front Office rings the Housekeeping Desk and reports the room numbers of vacated rooms so that Housekeeping can take them over to clean and prepare for sale. Once a room is clean, the Housekeeping Floor Supervisor rings the Front Office directly or through the Housekeeping Desk and hands over the room to front office for sale. Rooms received by Housekeeping for cleaning are called "departure rooms while cleaned rooms handed over to the Front Office for sale are called "Clear rooms. The promptness with which the above duty is performed enables the Front Office to have rooms ready to sell to a waiting customer. This is especially critical in hotels with high occupancies.

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## Personnel

Housekeeping co-ordinates with the Personnel Department for the recruitment of housekeeping staff, salary administration, indiscipline, grievance procedures, identity cards for staff, induction, transfers, promotions and exit formalities.

## Purchase

The Purchase Department procures out-of-stock items for Housekeeping such as guest supplies kept in rooms, stationery, linen of various types, detergents, etc.

## Engineering

The Housekeeping Department and the Engineering Department literally control about 90% of the energy consumed in a hotel. The two departments can create a synergetic effect to increase operational efficiency and better control of energy consumption. A close co-ordination is necessary with engineering which actually carries out the task of fixing out-of-order furniture and fixtures. As Housekeeping personnel are constantly spread throughout the hotel, checking on various things, they originate maintenance. The maintenance orders could cover a number of duties such as fused bulbs, broken furniture, plumbing not functioning in guest rooms or public bathrooms, air-conditioning not working, broken fixtures, etc. To be able to 'clear a room for sale to the Front Office, it is necessary that all malfunctioning items in a guest room are attended to promptly by Engineering. Hence close co-ordination / co-operation is necessary.

## Laundry

This is a department that can enhance the quality of housekeeping services. The responsibility of laundry to housekeeping is two-fold:

- To wash and dry clean linen and staff uniforms to a very high standard of cleanliness.
- To supply clean uniforms and linen to Housekeeping on time.

Housekeeping has to ensure that clean linen is issued to guest rooms, restaurants, health clubs, etc. as this directly reflects the quality and image of the establishment. If these are not received on time from the laundry, rooms would not be ready or restaurants would not open, etc. The Coordination becomes crucial in view of the large volume of linen and uniforms that is involved.

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## **Food and Beverage**

The restaurants and banquets constantly require clean table clothes, napkins, etc. Their staff, as well as those in the kitchen, require clean uniforms- the former because they are in guest contact and the latter due to strict standards of hygiene required in the kitchens by most governments.

## **Security**

The guest room is the most private place and a hotel goes to great lengths to ensure guest privacy and security. However, a guest can take advantage of this privacy by gambling, smuggling, etc. Housekeeping has to be alert to these goings-on, and seek the security department's intervention, if necessary.

## **Stores**

Larger hotels have a House-keeping Store that stocks housekeeping linen and supplies independently. Smaller hotels may stock them in the general store except for linen which should be issued to the housekeeping department. The co-ordination with the stores would ensure the availability of day-to-day requirements for housekeeping.

## **ROLE OF HOUSEKEEPING DEPARTMENT**

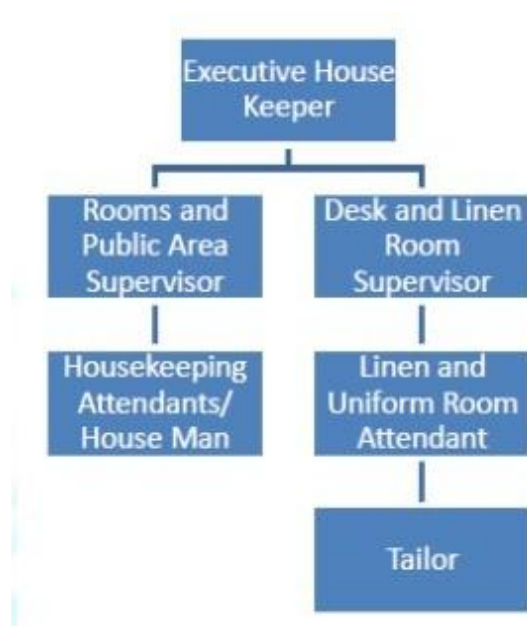
Housekeeping plays a very important role in the hospitality industry such as:

- To achieve the maximum possible efficiency in ensuring the care and comfort of the guests and in smooth running of the department.
- To establish a welcoming atmosphere and ensure courteous, reliable service from all staff of the department.
- To ensure high standards of cleanliness and general upkeep in all areas for which the department responsible.
- To provide linen in rooms, restaurants, banquet hall, conference venues, health clubs, and so on, as well as maintains an inventory for the same.
- To provide uniforms for all the staff and maintain adequate inventories for the same.
- To enter the laundering requirements of the hotel linen, staff uniforms, and guest clothing.
- To Provide and maintain the floral decorations and maintain the landscaped areas of the hotel.

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- To coordinate renovation and refurbishing of the property as and when in consultation with the management and with interior designers.
  - To deal with lost and found articles.
  - To ensure training, control, and supervision of all staff attached to the department.
  - To establish a good working relationship with other departments.
  - To ensure that safety and security regulations are made known to all staff of the department.

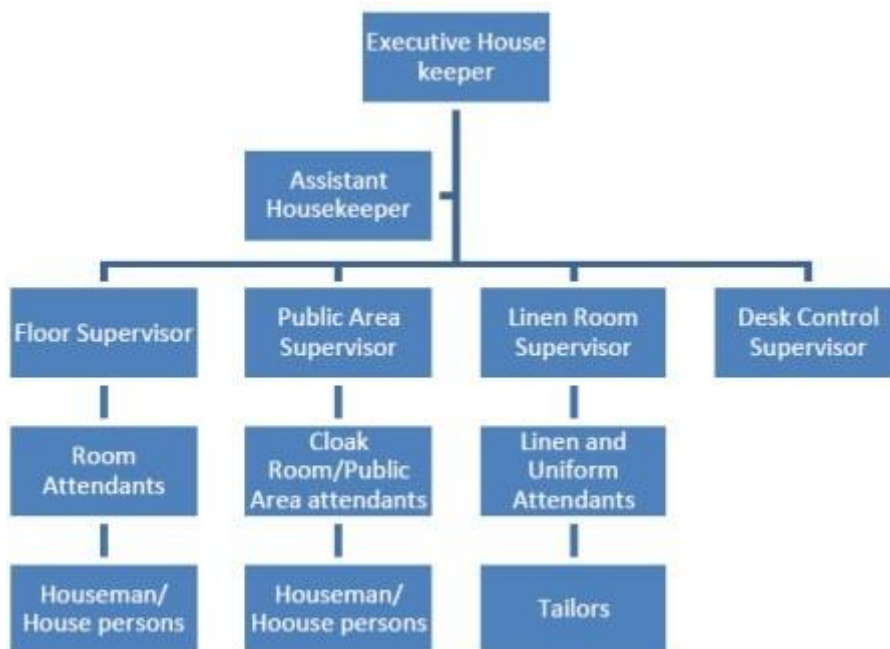
### **Hierarchy in Small, Medium, Large & Chain Hotels**

#### **SMALL HOTEL –**





**MEDIUM HOTEL –**



**LARGE HOTEL –**

