

HOUSEKEEPING PROCEDURES
FOR THE
SMALL HOSPITAL

RAYMOND BLOUNT, C.E.M.



Housekeeping Procedures

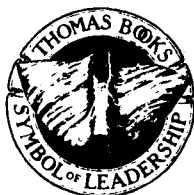
for the

Small Hospital

By

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Preface

THE housekeeping department is, so to speak, "the wrapping on the package." It is not only responsible for keeping the hospital, nursing home, etc., free from the "black hat guys," the harmful and infectious agents, but it must also maintain a neat and attractive appearance.

Informed leadership, planning, teamwork, a lot of "elbow grease," cooperation, and an adequate budget are required for effective housekeeping.

Its employees must, in addition to being competent in their own duties, be part-time public relations people, patient relations people, confessors, electricians, and maintenance people.

Gone are the days of the tired old janitor who shuffled about with broom and dust pan and rightly so. Housekeeping today is a science in itself. Employees must be trained in the use of modern equipment such as automatic scrubbers, floor machines, vacuums (dry and wet pick-up), wall washers, etc. They must know how to use various types of chemicals, and cleaning compounds, such as Quaternary Ammoniums, Phenolics, Iodophors; and also, why they are used. They should be familiar with the different types of floor finishes, strippers, and sealers. It is necessary that they be familiar with the treatment of various types of floors such as terrazzo, wood, cork, ceramic tile, vinyl, and vinyl asbestos, etc. They must know where and how isolation techniques are to be used. They must understand the overall importance of the housekeeping function.

The executive housekeeper must be a leader, supervisor, and administrator. He/she must keep well informed of changes which are constantly being made in the housekeeping field. It is of the utmost importance that the housekeeper have at least some knowledge of microbiology to better understand the interrelationship of dust dirt, contact infection, airborne infection, etc. He/she should be a professionally trained person,

have a professional attitude, and have a thorough knowledge of the job at hand and how best to do it. He/she should be well educated in the proper treatment of all types of floors, carpets, walls, and other surfaces. He/she should have an inquiring mind, constantly testing, searching for newer and better ways of doing the job. He/she should have some knowledge of the purchasing function, interior decorating, laundry and linens, safety and sanitation, budgeting, records, scheduling, maintenance and controls, etc. He/she should also be a person capable of accepting the consequences of failure, and, with this as a challenge, go on to test, compare, and improve.

The preceding paragraphs cover what might be considered the ideal situation. However, the ideal is seldom found.

During my career in the field of housekeeping, I have visited many hospitals and nursing homes, large and small, both in this country and in Mexico. I have attended numerous seminars, institutes, and study courses ranging in subject matter from the basic social sciences to just plain everyday "get down and get it" cleaning. The one thing that has come to the forefront in each case is that all institutions, large or small, have the same basic problems. Many books, magazines, pamphlets, articles, etc. are available on every phase of the housekeeping function, from the care and treatment of terrazzo floors to how to use a wet mop. Most of these are good; they are written by experts in the field. For the most part though, these are aimed at the hospitals or other institutions large enough to be able to afford such sophisticated equipment as automatic scrubbers, contact plates and incubators, wet pick-up vacuums (to create a germ free environment during OR and patient room cleaning), pressurized wall-washers and steam-cleaning equipment for the carpets.

But what about the small hospital or nursing home, the thirty-bed emergency unit fifty miles from nowhere; the small private hospital; or the county institution dependent on taxes for funds? What about the housekeeper who has not been professionally trained; who has not had the opportunity to attend seminars, institutes, or study courses; who does not have

access to labor saving, sophisticated equipment or a modern laboratory to aid in culturing the environment; who has limited equipment, supplies, and information?

Small hospitals, nursing homes, etc., because of the lack of funds, storage space, or the knowledge in purchasing, lose another valuable source of information: the chemical company representative. This is the fault of the chemical companies. Because their sales in these institutions are small, the representative calls only a couple of times a year, and on these visits, offers little or no assistance with solutions to everyday housekeeping cleaning problems.

Who is going to help these people, these institutions, to better understand the importance of housekeeping? How can they obtain the knowledge to carry out this important function? Because of these questions, and a deep desire to upgrade the housekeeping function and profession, I have put together the information on the following pages. It is a ready reference, intended to aid the housekeeper, supervisor, maid, or custodian. The methods are simple; if followed, they will result in a clean, neat, and attractive institution.

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CHAPTER 1

Training for Housekeeping

TRAINING is the process by which a worker is fitted for the particular job he is to perform.

The high cost of labor is a primary problem in the housekeeping field. The up-to-date housekeeper therefore employs modern scientific methods in order to absorb and, when possible, to lower costs. We must not only use the latest labor-saving devices and techniques, but we must also train our employees to do the job properly. The right training and work techniques in cleaning procedures are functional requirements. Where labor costs are a major factor in the budget, operational economy is a must. The old adage "if a little bit does good a lot does better" is not true. So, how can we accomplish this operational economy? The only answer to this question is training and more training. We must train the new worker and retrain the long-time worker. A well-informed employee is a better worker. He has more desire to do the job and feels better about doing it correctly. He has fewer accidents and less loss of time due to illness or injury. The hospital also benefits by the increased interest and efficiency in work performance, because these reduce costs.

A training program should be approached in the following three ways: 1. Why Train? 2. What To Train For? 3. How To Train?

Why Train

Training is essential in acquiring the skills and habits needed to do a job with the maximum efficiency in the minimum time and with minimum cost and effort. Uniformity of methods in carrying out the housekeeping procedures saves time, effort, and materials. There is less waste if the employee

knows how much of a product to use to do the job, and a higher level of cleanliness is maintained when standards are met. When the employee is encouraged to recognize the importance of his job and to take pride in his work, better human relations are developed. He attains increased satisfaction and morale when he knows what to do and how to do it well. His ambition, self-improvement, and contentment are increased when he has been trained for the job.

What to Train For

First it must be determined what and how much the employee needs to know in order to do the job. The training program should help him develop the proper attitudes and manners toward the job, teach him step by step how to perform the job, and prepare him for the responsibilities of the job.

How And When To Train

This is a question that has been studied by many, and there is no hard fast rule as to the best methods to employ. The time is now; start the new employee off on the training program, and there will be no doubt that they will use the proper procedures. Start to retrain your older employees with either of two good basic methods commonly in use; classroom and on the job. A combination of the two work very well. However, the method chosen must depend upon the individual situation. It is important to remember too, that before starting any type of training program, the housekeeper or supervisor must make special preparations and have a clear knowledge of the job at hand. Poor preparation on the part of the trainer can result in nothing more than a poorly trained employee.

Following are some of the points to be kept in mind when you set up your own training program:

1. Explain *what* to clean.
2. Demonstrate *how* to clean.
3. Explain *why* and *when* to clean.
4. Demonstrate *care* and *use* of equipment and supplies.

5. Outline and explain proper *attitudes* toward patients, staff, other workers, and visitors.
6. Set up *standards* of cleanliness.

Preparation For Training

Do not rely strictly on your memory when you are training a worker. Prepare a brief outline or description of all the main steps of the job.

Before starting to actually do a job, be sure that all supplies and equipment are at hand. Never set a bad example by a lack of preparation. Have the work place arranged as you want the worker to maintain it. This sets a proper example.

Prepare The New Trainee

First, you should put the worker at ease. Always remember that he is in strange surroundings and with strangers. His first impression of you is as important as yours is of him.

Introduce him to his fellow employees. Remember that people cannot learn when they are nervous, excited, or mentally uncomfortable. "Sell" the importance of the job to him.

Find out what he already knows about the job. Ask where he has worked before, and if possible, point out things learned on his previous job that might be helpful to him now. Keep his experience in mind during the training program, and emphasize how his job fits into the overall operation of your institution.

Demonstrate Job Procedure

On the first demonstration, you should explain and illustrate the job step-by-step and point-by-point. Do not skip or overlook steps in the job breakdown as this will only confuse the trainee. Make the job breakdown simple and brief. Do not use words the worker will not understand. Never try to teach too much at any one session or the worker will not retain it all.

Be patient. Show a willingness to help the new worker. Do

not hesitate to answer any questions he may have about the job. Do not leave anything to his own judgement. If you are explaining the "figure 8" mopping technique, actually show how to do it.

Ask him simple questions about the points you have already covered. If he hesitates in his answers, then go over these points again. When you are satisfied that he is ready, let him take over the job.

Let Trainee Perform Job

Let the worker try the job. Ask him questions about major points and steps of the job. Emphasize the various steps and find out how much he has learned. Do not hurry him or show impatience if he does something wrong. Do not grab the tools from him, but ask him to let you show the correct way to perform the task.

The worker's skill will indicate how well he knows the job. Once you are satisfied that he really knows and understands his duties, you should compliment him. However, remember that quick performance cannot be expected at this point; speed comes with practice.

Follow-up

Once the trainee is able to perform as well as you expect, and can tell you how the job should be done, leave him on his own for a short period of time. Explain that you will check back frequently in order to help him with problems that might arise or to answer any questions. When you do return, correct any mistakes that you may detect. Encourage him.

Remember that initial training must be slow and each detail of the job should be carefully explained, reviewed, and supervised.

Training should be a continuous process, not only for the new worker but as retraining for the experienced worker. Visual aids, films, demonstrations, literature, and conferences are all good training tools. Through them the workers' knowl-

edge can be broadened and a high morale maintained.

It cannot be denied that a training program is costly, and for that reason it should be periodically scrutinized and results evaluated. Statistics related to absenteeism, amount of waste, frequency of accidents, labor turnover, sickness, work production, workers' attitude and morale, and work improvement will prove an invaluable tool, and in the majority of cases will show that the training program, if carried out properly, is worth the cost.

CHAPTER 2

Are You a Supervisor?

HAVE YOU FULLFILLED YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A SUPERVISOR?

1. When was the last time you spent two or three hours or even half a day instructing a new employee?
2. Have you told your employees why a certain job has to be done? Did you only tell him what, when, where, and how?
3. When was the last time you had a heart-to-heart talk with any of your employees about personal problems; how they were doing; how they are measuring up to what you expect of them?
4. When was the last time you took a personal interest in your employees, asked them about their families, home, car, vacation, or plans for the future, etc.?
5. Do you listen to your employees, or do you instead convey the impression that you are not interested, too busy, or only interested in getting the job done?
6. Have you corrected your employees when they were doing something wrong or not doing something they were supposed to do in a manner in which you would want to be corrected by your supervisor? Did you use facial expressions, gestures, or tone of voice that let the employee know you were interested in him and how he performed on the job; or did your actions just make him angry?
7. Have you explained to your employees all of their duties, why they must be performed, and how important they are?
8. At all times, have you felt that you have given your employees the same type of fair treatment that you expect from your own supervisor?
9. Do you play favorites among your employees?
10. Do you hold a grudge against employees who do not perform as you feel they should?

11. Are you really convinced your job is one of the most important jobs in the hospital?

If your answers are honest and not favorable to all of these questions, take time to re-evaluate yourself. It will certainly prove worthwhile.

A supervisor's job is an essential function of the department. You must be able to communicate, get along with, and become involved (up to a point) with your employees and at the same time be a leader, in this constant war on germs.

To perform well, a supervisor must have an understanding of management, of their place in the organization, and communicate effectively with their peers as well as at times with the administration.

Think of yourself as a professional — be a professional.

HOUSEKEEPING SUPERVISOR JOB DESCRIPTION

- I. Asserts work leadership
 - A. Plans and schedules work objectives
 1. short term — full responsibility
 2. long term, in conjunction with executive housekeeper
 - B. Determines employee availability and balances with work assignment
 - C. Assigns duties to employees and follows up on task accomplishment
 - D. Provides technical knowledge needed for work decisions
 - E. Makes requests and recommendations to executive housekeeper for procedural or systematic changes he feels necessary
 - F. Informs employees of policies, procedures, or activities which effect them
 - G. Coordinates work effort with other housekeeping supervisors
- II. Building good employee relations
 - A. Promote employee moral through
 1. recognition of a job well done, 2. openers to em-

- ployee ideas, and 3. fair consideration of complaints and grievances
- B. Open communication and fair assignment of jobs
- C. Communicates facts to the executive housekeeper which have bearing on employee discipline cases
 - 1. gives oral reprimands and communicates this to the executive housekeeper
 - 2. recommends dismissal, if necessary, to department head and furnishes facts in the case
- D. Evaluates employee performance and communicates evaluation to the employee and the department head
 - 1. positive behaviors, attitudes, and characteristics
 - 2. negative behaviors, attitudes, and characteristics
- III. Provides employee orientation and training
 - A. Interviews prospective employees and communicates recommendation to hire or not to hire to the department head
 - B. Introduces new employees to other personnel
 - C. Schedules on-the-job training for new employees
 - 1. communicates objectives to employees and trainees
 - 2. trains new employees
 - 3. communicates progress to employee and department head
 - D. Communicates general-training needs to department head
- IV. Miscellaneous duties
 - A. Assures adherence to safe work practices and procedures
 - B. Communicates maintenance and repair needs encountered
 - C. Communicates equipment and supply needs to department head
 - D. Sets up rooms for meetings or assigns men to this task