



MANAGING HOUSEKEEPING OPERATIONS

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Preface

Nothing sends a stronger message than cleanliness in a hospitality operation. No level of service, friendliness, or glamour can equal the sensation a guest has upon entering a spotless, tidy, and conveniently arranged room.

To send this message of quality, housekeeping must be endowed with the same professionalism as other hospitality functions. *Managing Housekeeping Operations* gives managers the tools to systematically achieve the standards expected by today's guests in today's lodging and food service establishments.

While primarily written for the executive housekeeper, this text can be a resource for any professional who makes housekeeping decisions on a daily basis. The book is also designed to provide important technical information for persons seeking careers in this pivotal area. Every attempt has been made to thoroughly cover the day-to-day complexities of the housekeeping profession—from planning and organizing to budgeting, to supervising and performing the work itself.

To do so, the book is organized into four parts. Part I introduces the role of housekeeping in hospitality operations and focuses on the planning and organization of various housekeeping tasks. Part II emphasizes the importance of quality housekeeping staff by examining human resource management in the housekeeping department. Part III illustrates the various challenges and management responsibilities facing the executive housekeeper. Chapters focus on managing inventories, controlling expenses, and monitoring safety and security functions. For properties with on-premises laundries, a chapter is included which discusses how to effectively oversee the various laundry operations.

Finally, the details of housekeeping tasks are showcased in Part IV. This section consists of five technical/reference chapters which cover the how-to's of cleaning. Chapters focus on the basics of cleaning guestrooms, public areas, ceilings, walls, floors, carpets—as well as considerations in selecting and cleaning furniture, fixtures, linens, and other special features or conveniences. Step-by-step procedures follow most of the technical/reference chapters. While designed as guidelines only, these procedures show the actual application of many of the concepts narrated in the text. The “bookends” of this technical/reference section consist of a chapter on the management and use of cleaning chemicals and a concluding chapter on interior design.

To promote understanding, discussion questions and key terms appear at the end of most chapters. An extensive glossary places industry terms—particularly those related to housekeeping—at the reader's fingertips.

We hope this text meets its intended purpose as a practical resource for the executive housekeeper—and as a vehicle for promoting the professionalism of this important segment of hospitality.

Textbooks of this scope could not be written without the continual support of a great many people. Several industry and academic professionals have contributed time and expertise by writing and reviewing chapters; others by advising and shaping the book's content based on their years of professional experience. Particular thanks are extended to **Michael T. Floyd**, National Sales Manager—On-Premise Laundry, Speed Queen Company, Ripon, Wisconsin; **Melissa Frechen**, Executive Housekeeper, Holiday Inn—University Place, East Lansing, Michigan; **Sheryl Fried**, Assistant Professor, Widener University, School of Hotel and Restaurant Management, Chester, Pennsylvania; **Al Norwood**, Deephaven, Minnesota; **Jon M. Owens**, CHHE, Director of Housekeeping, Clarion Hotel & Conference Center, Lansing, Michigan; **Carolyn Rockefeller**, CHA, Executive Housekeeper, Radisson Hotel, Lansing, Michigan; and **James H. Simpson**, Vice President of Business Development, Flagship Cleaning Services, Newtown Square, Pennsylvania. We would also like to extend a special thanks to **Robert Di Leonardo, Ph.D.**, and his staff at Di Leonardo International, Inc., Hospitality Design, Warwick, Rhode Island, for contributing the concluding chapter on interior design.

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Part I

Introduction to Housekeeping

Chapter Outline

Types of Hotels

- Economy/Limited-Service Hotels
- Mid-Range-Service Hotels
- World-Class-Service Hotels

Hotel Management

Hotel Divisions and Departments

- The Rooms Division
- The Engineering and Maintenance Division
- The Human Resources Division
- The Accounting Division
- The Security Division
- The Food and Beverage Division
- The Sales and Marketing Division

Housekeeping and the Front Office

Housekeeping and Engineering/Maintenance

Teamwork

1

The Role of Housekeeping in Hospitality Operations

Efficiently managed housekeeping departments ensure the cleanliness, maintenance, and aesthetic appeal of lodging properties. The housekeeping department not only prepares, on a timely basis, clean guestrooms for arriving guests, it also cleans and maintains everything in the hotel so that the property is as fresh and attractive as the day it opened for business.¹ These are no small tasks, especially in light of the following statistics.²

There are an estimated 44,300 lodging properties in the United States with a total of 2.82 million guestrooms available for sale each day of the year. Assuming that, on the average, 63% of the rooms available are actually occupied by guests, hotel housekeeping departments would be responsible for cleaning 1,776,600 guestrooms each day. If, on the average, a room attendant cleans 15 rooms a day, then there are at least 118,440 room attendants employed each day in housekeeping departments across the United States. Add to this figure the management staff of housekeeping departments; the housekeeping employees assigned to clean public spaces, back-of-the-house areas, meeting rooms, banquet rooms; and the other housekeeping employees working in the hotel's linen and laundry rooms—and it's easy to see why there are usually more employees working in the housekeeping department than in any other hotel department.

Estimates are that, in the lodging industry, more than 1.5 million employees work approximately 2 billion hours each year to serve more than 270 million guests. The amount of cleaning necessary to provide for the needs of 270 million guests is staggering. Imagine the stacks of linens needed to make up 270 million beds. The truckloads of bath soap, tissue, and amenities such as shampoos and colognes that must be distributed to guestrooms. The thousands of miles of carpeting, floors, walls, and ceilings that need to be cleaned and maintained. The countless pieces of furniture that must be dusted and polished. And, the millions of barrels of cleaning compounds along with the thousands of special tools and equipment that housekeeping departments use in order to clean, clean, clean.

The tasks performed by a housekeeping department are critical to the smooth daily operation of any hotel. This chapter begins by briefly describing the roles that housekeeping performs within different types of hotels. Next, the structure of hotel management is described and housekeeping's place within the overall organization of hotel operations is identified. This chapter goes on to describe the basic functions of various hotel divisions and departments and briefly examines housekeeping's relationship to them. The chapter ends by stressing the kind of teamwork that is crucial to

successful hotel operations. Detailed examples are provided of the teamwork that must exist between housekeeping and front office personnel and between housekeeping, engineering, and maintenance personnel.

Types of Hotels

Classifying hotels into types is not easy. The lodging industry is so diverse that many hotels do not fit into any single well-defined category. Some of the categories used to classify hotels are location, the types of guests (or markets) attracted, the kind of ownership structure or chain affiliation, size, and service level. From the point of view of housekeeping, the size and service level of a property are its most important characteristics. However, size and service level are not dependent on each other. The size of a property often has little to do with the level of service it offers.

The size of a property gives only a general idea of the amount of work performed by the housekeeping staff. Size characteristics may include the number of guestrooms, meeting rooms, and banquet rooms within the property; the square footage of public areas; and the number of divisions or departments within the hotel requiring housekeeping services. Exhibit 1.1 focuses on the number of guestrooms and provides statistics on four hotel size categories.

A more precise measure of the work performed by a hotel's housekeeping staff is the property's level of service. Indicators of service level include the kinds of furnishings and fixtures in the different types of guestrooms; the decor of public areas; and special features of other facilities. While the levels of service offered by hotels vary tremendously across the lodging industry, properties can, for the sake of simplicity, be classified in terms of three basic service level categories: economy/limited, mid-range, and world-class service.

Economy/Limited-Service Hotels

Economy/limited-service hotels are a growing segment of the lodging industry. These properties focus on meeting the most basic needs of guests by providing clean, comfortable, and inexpensive rooms. Economy hotels appeal primarily to budget-minded travelers who want rooms with all the amenities required for a comfortable stay, but with-

Exhibit 1.1 Size Classifications of Hotels

Number of Guestrooms (A88)	Property*	Rooms**
Under 75	72.0%	20.9%
75-149	17.1%	29.8%
150-299	8.1%	26.3%
300 and over	2.8%	23.0%

*Based on a total of 44,300 properties.
**Based on a total of 2.82 million rooms.

Source: "Lodging Industry Profile," American Hotel & Motel Association, June 1989.

out the extras they don't really need or want to pay for. The types of guests attracted to economy/limited-service hotels include families with children, bus tour groups, business travelers, vacationers, retirees, and groups of conventioners.

The size of the economy/limited-service property has increased from the 40- to 50-room hotel of the 1960s. Some economy hotels now have as many as 600 guestrooms; however, managerial considerations keep most properties between 50 and 150 guestrooms. The staff of small economy hotels generally consists of a live-in couple as managers, several room attendants, front desk agents, and sometimes a maintenance person.

Low design and construction costs and low operating expenses are part of the reason why economy hotels can be profitable. They incorporate simple designs that can be built economically and maintained efficiently. Economy hotels are usually two or three floors of cinder block construction with double-loaded corridors (corridors with guestrooms on both sides). These structures are cheaper to build than the single-loaded corridors found in large hotels where guestrooms may overlook elaborate atriums.

In comparison to the early 1970s when the only amenity offered may have been a black-and-white TV, most economy properties now offer color TV (many with cable or satellite reception), swimming pools, limited food and beverage service, playgrounds, small meeting rooms, and other special features. However, many economy properties do not provide full food and beverage service, which means guests may need to eat at nearby restaurants. Also, economy properties do not usually



Suite hotels appeal to vacationing or relocating families. (Courtesy of Radisson Suite Resort, Marco Island, Florida.)

offer room service, uniformed service, banquet rooms, health clubs, or any of the more elaborate services and facilities found at mid-range and world-class properties.

Mid-Range-Service Hotels

Hotels offering **mid-range service** probably appeal to the largest segment of the traveling public. Mid-range service is modest but sufficient and the staffing level is adequate without trying to provide overly elaborate service. Guests likely to stay at a mid-range hotel are business travelers on expense accounts, tourists, or families taking advantage of special children's rates. Special rates may be offered for military personnel, educators, travel agents, senior citizens, and corporate groups. Meeting facilities of the mid-range-service hotel are usually adequate for conferences, training meetings, and small conventions.

The typical hotel offering mid-range service is

medium-sized (between 150 and 300 rooms). These hotels generally offer uniformed service, airport limousine service, and full food and beverage facilities. The property may have a specialty restaurant, coffee shop, and lounge that cater to local residents as well as to hotel guests. The management staff of a mid-range property usually consists of a general manager and several department managers. The executive housekeeper manages the housekeeping department whose staff generally outnumbers that of any other department in the hotel. Detailed descriptions of the positions and responsibilities of members of the housekeeping department are provided in Chapter 2.

A fast-growing segment of the mid-range-service category is the suite hotel. Typical hotel accommodations feature one room, an adjacent bathroom, a king-size bed or two double beds, a desk/dresser modular unit, and one or two chairs. A suite unit, on the other hand, offers a small living



The lobby of a world-class hotel may be elaborately furnished and decorated. (Courtesy of Opryland Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee.)

room or parlor area with a grouping of appropriate furniture (often including a sofa bed) and a small bedroom with a king-size bed. Suite hotels provide temporary living quarters for people who are relocating, serve as “homes-away-from-home” for frequent travelers, or appeal to families interested in non-standard hotel accommodations. Professionals such as accountants, lawyers, and executives find suite hotels particularly attractive since they can work or entertain in an area which is separate from the bedroom.

Some guest suites include a compact kitchenette complete with cooking utensils, refrigerator, microwave unit, and wet bar. These additional features mean that room attendants will need more time to clean a suite of rooms than to clean a standard guestroom. Therefore, housekeeping labor expenses may be higher for suite hotels than for

other properties in the mid-range-service category. Due to these and other costs, suite hotels generally offer less public space and fewer guest services than other hotels.

World-Class-Service Hotels

World-class-service hotels provide upscale restaurants and lounges, exquisite decor, concierge service, and opulent meeting and private dining facilities. Primary markets for hotels offering these services are top business executives, entertainment celebrities, high ranking political figures, and other wealthy people. To cater to these types of guests, the housekeeping staff is generally responsible for dispensing oversize bath towels, bars of scented soap, special shampoos and conditioners, shower caps, and other guestroom and bath amenities.