

# 1. Housekeeping – Introduction

***"I consider housekeeping to be the heart of hotels and it is only when something goes wrong that it is recognized – just like our hearts."***

***- Sheila Perera FIH Glenmor Manager, Gleneagles Hotel.***

The housekeeping department, in any hotel business, contributes to major amount of profit though it is considered as an ancillary service. The simple reason being, a customer demands a clean, tidy, and pleasing ambience.

Housekeeping generates the first impression on a guest's mind. The housekeeping efforts clearly show how the hotel will take care of its guests.

## **What is Housekeeping?**

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Housekeeping means performing all the duties towards cleaning, maintaining orderliness, and running a house or a business property. In case of hotels, the housekeeping duties involve maintaining the hotel to the best possible state in terms of cleanliness, and keeping it at highly desirable ambience.

## **Objectives of Hotel Housekeeping**

The main objectives of hotel housekeeping are:

- To maintain overall cleanliness of the entire hotel at all times.
- To perform cleanliness duties most efficiently and effectively.
- To use good quality, safe cleaning equipment and chemicals.
- To manage laundry and linen.
- To control pests.
- To keep up the hotel with classy interior decoration.
- To take care of the furniture, fittings, and fixtures of the entire hotel.

To understand the expanse or scope of housekeeping, it is better to understand the divisions of hotel a hotel, first.

## **Divisions of a Hotel**

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There are various divisions (or departments) of a hotel. They are given below.

### **Front Office**

It is responsible for guest check-in and check-out, mail and information services, and concierge services such as tour booking, reserving theatre and restaurants, providing airport taxi service, etc.

### **Food and Beverage**

Food and Beverage department is responsible for preparing menus, foods, and managing inventory of food and beverage items. It includes food and beverage preparation and service for restaurant, lounge, coffee shops, bars, parties, and room service.

### **Uniformed Service Department**

It includes parking and door attendants, drivers, porters, and bell attendants.

### **Housekeeping**

Housekeeping includes the duties of keeping the areas of the hotel clean, tidy, hygienic, and pleasant. It also performs the duties pertaining to decoration of hotel premises.

### **Sales and Marketing**

All sales, services, advertising, promotions, and public relations are taken care of by this team.

### **Security**

Security manager and security workers work to keep the property safe and secured from external hazards.

### **Accounts**

It conducts all financial activities like producing bills and receiving payments, computing employees' compensations and delivering payments. They also carry out the activities such as compiling monthly and annual income statements, depositing and securing cash, and controlling and monitoring assets.

### **Maintenance**

The Maintenance department is responsible for the maintenance of the property. It takes care of repairing furniture and fixtures, and painting the required area. When the hotel is small, these works are contracted from an outside agency.

### **Engineering and Technology**

It is responsible for keeping all of its equipment operational. The duties include maintaining telephone, hotel management software, internet etc. It is also responsible for implementing any new changes required such as upgrading the software and hardware.

### **Human Resource Department**

Human Resource department is responsible for interviewing and recruiting qualified staff to be placed at appropriate positions. They also conduct exit interviews for the employees who wish to quit the work. HRD works to set wages and salaries based on regional market rates and ensures that the hotel business meets safety and health administration standards.

In all these departments, the efforts of housekeeping department are overt. They are directly visible to the guests even before they try food or avail other amenities. Housekeeping creates the first impression about the hotel in the guests' minds. Hence this department can be said as the heart of the hotel business.

### Housekeeping Department Layout in Hotel

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The layout of the housekeeping department depends on the total number of Guestrooms, Outlets, and Required Staff. The following areas of the department are the most prominent ones:

- **Office of the Executive Housekeeper:** The administrative work of the department is carried out here.
- **Housekeeping Control Desk:** It is accessible and operational 24 hours a day. The housekeeping staff reports at the start and end of the shift here. There are notice boards, storage shelves, registers, lost and found cupboard, and key-hanger matrix.
- **Laundry Area:** Washing, ironing, dry cleaning, folding of linen and staff uniform takes place here.
- **Linen Room:** Here, the linen of the hotel such as bed-sheets, towels, pillow cases, etc., are stored, collected, and carried to the required places in the hotel.
- **Uniform Room:** The staff uniforms are collected, stored, and distributed from here.
- **Tailor Room:** Here, stitching and repairing of linen and uniforms takes place.
- **Housekeeping Stores:** It is a storage area where the cleaning equipment and items, and guest supplies are securely stored.
- **Flower Room:** It is an air-conditioned room with worktables, sink and water supply, cupboards to store vases and stones, and a counter.
- **Lost and found:** It stores all the items left by the guests. It directly communicates with the front office desk, as there the guests tend to first enquire about their lost articles.

Linen Store Room	Tailor Room	Uniform Room	Laundry Area	
Corridor				
Executive House Keeper Office	Housekeeping Desk	Lost and Found	Housekeeping Supplies Store	Flower Room

### **Housekeeping: Areas of Responsibility**

The housekeeping department is responsible to keep the following areas clean and tidy.

- Guest Rooms
- Guest Bathrooms
- Public Areas such as Lobby and Lifts
- Banquets and Conference Halls
- Parking Area
- Sales and Admin Offices
- Garden

Apart from the cleaning task, the housekeeping is also responsible for handling keys of each floor. In addition, it manages the laundry, which is often at some places considered as a sub-department of housekeeping.

### **Terms Used in Hotel Housekeeping**

Here are some commonly used terms in housekeeping:

Term	Meaning
<b>Banquets</b>	It is a multi-course meal or feast, usually given by the host on occasions like a charitable gathering, a ceremony, or a celebration, often precedes or succeeds by honoring speeches.
<b>Bridal Suite</b>	Room reserved for the newly married people.

<b>Check-In</b>	Counter where you announce your arrival or departure to the hotel.
<b>Coffee Shop</b>	Place in a hotel where coffee, light drinks and meals are served.
<b>Desk</b>	Place that provides information or service in a hotel.
<b>Dining Room</b>	Room where guests have their meals.
<b>En Suite</b>	Attached to the room.
<b>Guest Room</b>	Bedroom for a visitor.
<b>Head Board</b>	Upright panel designed or placed behind the head of a bed.
<b>Lobby</b>	A hall, foyer, or waiting room at or near the hotel entrance.
<b>Lounge</b>	Public area of hotel where people can just sit and relax.
<b>Reception</b>	The area/desk at which the guests are received.
<b>Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)</b>	It is a detailed information prepared by the manufacturer or importer of a chemical that describes the physical and chemical properties, health hazards, routes of exposure, precautions for safe handling and use, and first-aid procedures in case any accident happens.

### Abbreviations Used in Housekeeping

The following table lists a few common abbreviations used in housekeeping:

Abbreviation	Term	Meaning
<b>ACCT</b>	Accounting	A department of a hotel business that handles finance.
<b>CI</b>	Check-In	Depicts that the room is ready for check in.
<b>CO</b>	Check-Out	The room status when guest has vacated and the room still needs to be prepared for selling.
<b>DL</b>	Double Lock Room	A room with two locks, one by hotel and the other personal lock put by the guest.
<b>DNCO</b>	Did not Check Out	The guest settled the bill but did not check out formally at front office desk.
<b>DND</b>	Do Not Disturb	The DND tag or the privacy lamp depicts that the guest does not wish to be disturbed by housekeeping.
<b>DO</b>	Due Out	The room is expected to become vacant after the following day's checkout time.
<b>FBP</b>	Food and Beverage Product	A product used and sold by Food and Beverage service of the hotel business.
<b>FBS</b>	Food and Beverage Service	A service provided by the hotel business.

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<b>FO</b>	Front Office	The first contact point of Hotel staff and the guests.
<b>GC</b>	General Cleaning	A term used for routine cleaning.
<b>GRA</b>	Guest Room Attendant	The room attendant serving under supervisor.
<b>GRS</b>	Guest Refuse Service	The hotels reserve rights to refuse service because of the guest's behavior in the previous visit.
<b>HK</b>	Housekeeping	An important department of service industry.
<b>HM</b>	Honeymooner	Depicts that the room is for the newly-wed couple.
<b>HRD</b>	Human Resources Department	A department taking care of recruiting, induction, and training of new skilled employees.
<b>IS</b>	Inspected	Depicts the status of the guest room ready to sell.
<b>L</b>	Luggage	Luggage in room but bed unused.
<b>NC</b>	Not Cleared	A vacant room not cleared, not ready for selling.
<b>O</b>	Occupied	The status of the room as occupied by the guest or displays signs of being occupied by the guest.
<b>OC</b>	Occupied Clean	
<b>OD</b>	Occupied Dirty	
<b>ONL</b>	Occupied No Luggage	
<b>OOO</b>	Out of Order	The status of room is not ready for selling because of some problem such as clogged basin/toilet, nonfunctioning shower, or broken bed. The supervisor needs to know for how long it will be out of order and is responsible to get it into order as fast as possible.
<b>OS</b>	Out Of Service	The area or equipment not in service.
<b>REC</b>	Recreation	Leisure activity.
<b>RET</b>	Returned Guest	The guest that gives a repeat business as a result of satisfaction.
<b>SA</b>	Special Attention	Depicts that the room requires special attention.
<b>SB</b>	Scantly Baggage	The baggage is put carelessly.
<b>SEC</b>	Security	A department catering for the security of the hotel premises and properties.

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<b>SM</b>	Sales and Marketing	A department taking care of sales and promotion of the hotel business.
<b>SO</b>	Sleep-Out	The room is occupied but the bed was not used.
<b>SPA</b>	Sanus Per Aquam	Health by or through the water.
<b>UR</b>	Under Repair	Currently under repair and not ready to sell.
<b>V</b>	Vacant	The status of the guest room when the guest has vacated the room.
<b>VC</b>	Vacant Clean	
<b>VD</b>	Vacant Dirty	
<b>VCI</b>	Vacant Clean Inspected	
<b>VIP</b>	Very Important Person	The status of the room that needs extra amenities.

The housekeeping also practices general abbreviations such as *As Soon As Possible (ASAP)*, *Not Yet (NY)*, *Follow Up (FU)*, and *For Your Information (FYI)*, which are also used commonly in the industry.