

3. Housekeeping – Principles

"There are practical little things in housekeeping which no man really understands."

– Eleanor Roosevelt, American Politician, Diplomat, and Activist.

There are various principles followed by the housekeeping staff. They are cleaning and hygiene principles, safety and security principles, comfort and privacy principles, and finally, the decor. For understanding the housekeeping principles, first let us go through what advantages it offers to the hotel.

Advantages of Housekeeping

Here are some prominent advantages, the housekeeping department offers to its guests:

- Clean and hygienic atmosphere
- Comfortable and convenient stay
- Privacy
- Safety and security
- Provision of amenities
- Making guests Feel good

Having seen the advantages, let us see the principles of housekeeping towards providing these to the guests while working safely.

Purpose of Cleaning

Cleaning is conducted to remove harmful bacteria present in the dust deposited on the hotel property because of air pollution. This may cause unhealthy effects on the working staff as well as the guests. Cleanliness reduces the threat of any infections and offers comfortable stay to the guests in the hotel.

Cleaning and Hygiene Principles

The worker must follow the given principles while cleaning:

- Carry out the cleaning procedures in sequence. Say, sweeping-> Dusting -> Mopping/Suction Cleaning -> Disinfecting -> Air Freshening.
- Must take care while cleaning and polishing; not to damage various surfaces and hamper their appearance.

- Should start cleaning from extreme inner end continuing towards exit.
- Should park the chambermaid's trolley such that it leaves space for corridor traffic.
- Must take proper precautions while handling cleaning equipment, detergents, and guest luggage.
- Must remove hard water stains and spider webs as soon as they occur.
- Must never use guest room linen for cleaning or blocking room entry.



Safety and Security Principles

The workers must follow the safety rules mentioned below.

- Protect their body from harmful chemicals by wearing thick gloves.
- Protect their eyes by wearing masks or goggles if required.
- Must use caution sign to mark wet floors.
- Clean spilled liquids immediately to reduce chances of slipping.

- Handle cleaning chemicals carefully while transporting, disposing, or refilling the containers.
- Mix any chemicals required in the presence of proper ventilation.
- Must not open unlabeled chemical containers.
- Use swivel head mops to avoid inappropriate body posture while cleaning.
- Wear close toe-non slip footwear while working.
- Use appropriate body postures while working to avoid cramps.
- Request for peer assistance while moving heavy loads such as furniture.
- Report to the supervisor in case of any accident due to mishandling of flammable liquids or otherwise.
- Keep the guests safe with the help of security department.
- Keep the guests' documents, ornaments, or other articles safe.

Comfort and Privacy Principles

The housekeeping staff must follow the given principles with regard to comfort and privacy of the guest.

- Always remember comfort and privacy of the guests always comes first.
- Clean the premises or rooms in the least destructive and disturbing manner.
- Enter the guest rooms by following appropriate procedure.
- Work towards the guests' satisfaction.

Knowing and Handling Small Fire Hazards

The housekeeping staff needs to know various types of fires and fire extinguishers. The staff must be trained to handle small fires.

Fire is classified into the following types:

- **Class A:** Class A fire consists of ordinary combustibles such as wood, paper, trash or anything else that leaves ash behind. It needs water under high pressure to extinguish this fire.
- **Class B:** This fire occurs in inflammable liquids such as oil and grease, and needs blankets or sand to extinguish.
- **Class C:** This fire occurs in electrical equipment. Use of non-conductive agent is required for extinguishing this fire.

- **Class K:** Class K Fires are fires that involve cooking oils, grease or animal fat and can be extinguished using Purple K, a typical agent found in kitchen or galley extinguishers.

Fire Extinguishers

Soda Acid extinguisher is used to put out class A fire. It sprays the compound with gaseous pressure. Only good for small intensity fires. For large intensity and widely spread fire, water must be sprayed directly on the affected area with high pressure through the hoses.

For putting out class B fires, Carbon Di-Oxide extinguishers are used. Carbon Di-Oxide fog extinguishers are well-places in case of small class C fires.

The housekeeping staff must place appropriate extinguishers near the fire prone areas and must know to operate them under challenging conditions.

Importance of Décor in Housekeeping

The housekeeping staff is responsible for creating pleasant ambience in the hotel. This needs aesthetic sense and an eye for detail. A guest is keen to visit the hotel if he finds classy and catchy ambience with fresh air.

Housekeeping staff must intelligently use artificial waterfalls, large vases with neat and eye-catching flower arrangements, paintings, wall pieces, murals, lighting with appropriate luminance, candles, electric lamps or any rare antic pieces.

The housekeeping staff is required to know various materials such as wood, organic and artificial fibers, stone, sand, glass, plastic, and pigments to maintain the expensive hotel property.

Hotel decors can be conducted thematically depending on the local/international prominent festivals and cultures. Décor is yet another important task that elevates guests' experience with the hotel.

Rules for Housekeepers

The housekeepers represent the hotel staff and create an image of the hotel by working towards keeping the hotel at high standards plus conducting themselves well while on job. There are certain rules the housekeepers need to follow.

The housekeepers must:

- Enter the floor with clean and tidy uniform, in a properly groomed manner.
- Only use the service lifts.
- Speak to the other working staff only when necessary.
- Not walk by stamping the feet, run, or jump in the hotel premises.
- Eat only in meal hours, not while cleaning.

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- Stand outside the guest room while speaking to the guest to respect their privacy.
- Always keep the room doors open while cleaning.
- Greet the guests with smile according to the time of the day.
- Never answer the guest room phone.
- Never use guest room phone or floor desk phones for making private calls.
- Never use guest bathrooms.
- Familiarize themselves with the faces of guests. This is especially important for the security purpose.
- Never use a guest room for unauthorized person.
- Not accept any gift from the guests and politely deny them. If the guest insists to take and feels offended on denial, then mention the gift to the floor supervisor who can permit the attendant to take the gift out of the hotel.