

# 9. Housekeeping – Linen Maintenance

***"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."***

***- Mahatma Gandhi, Late Indian Freedom Fighter.***

In the range of small to large hotels, the guest room linen, guest bathroom linen, staff uniforms, all continue to accumulate in large amount. It is essential for the housekeeping staff to launder the linen and make it readily available at all times so that the staff can receive their well-laundered uniforms before work, and the guests are provided with good quality linen.

It is definitely required to purchase good quality linen; but the life, appearance, and the quality of linen largely depends upon the treatment it receives at the laundry by the laundry staff. Small hotels can contract with the commercial laundry services located outside the hotel. Large hotel establishments prefer to install their private on-premises laundry. Let us understand on-premises laundry operated by housekeeping:

## **Advantages of On-Premise Laundry**

---

The following advantages are seen if housekeeping staff works at on-premise laundry:

- On-premise laundry provides more use in comparatively less investment.
- The time, energy, and effort to take the clothes outside at a commercial laundry service is eliminated hence the staff can work better.
- The housekeeping staff can easily access the On-premise laundry.
- Pilferage is reduced.
- The staff can have complete control over the wash cycles, and wear and tear of the linen. Thus, life of the fabric can be prolonged by using specific washing for the linen depending upon degree of their soiling.

## **On-Premise Laundry Equipment**

---

On-premise laundry is the game of conservation of water and electricity and generation of high throughput. This equipment speeds up the housekeeping work. The laundry equipment mainly includes:

### **Washer/Extractors**

They are automatic machines which are used to wash the linen in large amount. They provide high laundry room productivity by using less water and electricity.

### Dryers

They dry the linen in less time than conventional drying methods. They deliver fast drying without consuming much electrical energy.

### Flatwork Ironers

They save energy, cost, and efforts to press the large number of linen by delivering them ironed and pressed. They are easy and safe to operate.

### Commercial Folders and Stackers

They are yet another automatic laundry devices that can deliver a perfectly folded and finished linen. They can also help to stack the folded linen neatly.

The housekeeping staff that handles laundry section is expected to know each device and its operation.

## Working at On-Premise Hotel Laundry

---

The laundry consists of bath and bed linen, dining are linen, staff uniforms, cleaning cloths, curtains, drapes, blankets, and rugs. The guest laundry is handled by the most experienced staff. The staff in the laundry room is expected to be aware of the chemicals, detergents, dry cleaning agents, and the stages of laundry cycle.

No sooner than the soiled laundry arrives, the laundering work starts quickly. The reason behind it are:

- The soiled linen must be cleaned as early as possible.
- The stains may get permanent.
- The stains may get transferred to other linen.
- The soiled linen should not provide a breeding ground for bacteria.
- To avoid the chances of linen misplacing or loss.

## Laundry Cycle

---

The laundry goes through the following stages:



This cycle depicts the typical operating procedures.

### SOPs for Laundry Management

The laundry management is carried out on daily basis. Here are some standard procedures given:

- Collect Dirty Linen:** Collect the dirty linen from various sections in the hotel such as guest rooms, guest bathrooms, and dining area. Put the soiled linen separately. The principle is, whatever linen it is, it must not hang over the edge of the collection basket. Transfer the collected linen to the laundry department.
- Sort the Linen:** Segregate the linen carefully according to type of fabric, domain of item use, degree of soiling, and type of soiling. Keep the staff uniforms, guest room and bathroom linen, dining area linen, butchery aprons, and guests' personal clothes all separately. Always handle the linen using gloves.
- Pre-treat the Stains:** Before the putting the linen into the washer, inspect it for stains such as grease or oil. Remove the stains using stain cleaning chemicals. If instructed before, use detergents and cleaning chemicals at the time of washing only, to save the time and efforts.
- Wash/Extract the Linen:** Put the linen into washers. Weigh the linen before washing process to ensure the washers are not overloaded. The housekeeping staff need to handle many washers and dryers depending on the size of hotel and occupancy of rooms. Set the automatic washers to different wash

cycles depending upon the type of linen. For example, embroidered pillow covers need soft wash cycle and the curtains need harder wash cycles. The following wash cycle is most effective:

Soak -> Flush -> Suds -> Bleach -> Rinse -> Extract -> Starch

Remove as much as possible water content from the linen by using extractors. The linen is then starched to make it little stiff and shiny.

- **Dry the Linen:** Put the linen into dryers for removing any moisture still left. Be careful while transferring the linen from washers to dryers because the weight of the linen increases after washing. Use automatic dryer that provides drying by hot air blows. The lint comes off from the linen surface in the process of drying yielding a finished surface. These dryers operate on less electricity and yield fresh and completely dry linen.
- **Iron/Repair the Linen:** At this stage, check the linen for any wear and tear. Separate the worn out linen to be given to the tailor. Some linen such as towels, bed linen, and dining area linen require Ironing. Pass these linen through the ironer. Hand-iron a few linen such as uniforms.
- **Fold and Stack the Linen:** Automatic folding and stacking machines come to the aid of housekeeping staff to save them from the large effort of folding and stacking the linen accurately. Some sort of linen such as staff uniforms and guest personal clothes still need manual efforts for folding. Operate the folding/stacking machines that ascertains finished appearance and makes the linen easy for storage and handling.
- **Deliver the Linen:** Transport the ready laundered linen to the uniform room and linen room. Send the linen that need repair to the tailor room. Then subsequently deliver the linen at the time of keeping and cleaning the various premises such as guest rooms, dining area, and banquet halls.

Give away the guests' personal clothes according to the rooms they are staying in.