



# ***Hotel Housekeeping***

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## About the Tutorial

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Hotel Housekeeping is an activity of keeping the hotel clean, tidy, and up to the highest standard of conduct. This tutorial introduces you to various concerns of Hotel Housekeeping such as principles of housekeeping, types of cleanings, and standard operating procedures of cleaning. It also introduces you to housekeeping equipment and agents, guest supplies, types of hotel rooms, and laundry management.

This tutorial teaches basic terms and abbreviations used in hotel housekeeping. After going through this tutorial, you will find yourself at a moderate level of expertise of retail management basics from where you can take yourself to next levels.

## Audience

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This tutorial is prepared for the beginners to help them understand basics of Hotel Housekeeping. It will help all those readers who are keen on making a career in Hospitality and Tourism.

## Prerequisites

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We assume the reader has basic knowledge of hotel and tourism businesses. Creativity, passion for physical work, and communication skill are a plus.

## Disclaimer & Copyright

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## Table of Contents

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|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| About the Tutorial.....                                      | i         |
| Audience .....   | i         |
| Prerequisites .....  | i         |
| Disclaimer & Copyright.....                                  | i         |
| Table of Contents .....                                      | ii        |
| <b>1. HOUSEKEEPING – INTRODUCTION .....</b>                  | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>What is Housekeeping? .....</b>                           | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Divisions of a Hotel .....</b>                            | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>Housekeeping Department Layout in Hotel.....</b>          | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>Housekeeping: Areas of Responsibility.....</b>            | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Terms Used in Hotel Housekeeping.....</b>                 | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Abbreviations Used in Housekeeping .....</b>              | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>2. HOUSEKEEPING – STAFF DUTIES.....</b>                   | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Structure of Housekeeping Staff.....</b>                  | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Executive Housekeeper / Manager of Housekeeping .....</b> | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Supervisors of Housekeeping .....</b>                     | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Operating Staff / Attendants.....</b>                     | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Qualities of Housekeeping Staff .....</b>                 | <b>11</b> |
| <b>3. HOUSEKEEPING – PRINCIPLES .....</b>                    | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Advantages of Housekeeping .....</b>                      | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Purpose of Cleaning .....</b>                             | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Cleaning and Hygiene Principles.....</b>                  | <b>13</b> |
| <b>Safety and Security Principles .....</b>                  | <b>14</b> |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Comfort and Privacy Principles.....               | 15 |
| Knowing and Handling Small Fire Hazards.....      | 15 |
| Importance of Décor in Housekeeping .....         | 16 |
| Rules for Housekeepers.....                       | 17 |
| 4. HOUSEKEEPING – TYPES OF HOTELS AND ROOMS ..... | 19 |
| Types of Hotels.....                              | 19 |
| Types of Hotel Rooms .....                        | 22 |
| VIP Amenities in Hotel .....                      | 24 |
| 5. HOUSEKEEPING – CLEANINGS .....                 | 26 |
| Periodic Cleaning in Hotel .....                  | 27 |
| Cleaning and Keeping Public Areas of Hotel .....  | 28 |
| 6. HOUSEKEEPING – CLEANING EQUIPMENT.....         | 29 |
| Advantages of Cleaning Equipment.....             | 29 |
| Classification of Cleaning Equipment.....         | 29 |
| Cleaning Agents or Chemicals.....                 | 32 |
| 7. HOUSEKEEPING – GUEST SUPPLIES .....            | 35 |
| List of Supplies for Guest Room.....              | 35 |
| List of Supplies for Guest Bathroom .....         | 36 |
| Items Provided on Request .....                   | 37 |
| 8. HOUSEKEEPING – STANDARD PROCEDURES.....        | 39 |
| Setting Chambermaid’s Trolley .....               | 39 |
| SOP for Entering the Guest Room.....              | 40 |
| SOPs for Cleaning the Guest Room.....             | 41 |
| SOPs for Cleaning the Guest Bath Room.....        | 42 |
| SOPs for Cleaning Balcony / Patio .....           | 42 |

## Hotel Housekeeping

|   |    |
|---|----|
| SOPs for Do-Not-Disturb (DND) Rooms .....                 | 43 |
| Public Area Cleaning SOP .....                            | 43 |
| 9. HOUSEKEEPING – LINEN MAINTENANCE .....                 | 48 |
| Advantages of On-Premise Laundry .....                    | 48 |
| On-Premise Laundry Equipment.....                         | 48 |
| Working at On-Premise Hotel Laundry .....                 | 49 |
| Laundry Cycle .....                                       | 50 |
| 10. HOUSEKEEPING – COORDINATION AND WORK RECORDS .....    | 53 |
| Importance of Housekeeping Control Desk .....             | 53 |
| Coordination of Housekeeping with Other Departments ..... | 54 |
| Important Registers Maintained by Housekeeping.....       | 56 |
| Checklists and Reports in Housekeeping .....              | 59 |

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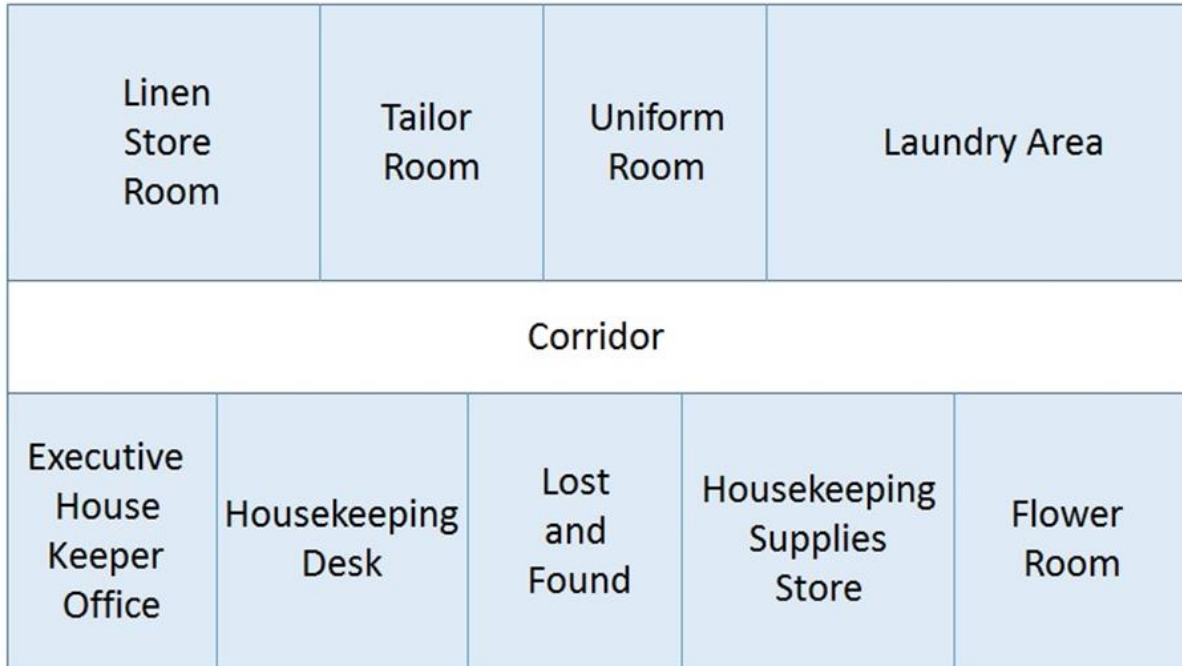
The layout of the housekeeping department depends on the total number of Guestrooms, Outlets, and Required Staff. The following areas of the department are the most prominent ones:

- **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.



## Hotel Housekeeping

- **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.



### Housekeeping: Areas of Responsibility

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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

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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

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

| Abbreviation | Term | Meaning |
|--------------|------|---------|
|--------------|------|---------|

## Hotel Housekeeping

|             |                           |   |
|-------------|---------------------------|---|
| <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.   |
| <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.   |
| <b>SM</b>  | Sales and Marketing        | A department taking care of sales and promotion of the hotel business.   |

## Hotel Housekeeping

|            |                        |   |
|------------|------------------------|---|
| <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.

## 2. HOUSEKEEPING – STAFF DUTIES

***"A new broom sweeps clean; but an old broom knows the corners."***

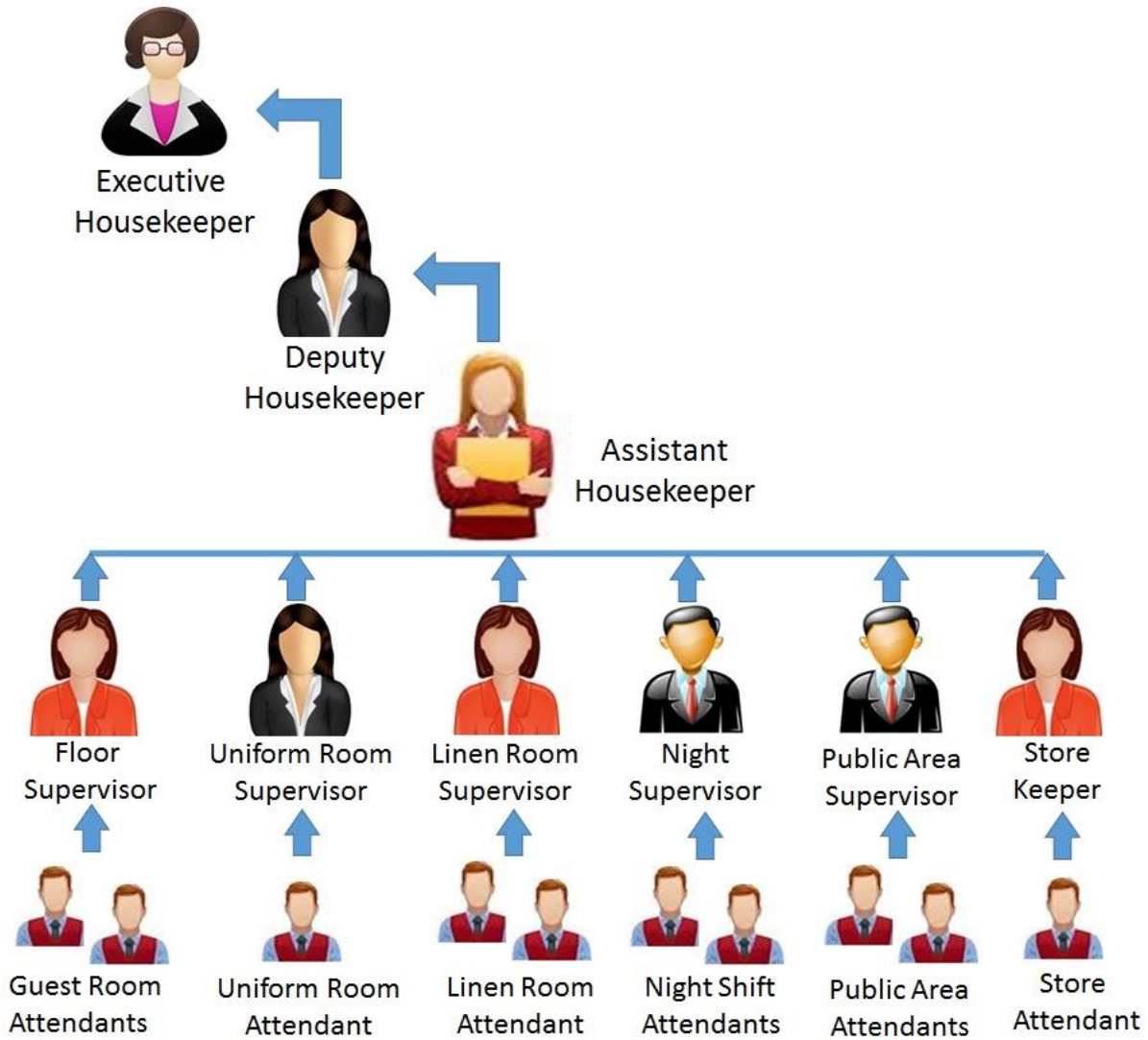
**- An Irish Saying.**

There is a huge workload on the hotel housekeeping staff. The housekeeping work is carried out at various levels such as managerial level, supervisory level, and operational level. Let us see more about the staff and qualities they should possess.

### **Structure of Housekeeping Staff**

---

The general structure of housekeeping staff is as shown below:



Let us see the work and responsibilities at each level.

### **Executive Housekeeper / Manager of Housekeeping**

The Executive Manager is the chief of housekeeping department. The Deputy Housekeeper and Assistant Manager of Housekeeping report to him. Their responsibilities include:

- Ensuring overall cleanliness and aesthetics of the hotel.
- Ensuring overall sanitation, comfort, and ambience of the hotel.
- Training the new joiners and motivate the existing employees.

- Modelling and establishing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for cleaning and decorating.
- Monitoring regular inventory of guest supplies and linen.
- Monitoring housekeeping equipment and hotel property.
- Evaluating employee performance, and handling their training, promotions, and transfers.
- Organize flower arrangements for events.
- Presenting the estimate of the required budget to the General Manager of the hotel.

### Supervisors of Housekeeping

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The supervisors report to the Assistant Housekeeper. Their positions and their respective responsibilities include:

#### Floor Supervisor

- Issuing keys to the room attendants.
- Coordinating floor operations and tray clearance with room attendants.
- Inspecting rooms for readiness and reporting to the front office for the same.
- Catering for VIP facilities and providing special supplies such as hot drinking water, baby-sitting provision.

#### Public Area Supervisor

- Ensuring that cleanliness is maintained at all times in public areas such as lobby, lifts, parking, swimming pool, coffee shop, conference hall, banquet hall, and restaurant.
- Ensuring banquet and conference halls are well kept and ready.
- Ensuring the concerned operating staff is available as per the schedule.

#### Night Supervisor

- Ensuring provision of guest supplies such as water, extra bed, fans, or towels.
- Ensuring the operating staff working at night is following all cleaning SOPs.



- Supervising hotel area at night and ensuring cleanliness in all areas of hotel.

### Uniform Room Supervisor

- Providing clean, ironed, and fresh uniforms to the hotel staff.
- Suggesting procurement of any uniforms required.
- Checking repaired linen from tailor room.
- Keeping track of number and condition of uniforms.

### Linen Room Supervisor

- Inspecting linen and sending it to the laundry.
- Checking linen from laundry and sending it for ironing.
- Maintaining linen influx and out flux register.
- Checking repaired linen from tailor room.
- Suggesting linen replacements if required.

## Operating Staff / Attendants

---

The positions and responsibilities of the Operating Staff/Attendants are explained below.

### Uniform Room Attendant

- Collecting uniforms of staff at the end of every shift and maintaining them to be used for the next time.
- Maintaining the shelves of uniforms and linens clearly.
- Giving and taking back the uniforms from the staff.

### Linen Room Attendant

- Segregating the dirty linen according to its type and sending it to the laundry.
- Keeping the track of linen count before and after laundry.
- Stacking towels, bed sheets, pillowcases, table napkins separately into different sections of shelves.

### Guest Room Attendant

- Reporting to the floor supervisor.
- Cleaning the guest rooms, guest bathrooms, and the corridors.
- Changing the linen of the guest room and guest bathrooms.
- Topping up the guest supplies.
- Making guest-room beds.
- Replenishing the hotel cleaner's trolley with supplies and linens for the next shift staff.

### Storekeeper

- Reporting to the floor supervisor.
- Keeping the count of cleaning equipment and items such as cleaners and detergents.
- Generating requisition to purchase the required material.

### Public Area Attendants

- Reporting to public area supervisor.
- Keeping the parking, lobbies, guest rooms, lifts, and corridors in best maintained status.
- Keeping these areas smelling fresh and clean.

### Night Shift Attendants

- Reporting any hotel safety issues to the night supervisor.
- Performing housekeeping duties during night.

## Qualities of Housekeeping Staff

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There are certain professional qualities the housekeeping staff is required to possess:

### Personal Hygiene and Appearance

The housekeeping staff on duty must:

- Be well-groomed with high degree of personal hygiene.
- Have trimmed nails and hair, and clean uniform.
- Have a clean and pleasant appearance.

### Communications skills

The housekeeping staff must:

- Conduct themselves with a cooperative attitude.
- Speak in a friendly but sincere tone.
- Speak clearly in audible voice of moderate pitch.
- Maintain polite eye contact while interacting with the hotel guests.

### Interpersonal skills

For serving the guest and working for cleanliness, the housekeeping staff must:

- Possess right attitude.
- Have good listening skills to avoid any miscommunication.
- Be a good team player.

### Personal skills and Traits

The housekeeping staff must:

- Be able to retain and pursue the demand of the guest until it is fulfilled.
- Be sincere and physically fit.
- Respect each hotel guest they are dealing with. They must conduct themselves confidently and courteously.
- Have high integrity.

# 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**

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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.

## Hotel Housekeeping

- 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.

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