

## INTRODUCTION

The housekeeping department in a hotel is responsible for the cleanliness, maintenance and aesthetic upkeep of the hotel. Just as the name signifies the role of housekeeping is to maintain cleanliness, comfortable, and safe hotel. Housekeeping is an important and integral part of the guest experience and satisfaction. It is an extension of basic home keeping multiplied into commercial proportion. The housekeeping department takes pride keeping the hotel clean and comfortable so as to create a home away from home environment. The concept of housekeeping is simple but when it is about attending several hundreds of rooms then the task become gigantic. It takes a well organised approach and technical understanding to enable housekeeping to cope with the volume of work.

## MEANING OF HOUSEKEEPING

Housekeeping is the management of household activities, it means dealing in maintaining a clean and comfortable environment in the hotel. In other word, it is the housekeeping task to ensure the guest needs and preferences to comfort and security are fulfilled.

## ROLE OF HOUSEKEEPING

The role of housekeeping is to keep a clean, comfortable, hygienic and safe house. just as we enjoy keeping a "Sparkling" home for guests and ourselves who visit us at home, the housekeeping department takes pride in keeping the hotel clean and comfortable so as to create a "home away from home environment". Housekeeping is the backbone of hotel and plays an important role in the reputation of hotel and plays the large part in ensuring whether guests wish to return again or not. The largest work force of the hotel belongs to housekeeping department. The housekeeping department occupies an important position because it is entrusted by the valuable of the hotel such as furniture, linen, objects of arts, carpets etc.

A hotel survives on the sale of rooms, food and beverage and other minor operating services such as laundry, health club etc. Of these, the sale of room constitutes more than 50% percent. In other words, a hotel's largest margin of profit comes from room sales because a room once made can be sold over and over again. A good hotel operation ensures optimal room sales to being in the maximum profit.

The room sales is depends upon several other things such as cleanliness of the room, the quality of room decoration, room facilities and its safety. The criteria by which each guest decided whether a room is good or bad are strictly personal. To make room appealing to a guest is the task of housekeeping which has to ensure the basic human needs of comfort and security. Thus, the personal effort the housekeeping department makes in giving a guest a desirable room has a directing bearing on the guest experience in a hotel.

## IMPORTANCE OF HOUSEKEEPING

- i. **Comfort:** Achieve the maximum efficiency possible in the care and comfort of the guests and in providing support services for the smooth running of the hotel. Every hotel spends a lot of effort in ensuring the quality of beds, mattress, T.V, air conditioner, attached bar etc. The comfort must be maintained regularly and should be properly functioning. It is the duty of the housekeeping department to ensure comfort and a welcoming atmosphere to hotel guests as well as strive to extend courteous, reliable and satisfactory service from staffs of all departments.
- ii. **Cleanliness and Hygiene:** Ensure a high standard of cleanliness and general upkeep in all areas. Clean and well maintained areas and equipments create a favourable impression on the guest. Hygiene is maintained especially in the wash room, toilets, pool changing room, health club etc.

- iii. **Privacy:** The prime concern of any guest irrespective of whether rich or poor, common man or celebrity, is privacy. Room windows are provided with curtains. Windows could normally overlook good scenic view, away from the prying eyes of others in the hotel or outside public. Housekeeping staffs ensure the privacy of the guests and they should be trained with proper procedures to enter the room.
- iv. **Safety and Security:** Security is one of the prime concerns of a hotel guest. The housekeeping department staffs should ensure the safety and security of the guests with the help of security services. They should also make sure that fire fighting equipments and emergency alarms are functional at all times. They should also ensure peace and noise free atmosphere in the area.
- v. **Decoration:** Creating a pleasant and classy ambience is also one of the major concerns for a guest, This is not easy and requires a good eye for detail. This work in an art and the housekeeping staff is mainly responsible for creating a pleasant atmosphere.

### FUNCTION OF HOUSEKEEPING

Housekeeping department holds the responsibility of cleaning, maintenance and admirable upkeep of the hotel. The main functions of housekeeping are overall cleanliness, bed making, ensuring maintenance of the building and its infrastructure, laundry, linen management, key control, safety and security of the guest as well as the infrastructure and interior decoration. All this ensure the ambience and promotes a congenial environment. The basic function of the housekeeping is explained briefly:

- i. **Cleaning Rooms and Public Areas:** Housekeeping department cleans the rooms and toilets and wash basin in the room. Apart from cleaning the guest rooms, housekeeping department is also responsible for cleaning floor, terrace, elevators, lobby, corridors of guest floors, closets, uniform room, tailor rooms, upholstery, store rooms and swimming pools. To be concise, the housekeeping department is responsible for the total cleanliness of a hotel.
- ii. **Bed Making:** A guest requires a comfortable bed to take a rest, relax and enjoy. A bed that is well-made will provide the required comfort. Bed making is a skill that is achieved by the practice. Good bed making only only does not provide comfort to the guest, but also adds pleasant ambience in a guest's room. Guest should not be able to tell if anyone has slept in the room, so a clean environment and perfect bed making is a major consideration of this department.
- iii. **Linen Management:** One of the important jobs of the Housekeeping Department is clothes and linen management. This involves all functions from purchase of linen to laundering, storage supplies and to condemnation. In a hotel different types of clothes and linen are used such as the bed sheets, pillow covers, napkins, towels, hand towels, table covers, cushion covers, curtains etc. All of these require regular maintenance.
- iv. **Laundry Services:** It is the job of the Housekeeping Department to ensure clean and hygienic washing of all the linen items, and then distributing them to different areas of the hotel. The relationship between the housekeeping and laundry is significant for the smooth functioning of housekeeping services. One of the supporting role of the laundry is to provide valet services to house guests.
- v. **Pest Control:** Pest control is another major job of the Housekeeping Department. No matter how clean one keeps the surroundings, one cannot avoid the "uninvited guests" - the pests. It is not only embarrassing but also makes the hotel reputation down related to cleanliness where one sees rats, cockroaches and lizards running around. Therefore, pest control is one of the primary responsibilities of the housekeeping department.
- vi. **Key Control:** Key control is one of the major jobs of the Housekeeping Department. The room keys have to be handled efficiently and safely before and after the duty of the room.

**vii. Safety and Security:** The Housekeeping Department is responsible for maintaining a peaceful atmosphere of the hotel. If the guests and staff always fear for their safety and the safety of their belongings, the atmosphere will be very tense. Hence, the housekeeping department staff should be aware of ways to protect himself and others. Especially, the guests around him and the property of the hotel from accidents, falls, wounds, injuries, negligence in handling electrical equipment etc. It is important for all housekeeping personnel to know about first aid as they could be the first ones on the spot to give immediate attention to a guest and also an employee in trouble.

**viii. Interior Decoration:** Interior decoration is the art of creating a pleasant atmosphere in the living room with the addition of a complex of furnishings, art and crafts, approximately combined to achieve a planned result or design. These arts and crafts have to be well maintained by the housekeeping department. Decoration flowers is a creative and stimulating art which often carries a message or theme. Flowers and indoor plants add color and beauty to a room.

**ix. Room Maintenance:** Good housekeeping is the responsibility of h.k department where hotel's maintenance is done by engineering department. In an ideal environment the housekeeping staff and managers should act as the eyes and ears of the engineering department. If damaged or broken items are not reported, they can't be fixed, Proper maintenance will make the perception of cleanliness easier to maintain and reduce guest complaints.