

DAILY ROUTINE AND SYSTEM IN THE HOUSEKEEPING DEPARTMENT

Hotel is working 24x7x365 days. To operate the hotel smoothly it has three shifts. Shift may start at 6-7-8am and end at 2-3-4pm respectively. All the shifts will overlap one hr to ensure the reliever is on duty.

As an employee arrives he/she has to enter through back gate which is meant only for staff. They must punch in their card at the time of entry as it is from here that personal dept. prepares their salary cheque too.

Then they go to staff locker to change and groom to the hotel standard before they report to the dept. It is suggested that all the employees deposit their uniforms at the time of departure so that it is ready in time for next use.

In housekeeping dept. the staffs report to H.K. desk.

H.K. CONTROL DESK-

The H.K. control desk is the hub of the housekeeping dept. This is the area in then dept. where all information is received and from where messages are dissipated to housekeeping and other staff present in various parts of the hotel. Thus, the control desk

may be considered the nerve centre for to and fro communication in the housekeeping dept. One of the main functions of the control desk is ensuring smooth co-ordination between housekeeping and other dept. such as maintenance, front office, food and beverage, security, sales and marketing and so on. Apart from maintaining the intra-dept. and inter- dept. channels of communication, it is the control desk which receives messages from in-house guests over the telephone. In most hotels, this is the area where housekeeping employees report for work; collect the respective keys, signing for them; peruse the log book; get their briefing; and at the end of their shift, report back to.

The main physical feature visible in most control desk areas is the key cabinet on the wall, where all floor master keys and store keys are kept under lock and key. Another common feature here is a large notice board displaying notices:

- Duty roaster
- Cleaning schedules
- VIP list
- List of rooms, of; crew and groups in-house.

One of the most important roles of the control desk is maintained various important records, registers, forms and formats so that they are available and easily accessible for reference to managers and supervisors. For e.g.:

- Key control register
- Log book
- Maintenance register and forms
- Departure register
- Guest message register
- Baby sitting register
- Guest loan article register
- Lost and found register Store indent book Room status report Room transfer report VIP in-house list
- VIP arrival list.

Then they are briefed by the supervisor for the daily schedule at the desk. At the desk “Day book” is written in pen which is earlier written in pencil. “Day book” indicates who is working in which floor and section. If an employee is absent as per Rota the work of the section may be divided amongst the present staff if the work load is low. This is called **splitting section**. Otherwise a staff may be asked to stay back to cope up with the situation from the previous shift.

DAY BOOK

DATE-

FLOOR	SECTION	NAME
I	A	Ms x
	B	Ms y
	C	Mr a
II	A	Mr b

Each morning front office sends “**Night report**” to housekeeping dept. which gives up-to-date information about the status of the hotel. This report helps to plan and organize the work of the H.K.department as we know which rooms’ needs immediate attention and where should we go later to service.

It is here that they are issued with sub master keys (which enable them to carry out the task in guest room) and work is allocated. They are given a “**Worksheet**” with the room numbers printed on it as per the section they are responsible for, and the status of the hotel. This helps the chambermaids to plan out the task of the day.

KEYS

All the employees are issued with the master keys from H.K. desk after they have signed in the “Key control register”. This is important for the management to know **who** had entered the room **when**. Issuing the key to a hotel personnel means he/she takes the responsibility of the hotel as well as guest property in the room. There are different types of key:

ROOM KEY: this is issued to the guest on arrival by the Front office. So this key is stored by Front office dept.

SUB MASTER/SECTION MASTER KEY: This key is issued to room attendant. This helps them to carry out the cleaning and servicing of rooms in the section.

This opens all the door in a section of the hotel. But it does not open the door having double locked. The key is suggested to be worn in the waist belt which is called “gadget” for safety.

FLOOR MASTER KEY: This key is issued to floor supervisor. This helps them to inspect the rooms which are serviced by the chambermaid. It opens all the door locks of a floor. But it does not open the door which is double locked. Some time they can be issued more than one key if they are responsible for more than one floor.

GENERAL MASTER KEY: This key is issued to Assistant H. keeper. This opens all the door in all the floors. But this does not open the door which is double locked. This helps in spot checking rooms in any floor at any time. Some times this can be issued to the floor supervisor too when they are held responsible for many floor together.

GRAND MASTER KEY/ EMERGENCY KEY: This key is used very rarely that means only on emergency. This is the only key which can open the room even if it is double locked. Opening a double locked door means interfering in guest privacy so managements consent is required to use this key. Due to the importance of the key this is only with Ex. Housekeeper, General Manager and Lobby Manager/ Rooms Division Manager.

RULES FOR DOUBLE LOCKED ROOMS

If a door is double locked (D/L) for all morning then usually at 1pm or 2pm the floor supervisor will contact the guest over the phone. The dialogue should go something like this: “good afternoon sir / madam, this is the floor supervisor speaking, what time would you like your room to be serviced?”

Then the time suggested by the guest is recorded and information passed over in the log book at the time of handover. If there is no reply supervisor should inform the Ex. Housekeeper and seek the grand master keys. This is because every room must be entered once daily to ensure no tragedy has taken place in the room.

The same procedure is followed for "DO NOT DISTURB" rooms too. Some hotels also use light for "DO NOT DISTURB" sign.

The Grand master key can also be used to double lock the door when there is emergency like when hotel hears some unusual disturbance,

When the guest doesn't check-out in their scheduled time without information,
When the guest doesn't clear / settle his account within their credit limit after reminders too.

The keys are issued to the staff and they are expected to sign out and in for the same in the following register:

When the keys are issued to any staff they are expected to sign in Key control register:

KEY CONTROL REGISTER

DATE:

KEY CODE	NAME	SIGN	TIME OUT	ISSUED BY	TIME IN	SIGN	RECEIVED

ELECTRONIC KEY CARD SYSTEM

In the modern days electronic card systems have replaced keys. They offer more security as it can be programmed differently for each guest. If by chance the guest carries the room key with him/her, the particular room's lock has to

be changed, as there is always a chance of theft in the room with the old key. The card system cuts out that danger completely. When a master key is lost, all the locks have to be replaced for the safety of the guests; but it is extremely costly and practically impossible to do. A card system allows us to change the code of the locks at our will, and new cards are issued. This system has become a phenomenon in all star category hotels as safety and security plays the most important role in today's hospitality industry.

DISADVANTAGES OF THE MANUAL KEY SYSTEM

1. Some hotels admit defeat in failing to stop undependables from going to the residential guest floors, due to the difficulty in spotting thieves amongst potential customers.
2. Many hotels rely on old mechanical locks that can be easily picked, forced and even slipped.
3. Room keys are very commonly lost, even the master keys. Some hotels have lost as much as 12 keys in a month. Hence the only escape is changing the locks every month, which is considerably costly.

ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF COMPUTERISED LOCKING SYSTEM

In selecting appropriate computerized key control system for a property, it is important to have: -

- I. **Reliability** – so that every time the key code is changed it works.
- II. **Speed** – for speedier guest check-in.
- III. **Simplicity** – so that every time computer experts are not required to handle the keys.
- IV. **Control** – to limit room access and keep track of, to whom are the keys issued and who uses them.
- V. **Easy installation** – for cost effectiveness.
- V. **Software integration** – to connect the hotel system to the computer.
- VI. **Expansion and upgrading capability** – to always be at par with the latest development.

- VII. **Comprehensive training programme** – so that staff turnover does not pose a problem.
- IX. **Responsive service and support** – to back-up the investment.

Though all computerized key card systems have many common features of reprogrammable locks, the programme can be activated by –

1. Key cards – magnetic strip Punched holes
2. Replica keys – reprogrammable metals Plastic disposable.

The locks themselves will be either –

- I. Stand alone
- II. Wire directly (to control procession)

MAGNETIC STRIP KEY CARDS –

They are the latest development of computerized electronic door locking system. Most systems share the philosophy, that each individual key that is issued is programmed with a specific code that supersedes the previously accepted code by the lock. The combination of codes is literally endless with a possibility of billions of lock combinations. As each lock will be capable of accepting an infinite number of different combinations, a replacement card may be issued quickly, should the guest lose the initial key card. A great benefit for the front office staff is that creating and issuing cards takes a mere 4 seconds, which greatly speeds up the check-in process. Batteries with a life of several years power the microprocessor and card reader, within the lock. When batteries are running low, an indicator flashes light. Key cards that are programmed to operate at a number of access levels activate the locks. The most common access levels are – Grand Master and House Master. They usually give access to all guest rooms in the hotel, provided that guest has not activated his 'Dead Bolt' or 'Privacy Facility'. If the indicator is ignored, a battery pack is plugged in and the door lock is activated.

Area Master key card – This key card will open locks in a particular area only which is usually defined by the management. Staff who carry this card includes – Valet, Room Service waiters, Mini bar Service staff, Chamber maid or Room attendant, etc.

Floor Master key card – Typically issued to floor housekeepers, these cards allow access to rooms of one floor.

Guest key card – Each guest at check-in is issued a card, which will only open the room, which has been allotted to him/her. Emergency key card – This card act like the emergency master key which can open locks whose ‘Dead Bolt’ or ‘Privacy Facility’ has been activated so that the rooms can be opened from outside in any emergency situation.

Maintenance or One Shot key card – This is like a Guest key card but is issued to a staff, usually someone who is on contract, like a T. V Engineer. This card will open only one room in which he/she has to enter to do the work or repairs, and can be used only once.

Power Down or Back-Up key card – In the event of power failure or computer maintenance, pre-prepared power down or back- up key cards are issued to guests checking-in. these are usually kept in a secure place with the duty manager.

Guest Lock out card – this card may be issued to block a guest’s entrance into a room. A new key-card will return the lock to normal.

Time control key cards – Apart from the magnetic strip key cards, some hotels use door locking system, which operate through a clock located within the lock. They also provide all facilities provided by the magnetic strip. The key card is issued for the room at the time of check-in, for the duration of the guest’s stay,

so that the card ceases to be valid at a pre-determined time on the day of the departure. This system removes the need for sequential coding of key cards.

Now they are issued with the “Worksheet” which shows the room No. and the status of their section: MAIDS’ WORKSHEET

DATE:	NAME:	SEC. :	
ROOM NO.	STATUS	PAX	REMARKS
201	V		
202	OCC		
203	OCC		
204	C/O		
205	OOO		

Maid’s signature _____

Once they are provided with keys and worksheet after briefing they move to the “floor pantry”. Floor pantry may be referred as a maids’ service room/ maids’ station/floor linen rooms as well.

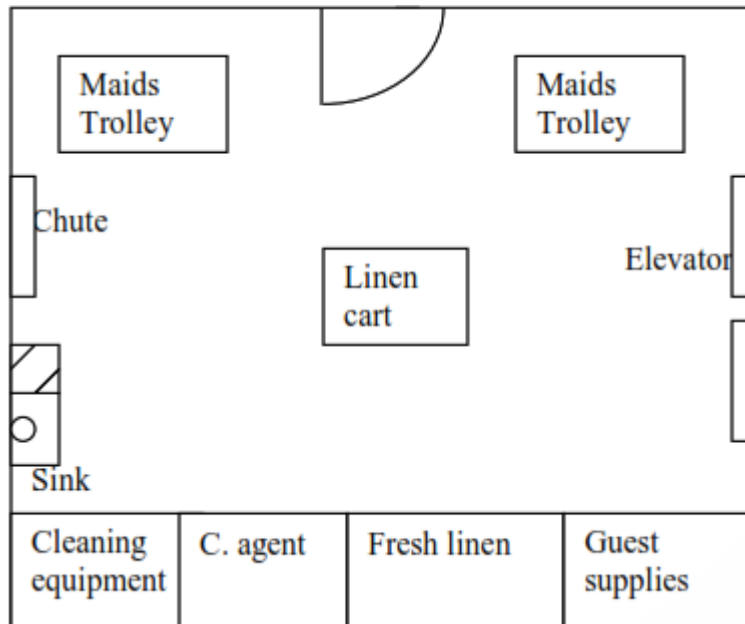
This is where the maids’ trolley, linen and guest room supplies, cleaning agent and equipments are stored. The shelves containing these items must be maintained neat and clean in each cupboard.

Normally one linen cart is always present here to collect all soiled linen throughout the shift. Toilet facility and water supply with a sink is normally provided for staff benefit. Telephone for the floor is also connected in the floor pantry for communication with

Housekeeping control Desk.

Depending on a No. of room in a floor Maids’ service room is shared by one or more chambermaid/room attendant. The area must be cleaned regularly by each one of them.

PLAN OF A MAIDS' SERVICE ROOM



THE MAIDS' TROLLEY

As the room attendant goes up to the floor pantry, he check on the trolley, whether, it is equipped well enough for the shift or not. Normally most hotels keep the trolley ready for use for the next shift.

The trolley is for convenience and speed and as such must be kept in order. The trolley saves ones feet as all necessities are in hand. It helps one to have a fast ordered method of work.

There are separate receptacles for dirty linen; garbage etc which helps in maintaining hygiene by keeping the fresh ones separate from dirties. Normally top shelf contains the guest room supplies specially the take away. The first shelf contains bath linen like: bath towel,

hand towel, face towel, bath mat, bath robe etc .The second shelf contain bed linen like: single sheet, double sheet, queen size sheet, king size sheet, pillow

slip, mattress protector etc. the bottom shelf contains caddy box (this contains the cleaning agent and equipment required in cleaning bathroom).

When one is servicing a room the trolley must be kept outside the room facing the room to make it easily accessible. One must always leave the door open while working.

Linen bag (made of canvas) must be emptied out in the linen cart whenever it is full, and replace the disposable garbage bag (plastic bag) when it's full.

One must keep the trolley neat and tidy. At the end of the shift garbage bag must be removed and tied and deposed to the garbage room. Garbage room is mostly refrigerated. Dirty linen in the linen cart should be counted and number entered in floor linen book and then sent down to linen room for exchange. Floor linen book is maintained by supervisor. All the entries regarding movement of linen must be entered and updated daily.

Some hotels have “chute” (an aperture with door, lock and key). It's a hollow tunnel from where dirty linen may be sent directly to laundry. When the hotel does not have a chute they will manually send the dirty linen down to the laundry.

As they begin servicing the rooms, they first check and clean the vacant room (VR- the room vacated and made ready last night but not sold, ready to sell now) to ensure vacant rooms are in perfect condition to sell quickly.

In the morning GRA (guest room attendant) in a “room attendant slip” give a status of room of their section. Status means the letting situation of the room for e.g.(check-out, occupied/stay over, vacant).This report is based on a physical check only. This is prepared by each GRA for their section which is collected by their supervisor at 9am and submitted to the Housekeeping control desk. Housekeeping control desk compiles them in occupancy report and

submits it to the Ex. Housekeeper. Ex. Housekeeper signs after scrutinizing the report and a copy of physically checked occupancy report/ Housekeeper's report is sent to the Front Office.

Front Office tallies the report and prepares a discrepancy report if there is any dispute in the occupancy report produced by Housekeeping.

OCCUPANCY CHART/HOUSEKEEPERS' REPORT

DATE-	Room	Status/ Pax	Room	Status/ Pax	Room	Status/ Pax	Room	Status/ Pax	Room	Status/ Pax
201			301		401		501		601	
202			302		402		502		602	
203			303		403		503		603	
204			304		404		504		604	
205			305		405		505		605	

C/O Rooms- _____

OCC Rooms- _____ V Rooms- _____

OOO Rooms- _____

TOTAL Rooms- _____

Ex. Housekeepers signature _____

GRA now proceed to service the guestrooms. On-change room (check-out) rooms are first priority, are cleaned by GRA. The floor supervisor inspects the rooms and informs the control desk supervisor to release these rooms to Front office for sale. The occupied rooms must be given most importance if there is any request made for cleaning the room by the guest.

While cleaning a check-out room mostly there is a probability of finding lost property of guest. Not only from guest room but also from different part of the hotel there the staffs from different departments too keep getting lost property of guest as well as staff. As the probability is more from guest room the responsibility is shared by Housekeeping department.

LOST AND FOUND

Articles are many times left behind by the guest but at times staffs too pick them while collecting soiled linen from room by mistake and also with the guest laundry its left back in the pockets of shirt and trouser of guest.

Every item found is recorded in the lost and found register.

DATE/TIME	SERIAL NO.	WHERE FOUND	ARTICLE &DESCRIPTION	FINDER	DISPOSAL

Each article is given a “serial No.” which makes it easy to locate in the storage. The best way is by numbers 1/1, 1/3, 2/9 so on. This means the first thing found in Jan. or 3rd thing found in Jan. and the 9th thing found in Feb. so on. The first number indicates the month and second number indicates article. “Where found” means room number or the specific area where the article is found.

“Article and Description” means specification of the article found for e.g. whether its shoe or slipper or sandal, and male or ladies shoes the size and the color etc. “Disposal” must be recorded, whether it’s returned to guest or given to finder according to the norms of the hotel. Often some articles are kept by the hotel and used like any liquor found in the room etc.

On receipt of article found the Housekeeping control desk records it in the “lost and found register”. The article is packed in transparent plastic bag with a lost and found slip containing the details as written in the register and stapled. One copy of the slip is also sent to the front office for information. Shelving space is divided in the cupboard according to the month, and articles are stored accordingly.

A lost and found enquiry file is also maintained in the department. As sometimes articles for some reason may come later too.

DATE	NAME	ADDRESS	ARTICLE LOST	DISPOSAL

Most hotels keep the less valuable articles for six months. Usually valuables are kept for one year.

Hotel advises their in-house guest to avail the safety locker facility in Front office cashiers’ office. These days most hotel provide a safety locker box in the wardrobe of the room itself and the guest can have their own code to activate or deactivate it. Valuables if found are stored in Ex. Housekeeper’s office in safety locker. Key to which is normally with Ex. Housekeeper. At the time of departure the Ex. Housekeeper seals the key in an envelope and deposits it in Front office cashiers’ office so that the key are always available. If required the duty manager can collect the keys after signing in the cashiers’ key register do the needful and return it again in a sealed envelope.

Note: valuables are marked with red ink in “lost and found register” Guest may phone, write or mail and enquire about his/her lost article. They may ask the hotel to post them or might send someone on his/her behalf to collect the article or sometimes even may collect it their subsequent visit to the hotel. Hotel

does not charge for postage. The Ex. Housekeeper signs on the register in the disposal column and mentions the address. If someone else comes to collect the articles we must ask for an authorization letter and get their signature on the register and the tag. Sometime the guest collects them then we request them to sign on the register.

When the storage time is over articles are returned to the finder. The Ex. Housekeeper signs in the lost and found slip which acts as a gate pass for the finder (staff). The valuables are auctioned and money distributed amongst the staff. This normally boosts the moral of the staff.

Each company has slightly different rules/policy about handling lost and found. As they are about to finish one after another guest room, they are log the details in the maid work sheet.

MAIDS' WORKSHEET

DATE:	NAME:	SEC. :	
ROOM NO.	STATUS	PAX	REMARKS
201 8.00am	V	---	---
202 9.00am	OCC	2	Ac noise
203 9.30am	OCC	1	TV channels
204 8.15am	C/O	2C/O	---
205	OOO	---	---

Maid's signature_

At the end of all the work they might be left with D/L or DND rooms. The supervisor makes a call to these rooms at 1.30pm to check whether these rooms can be serviced or not.

At about 2pm all the chambermaids' will collect all the soiled linen and sort them according to types of linen in their respective floor pantry. The supervisor will have them count the linen and enter the data in the floor linen book for record. The soiled linen will be sent to the linen room for exchange. Once the fresh linen is back in the floor they will be stored in the respective places. The chambermaids' are expected to clean the floor pantry before they leave. The

chambermaid will finally report back to Housekeeping Desk and submit the maid's report. The key are to be returned and signed for them too in the presence of H.K Desk supervisor.

It s now that they can go back to staff cloak room and change and deposit their uniform to the uniform room and keep the fresh uniform ready for next use.

Guest room inspection.

A supervisor has to check all the rooms on his/her floor, including all vacant room, departure room, expected arrival, VIP arrival, group arrival, blocked rooms and under repair rooms both out of service and out of order. After the end of the shift the floor supervisor has to take hand over from the GRA and make the entry in the floor register. The supervisor has to make the entry of all the DND, R/S, L/S on the floor.

The supervisor has to take the handover of lost and found from the GRA for the day. Before coming to the department the supervisor has to check the floor pantry, guest elevator, and service elevator, back-area of the floor, all fire exit and corridor. The supervisor has to check the floor pantry and has to take the count of all the items in the pantry like all loan item (iron board, hot water bag, water flask, weighing machine, etc) and make an entry in the floor register. After that the supervisor has to fill the log book kept in the department. The supervisor has to make an entry of all the rooms checked by him for the day. The supervisor has to fill the key register, hand over register. The supervisor has to hand-over the lost and found and keys to the desk attendant/supervisor before leaving for the day.

While dealing with the guest the floor supervisor comes across various complaints made by guests during their stay. The nature of these complaints is:

- Technical / mechanical complaints: these are various complaints which include maintenance
- related problems e.g. AC not working, the job of the supervisor is not only to pass on these complaints but also to get them attended as early as possible.
- Service related complaints: they are complaints related to inefficient working or cleanliness standards of the GRA. She briefs the GRA accordingly and attends to the complaint as soon as possible.
- Attitude related problems: these imply problems regarding the behavior of the GRA which may require counseling,
- unusual complaints: these imply undue demands made by the guest and also bad guest behavior.
- Complaints like missing items from the room after the room is cleaned by the GRA which calls

for alertness, investigation and involvement of seniors.

1. Bedroom: Procedure.

Check guest room entrance door.

Note any scratch marks, smudgy or dirt/dust on surface. Check for 'DO NOT DISTURB' sign on inside knob of the door. Check proper operation of locks, chains and door stops.

- Check condition and cleanliness of light switches and surrounding wall area.
- Scan ceiling, walls, woodwork for any damage, dirt/dust.
- Check curtains for stains, check that hooks are in place and the rods work correctly.
- Check window sill's window for cleanliness, make sure windows are locked and that locks work properly.

- Make sure heating and air-conditioning unit is free from dirt and dust, operates correctly and the temperature is set according to property standards.
- Make sure telephone is clean and works properly.
- Check the bed
- Make sure that the bed has fresh linen.
- Check condition of the bed spread and check the edges of the bed. Look under the bed for trash or guest item.
- Check head board for the dust.
- Check room furniture for scratches damage and dust check upholstery for stains.
- Check lamps for scratches and dust. Make sure light bulbs are of proper voltage.
- Turn –on television set to check for proper operation, turn-off and check for scratches, damage and dust.
- Check carpets and bade oafs or skirting boards for dirt, stain and dust.
- Check that wardrobes are clean and have the proper anonym of hangers. xiv. Check pictures and mirrors for dust,
- Check that bedroom amenities such as stationary and match-boxes are properly stacked.
- Make a final check around the room to make sure that all items are well positioned and that all areas ceiling to the floor are cleaned and well maintained.
- Complete a work order request and/or notifying the appropriated department for any item needing attention or repair.

BATHROOM Procedure

- Check bathroom door for scratches, marks or dust in the surface
- Check condition and cleanliness of light switches and surrounding wall area.
- Scan ceiling, walls and tiles for any damage, dirt and dust.

- Check shower area check tub and fixtures for watermarks, soap films and hair.
- Check fixtures for correct position and operation.
- Make sure bath not is in place. vi. Inspect vanity and sink area
- Check sink and counter area for watermarks, soap film and hair. Check mirror for spots.
- Check toilet for cleanliness, flush to check for proper operation.
- Check floor and base board for dirt and dust.
- Make sure that towels are neat and cleanly arranged on towels racks. x. Check toilet and facial issue and supply.
- Check that bathroom amenities such as soap, shampoo and mouth wash are properly stacked.
- Make a final check of bathroom to make sure all items are well positioned and that all areas from ceiling to floor are clean
- Complete the work order request and/or notify the appropriate dept. for any item needing attention or repair