



Engineering

by Erwin Noguera

Engineering training and resource manuals are an essential tool

*Another great article from The Rooms Chronicle, the #1 journal for hotel rooms management! ***Important notice: This article may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher or the author.*** College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Niagara University, P.O. Box 2036, Niagara University, NY 14109-2036. Phone: 866-Read TRC. E-mail: editor@roomschronicle.com*

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The engineering department training and resource manual is an essential tool to aid employees in maintaining department standards and to ensure timely and consistent responsiveness to engineering-related guest concerns. In short, the training and resource manual is the engineering department's "black book" that is furnished to each engineering staff member. It provides key information, resources, and standardized procedures pertaining to the everyday operation and maintenance of the hotel's physical facility.

What to include

Key information that should be included in every manual include: engineering department standards for the operation of the physical plant, fire alarm system specifications, sprinkler systems schematics, details regarding the location of shut-off valves for hot and cold water lines, the location of HVAC units and the areas they serve, hotel-specific plumbing manuals, guestroom repair standards, and pool & spa testing and cleaning instructions. Also, contact information for system specialists and repair/maintenance companies should be included in the manual. Centralizing this key information in a standardized and easily accessible format will enable the watch engineers and general maintenance team to respond to, troubleshoot, and resolve problems more quickly. It may also save the Chief Engineer or trade specialists from being paged or called while off property by a duty engineer to obtain unknown information.

Keep it simple

Simplicity is the key to creating a training and resource manual. Use 3-ring binders to create a manual for each engineering employee, thus enabling the addition of new or updated materials and the removal of outdated information. Binders can also be customized by each employee to include their name stenciled on the front or spine and by adding important information or data that may be unique to their engineering specialization.

Try starting out with an index page and one subject; use numbered tabs to make it easy to subsequently modify or add to the index. Even after the binder is assembled, the Chief Engineer will likely come across items that will be of interest to the maintenance staff. Now these items can be easily inserted. The important part of developing the manual is to keep it as basic as possible and not have the manual become a mechanical equipment technical bulletin, which can contain hundreds of pages. For a training and resource manual to become useful (and used by all maintenance employees), it is imperative that staff will become comfortable reading and reviewing its contents, and not inundated with hundreds of pages of superfluous technical information. Include only the key information that staff members need to know on a regular basis.

Don't forget to include critical information that all engineers should know or have access to such as emergency response procedures/information, fire alarm procedures, sprinkler valve locations, basic hood extinguishing system procedures and emergency generator start-up instructions. Include important telephone numbers such as service contractors specified with the service they provide. The manual should also contain service manuals for everyday guestroom items that may need repair such as: sink and tub faucets, pay-per-view system, HVAC thermostat, heating and cooling valves, heat pumps, internet modems, electronic door locks and electronic in-room safe. Don't forget to include manuals or information pertaining to public area items (e.g.,

Pictured below: Training and resource manuals such as this one can be a quick and handy source of key information for engineering employees.



automatic flush urinals and water closets, door operators, electronic door locks, temperature standards for public areas, meeting spaces and pools, etc.).

Even more benefits

Another great benefit of the manual is that it can become a guide to weekly training topics. Have the engineering team suggest and participate in deciding what should be included in the contents of the training manual. The non-specialized team members will be the individuals who can benefit the most.

The reference manual can be a great tool for new hires as well as existing staff members. Look around the department, think of all the common problems and make them uncommon. Most of the small repair issues in the department can be easily solved by assisting the staff with this resource. Implementing an engineering department training and resource manual today will save money tomorrow and throughout the future through quicker response time, repairs completed correctly the first time, and adherence to money-saving procedures and standards. ✧

(Erwin Noguera is the director of engineering for the Park Hyatt Toronto, a premium luxury hotel containing 346 guestrooms and suites in the heart of Canada's largest city. E-mail: enoguera@torphpo.hyatt.com)