



# Housekeeping

by Gail Edwards, CHHE

## To increase room attendant efficiency, limit trips to the cart

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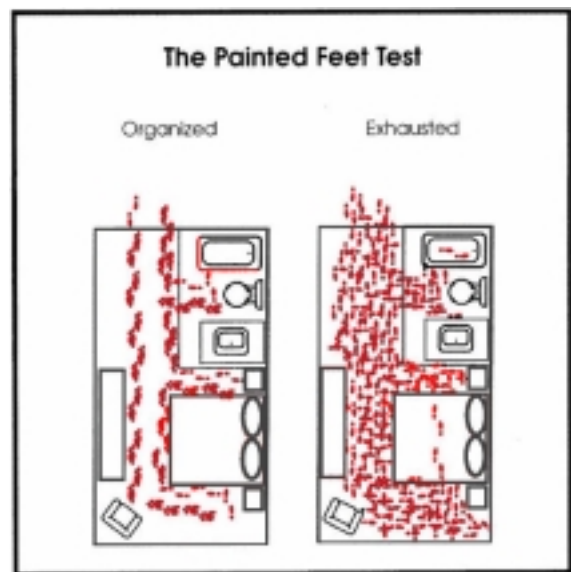
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The best room attendants will explain that they have developed a system to clean their rooms. Whether or not they have been formally trained, veteran cleaners have worked out a routine that they use in each room.

One of the secrets of being an excellent executive housekeeper is to help every room attendant learn a system that will save both steps and time.

Although there are disputes about the correct order of cleaning, the most important factor is to limit the number of trips to the cart. This is a list that has been successful in many hotels. Note there are only four trips to the cart.

1. Set vacuum cleaner inside door. Enter the room carrying cleaning supplies. Circle around the room turning on lights, collecting trash, opening drawers and drapes, and checking supplies. Return to the cart to empty trash. Set empty wastebaskets near bathroom door to be washed.
2. Carry in replacement supplies. Strip bed(s), add dirty linen from bathroom, and return to cart with all dirty linen.
3. Carry in clean linen. Clean the bathroom and place clean terry. Make beds. Move around the room in a circular pattern to dust, clean mirrors, and straighten supplies. Return cleaning supplies to cart.
4. Carry in supplies that may have been forgotten on earlier trips. Vacuum beginning at the farthest point from the entry door. Close drapes, set HVAC, and turn out lights while vacuuming Suites, kitchenettes, and other special situations require more creativity to streamline the process, but the goal should always be to save steps. Buy caddies and other tools that will make it easy to move cleaning supplies and amenities from the cart to the room. Choose uniforms or aprons that have big usable pockets. Organize the room's paper supplies into a notebook that the cleaner can simply replace. Notebooks can be refilled after hours in the housekeeping office by other employees.



The best way to help room attendants understand wasted steps is to have them pretend that they have wet paint on the bottoms of their shoes. How many footsteps would be on the floor after they finished a room? Make sure there are enough, without having too many. ✧

(Gail Edwards is the Executive Housekeeper of the 809-room Millennium Hotel in St. Louis, MO. She has previously held positions as Front Office Manager, F&B Director, Rooms Division Executive and has taught at a local college. This article originally appeared in *The Rooms Chronicle*® Volume 2, Number 4 - July/August 1994.)