



Ask Gail

by William D. Frye, Ph.D., CHE

Removing hair and dust from walls and chemicals from housekeeper carts

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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Dear Gail:

I know that in a previous Ask Gail column you explained how to remove small hairs from bedding. How can our room attendants remove hair, lint fibers and dust that tend to accumulate on walls? We try and dust vertical surfaces on a regular basis but it seems the more we dust, the faster it accumulates. Also, can you suggest a reasonable alternative for our room attendants to avoid leaving chemicals on their housekeeping carts while they are in the guestroom cleaning with the door closed? A small child at a nearby hotel was poisoned when he started playing with cleaning chemicals that he found on an unattended housekeeping cart in the hallway.

Deirdre L., Housekeeping Manager
Tucson, AZ

Dear Deirdre,

The problem that your room attendants are experiencing with hair, fibers and dust on guestroom walls is not unusual. Generally, these contaminants end up on walls through a variety of means. Stray hairs tend to adhere to walls because they become electrostatically charged, primarily through the use of hair dryers. When a guest uses an electric hair dryer and then brush their hair afterwards, individual strands become "charged." All humans, especially woman, will shed a number of hairs each time they brush; these charged hairs then gravitate and adhere to the nearest vertical surface, or they may be blown there by the hair dryer. Dust in carpets, pet hairs shed from guest clothes, and errant lint fibers also becomes electrostatically charged and dispersed against walls by vacuum cleaners or through the induction of heat from blowing guestroom heating units such as PTAC's and centralized forced-air heating systems.

Until something that has greater attraction power than the electrostatic charge comes in contact with these contaminants, it is very hard to remove them from walls. Typical dusting of walls only tends to stir up the contaminants and move them to another surface. It usually does not pull the contaminants from the wall and remove them from the guestroom environment.

Consider arming each of your room attendants with self-adhesive rollers designed to catch dust, lint and hair. Self-adhesive cleaning rollers quickly clean walls as well as floors, upholstery, carpets, tile, and draperies. The self-adhesive rollers should be attached to extension poles so housekeepers can easily reach overhead areas without using a ladder or standing on guestroom furniture. Each housekeeping cart should be equipped with an extension dust roller and the appropriate mechanism to hold the extension pole in place (see picture at left). To aid in minimizing the accumulation of dust and hair on vertical surfaces in guestrooms, assign wall cleaning with self-adhesive rollers as a "daily special" task each week for room attendants.

As for removing dangerous chemicals from housekeeping carts so they do not pose an attractive nuisance to children, I checked with Paul Gingras at the Park Hyatt hotel in Toronto, Canada. When Mr. Gingras, who is a seasoned hotelier, assumed the position as Executive Housekeeper at the Park Hyatt Toronto two years ago, he recognized the importance of minimizing clutter on housekeeping carts in a luxury hotel environment. He also acknowledged the potential for danger and incurring legal liability by leaving cleaning chemicals unattended on housekeeper carts.



Mr. Gingras outfitted each room attendant with a black, nylon coated tote bag that is specifically designed to carry spray chemical bottles and cleaning rags. The soft-sided tote bag has large web handles for easy carrying into guestrooms and transporting on the front of the housekeeper carts. The dark color tote bag hides any staining and matches the uniforms of the room attendants and the décor of the guest floors. Bags can also be cleaned with soap and water. ✧

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