



Housekeeping

by Gail Edwards, CHHE

Are public restrooms giving a great first impression?

*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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Veteran cleaners explain how to inspect a public restroom: “Walk in the door. Look up to see if the ceiling vent is fuzz free, and look down to see if the floor drain is clean and polished.” In two quick glances, our experts can determine whether the restroom receives regular, detailed care or only a passing touch-up.

Does this two-glance method really separate the clean from the not-so-clean? “Yes,” veteran cleaners will say. “When the cleaning staff cares enough to reach up to vacuum the air vents or to get on hands and knees to polish the metal floor drain, you can be sure they have also cleaned the walls, floors, and fixtures.” Keeping public restrooms clean and safe requires a strong combination of daily and regular cleaning.

Daily/hourly tasks

All public restrooms should be cleaned twice daily, inspected regularly, and touched up as necessary. A record should be kept of cleaning and inspection activities to limit the hotel’s liability in case of a guest accident. For instance, if a guest slips, a log verifying that the hotel demonstrated reasonable care in keeping the floor dry would limit the hotel’s exposure to a lawsuit. Records can be maintained using a log kept in the restroom. Some hotels post the log inside

the towel dispenser or on the back of the entry door. Others keep a clipboard on the cleaner’s cart and update a file in Housekeeping after each day’s inspection.

While working, employees must take care to keep cleaning supplies out of guests’ view. Some hotels have special, shielded carts or use storage rooms near the restroom. When restrooms are closed for cleaning, it is courteous to guests to post signs indicating the locations of nearby restrooms.

Deep-cleaning tasks

Many tasks in the job of cleaning a public restroom require that the room be placed out of service for a few hours while it is deep cleaned. For instance, stripping the floor and resealing it may need to be done four times a year, depending on the traffic in the restroom. Men’s restrooms often need the area around urinals redone more frequently, due to splashes of urine deteriorating the floor sealant.

Other projects might be: scrub the floor drains; wash all walls; clean all edges; remove ceiling vents and clean them; clean the light fixtures; scrub the trash receptacles; scrub the carpet; and wash the windows.



Reporting maintenance issues

It is extremely important that public restroom cleaners immediately report maintenance issues. Failure to repair drips, leaks, burned-out bulbs, broken locks, and other such things in a timely manner will cost the hotel precious profit.

Meeting guest expectations

The appearance of public restrooms is very important if a hotel is to have a favorable impact on guests. Always under the scrutiny of the public, the condition of these bathrooms makes a strong statement about the rest of the hotel. Customers who only visit the restaurant or bar or who only attend a meeting will draw conclusions about the condition of guestrooms based on their impressions of the public space. ✧

(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 4, Number 3 - May/June 1996.)

Public restroom cleaning tasks

- Clean sinks, counters/edges
- Polish faucets (and pipes under sinks)
- Clean mirrors
- Clean windows and ledges
- Refill soap dispensers and clean
- Refill towel dispensers and polish
- Refill toilet paper dispensers (as needed)
- Empty trash receptacles, replace liners
- Dust lights, ceiling vents, and corners
- Wash down walls (especially near sinks, urinals, and toilets)
- Scrub urinals and/or toilets
- Wash plumbing pipes
- Wash privacy panels, sides, and edges
- Sweep floor to remove hairs and trash
- Wet mop floor
- Check supply of vending machines and report need for restocking
- Check condition of all fixtures and report to Maintenance as needed
- Brush upholstered furniture (if present)
- Vacuum carpet (if present)

Equipment list

- Appropriate signage (Caution, Wet Floor, Restroom Closed for Cleaning)
- Protective gloves and goggles
- Paper towels
- Toilet seat cover protection
- Liquid hand soap
- Toilet paper
- Liquid disinfectant cleaner
- Rags and disposable rags for toilets
- Bucket with mop, wringer attachment
- Dust pan, broom, and vacuum
- Squeegee (with extension if necessary)
- Toilet mop/scrubber with retractable plastic cover so attendant need not touch it
- Floor squeegee to push excess water down drain
- Air freshener
- Window and mirror cleaner
- Trash receptacle liners
- Putty knife to remove gum from floors
- Graffiti remover