

Latest trends and development in the use of cleaning equipment in Hotel Housekeeping; its anticipations and opportunities

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ABSTRACT

Keeping the interior and exterior surface of a hotel or any sector of the hospitality industry is the basic requirement for existence of any organisation. It creates an ultimate impression in the minds of the guest as we all know that first impression of the guest has a huge impact because it only determines whether a guest will return back to the hotel or not. To achieve the highest quality and standards effective cleaning is required which is done now a days by using the modern cleaning equipments. The efficient and effective cleaning and maintenance will depend upon highest quality cleaning equipment and by using them correctly. Selection of the appropriate cleaning equipment play an important role in the entire cleaning process because only five to ten percent of the overall cost incurred on cleaning is accounted for by cleaning equipment and cleaning agents. There are often being various methods of doing any particular cleaning task and various type of cleaning equipment that can be used for the same. It is the duty of the Executive housekeeper to select the most appropriate piece of cleaning equipment according to the requirement of the hotel. A few large pieces of cleaning equipment may be considered as fixed assets, where as many types of cleaning equipment that falls under the category of recycled inventory items. The appropriate choice of good quality cleaning equipment can be very useful as it could save costs due to breakdown, reduces fatigue and tension and also ensure overall efficiency in handling operations. Equipment used in the cleaning of surface, various furniture and fittings in a hotel building include both manual and electrical cleaning equipment. Manual cleaning equipment does not require electricity to function whereas mechanical equipments do not function without electricity. That is the reason mechanical cleaning equipments are also known as electrical cleaning equipments. As the days are passing people are paying more attention towards housekeeping department, for example the room attendants are also given training as how to handle the cleaning equipments efficiently as more and more use of electrical and mechanical equipment are increasing these days. Similarly in hotel public areas more use of sophisticated mechanical cleaning equipments are used now a days and also in the on premises hotel laundry. In five star hotels in recent times, the robot cleaner is being introduced.

Key words- Housekeeping department, present trend, Hospitality industry, Hotel

Introduction

Cleaning is the process of removing stains and dust particles from the materials and surfaces with the help of particular cleaning equipment and cleaning agent. In the hotel , the guest attitude towards it is determined by the neatness of the surroundings and cleaning has a high impact. Cleaning helps to provide a hygienic environment and it is a task done to preserve the life of building, furniture, linen and equipment, it also helps to prevent bacterial infections. The hotel premises is also segregated into three major parts for effective cleaning like guest room and bathroom area, public areas like banquets, lobbies, restaurants, guest floor corridor, guest and staff elevator areas, escalators and moving walkways, garden areas and thirdly In house office areas such as business centers, account offices, executive offices and so on. It is easily understood that for maintaining the effective cleanliness , the role of

cleaning equipment cannot be ignored. Cleaning equipment, both manual and electrical are both widely used in all fields of hospitality industry namely hotel, airline, hospital, resorts, floatels, motels, management offices, multinational companies and so on. So, it can be now understood that the equipment that helps in cleaning is called cleaning equipment. These tools are necessary for the accommodation operations department as cleaning equipment is one of the prime product of this department. The desk control must also be careful as these product requires a lot of expenses. As far as the latest trends and development is concerned in cleaning equipment, there are a series of manual equipment used now in hospitality industry for efficient cleaning like bucket, bowls and basin, dustpans, sanitary bins, polish applicator tray, brushes and brooms, dry mop, wet mop and box sweepers whereas as far as the mechanical cleaning equipment are concerned there are machines like vacuum cleaner, scrubbing machine, carpet shampooing machine, hot water extraction machine and so on. There are many organizations who are constantly doing their research for the development and the modernization of housekeeping cleaning equipment and they are also manufacturing the same. Some of the famous organizations like Diversy, Jangro, Eco Lab, Haylde are manufacturing innovative cleaning equipment and nearly all sector of hospitality industry is using their products. In spite of new development in cleaning equipment, training must be given to the people and staff who handle them otherwise wrong use or mis use can damage the equipment or the environment. Since aspect of cleaning is done keeping in mind about guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry, utmost care should be taken while handling these equipments because effective cleaning will lead to guest satisfaction and profit maximisation.

Review of Literature

Cleaning equipment is a major requirement for the day to day work process of the housekeeping department. Effective cleaning can only be done if proper use of cleaning equipment and cleaning agents are done simultaneously. This research paper aims to impart the importance for the efficient usage of the cleaning agents in hotel and hospitality industry. Cleaning equipments are used in all sector of hospitality industry like hotels, airlines, multiplex, shopping malls, shipping, railways, cruise lines, and other parts of tourism industry for cleaning purposes. Different organizations are continuously doing their research work for the improvement in functioning of cleaning equipments and innovations and improvisation are being done for the easy usage in the hotel and hospitality industry. The different cleaning equipments that are used in hotel industry are continuously improvised for better functioning.

Manual Cleaning Equipments

Manual cleaning equipments are widely used in hotel and hospitality industry as an effective cleaning tool but they are mainly used in the back areas cleaning like management offices, staff lockers, laundry, linen and uniform room, training and human resources office, security areas and the like. Frequent wash with water is avoidable since the brushes may lose some of their stiffness in this way. If they must be washed frequently, the final rinse should be in cold saline water to help the bristles regain their stiffness. Brushes should be cleaned of all fluff and threads before washing. They may then be rinsed in warm, mild soapy water. A disinfectant should be added to the water used for rinsing toilet brushes. If brushes with natural bristles (vegetable or animal origin) have been used for wax polishing, add washing soda (1 tbsp to 2 litres of water) to remove grease thoroughly. Brushes should be washed by beating the head up and down, with the bristles facing downwards, so that the water splashes up between the tufts. They should be rinsed well in the same way in cold water. After shaking off excess water, the brushes should be left to dry in such a way that the remaining water may drip off the side of the brush or the top of the head stock. Never leave brushes resting on their bristles, else will they splay out; if left resting on their stock, water will rot the stock in time. The best way would be to hang the brushes bristles downward. When possible, dry brushes in the sun or open air. To extend the life of the brush, apply lacquer to the stock and handle with an oil-can and allow to harden. Another important manual cleaning equipment is Sweeping brooms that consist of long bristles gathered together and inserted into a handle. Electric brooms, arguably a fourth type, have been discussed under mechanical equipment. All kinds of brooms raise and dissipate dust, so that, with the advent of the more hygienic process of

vacuum cleaning, brooms are used less often for cleaning purposes in hotels. Brooms should be shaken free of dust and fluff. Never store them standing on their bristles, or the bristles will bend out of shape, resulting in inefficient cleaning. Store brooms either lying horizontally or hanging bristles downward. Never use soft brooms on wet surfaces. Stiff brooms such as coconut-fibre brooms can be used on wet surfaces but must be cleaned afterward thoroughly in saline water and dried in the sun before cleaning. The Box Sweepers are also called carpet sweepers and are used for sweeping up dust and litter from soft floor coverings as well as rugs and carpets. They are ideal for the removal of spills and for light cleaning of small carpeted areas. A box sweeper consists of a friction brush that revolves when the equipment is pushed manually over the carpet bottom to facilitate emptying after use. Choose sweepers with a wide base that is low enough to be pushed under furniture and that will clean close to a wall. In sweepers meant to clean hard floors as well as soft floor coverings, the brush can be lowered to the floor to sweep. The friction brush should be kept clean; else the efficiency of the equipment will be seriously impaired. After the cleaning process, the dustpans should be emptied of all the collected dust. Dry mops are also used widely in hotels as it is easy to remove the dry dust particles from floor and walls if dry mops are used. The mop head is either inserted into the frame or stretched over it, or used according to the type. For maintenance purpose it is required to shake mops well after use outdoors. The mop head should be easily detachable so they can be frequently washed in hot water with detergent. The use of soap-free detergent will prevent the formation of scum that clogs the fibres of the head. The mop must be worked up and down in at least 2 changes of clean, hot water. The clean mop should then be tightly squeezed out, shaken well to get rid of excess moisture and left to dry in open air. Once dry, the mops may need to be re-impregnated. Next important manual cleaning equipment is a squeegee that consists of a long metallic handle and a wooden or rubber blade to remove excess water from a surface being cleaned. It is effective when followed by mopping with a damp mop. A smaller version called the window squeegee is used for wiping away water from windows after washing. In order to take proper care of mops, mops are taken outdoors after use and shake well to remove excess moisture. Then these mops may be washed in the same way as dry mops. Detachable heads are easier to clean and maintain. However, drying is the most important part of mop care as bacteria require moisture to multiply. A disinfectant to discourage their growth is effective only for a short period of time, so leaving them damp means letting germs breed. Damp mops should be renewed as soon as there are signs of wear. They should be stored in such a way that air is allowed to circulate around the mop head. Never use disinfectant or bleach with a cellulose sponge head. Wash and rinse sponge heads after use, squeeze out excess water and dry well. Store the sponge head by hanging. They are sometimes placed in the passage between the kitchen and dining area to catch spills and debris. · Hearth and bucket cloths are made up of thick fabrics and used to protect the carpet and flooring when a fireplace is being cleaned or placed under buckets to prevent marks on the surface they are kept on. They also catch splashes of water. The above mentioned cleaning equipments are mainly used in the back areas of hotels presently and research is ongoing by various organisations for its development and making them more user friendly. The modern manual cleaning equipment includes water closet brush, box sweeper machine, flue brushes, linen scrubbing brush, impregnated mop, dry mop wet mop, micro fiber duster wonder wipe, Brooms that are also used consist of long bristles gathered together and inserted into a long handle. It is of following types like soft bristled broom and They have soft bristles and are used on smooth floors, next comes the hard or coarse bristled broom that are used on coarse surfaces especially outdoors. Wall brooms are also called as ceiling brooms or Turk's head which have a soft head and a long handle usually made of cane. They are used to remove cobwebs as well as dust from cornices, ceilings and high edges. Other type include soft bristled broom, hard bristled broom, wall broom and box sweeper. Polish applicator are labelled for the type of polish used. The head is never washed but replaced. Squeezes are meant to remove excess water from the floors. Smaller ones are meant to remove excess water from windows while cleaning windows. Other manual cleaning equipment include mop sweeper, wet mop, containers, mop wringer trolley, hand caddy, dust bin, sani bin, spray bottles, maid cart trolley, janitor trolley, linen trolley and so on that are widely used in hotel.

Mechanical cleaning Equipments

The different types of mechanical cleaning equipments include the use of vacuum or suction cleaners widely in hotels. These machines are electrically operated and can clean the dry dust particles as well as water or liquid dirt from a surface by the use of wet vacuum or suction cleaner machine. For operating these equipment people get tired slowly. There are no frayed flexes to repair and no individual machines to go wrong. Apart from Vacuum cleaners

Floor scrubbing machine, Floor polishing machine, Carpet shampooing machine, hydro-extractor, tumble dryer, calendar (Ironing machine) are all modern and latest equipment that are currently used in the industry. I robot vacuum cleaning (Robot room cleaner) is the latest addition to the latest type of cleaning equipment. Latest technology floor scrubbing machine, steam vapour machine are now used in hotels. Wet and dry vacuum cleaner are meant for both dry and wet work. Only heads of the machine need to be changed. Filters also have to be changed. Nylon for wet work & felt for dry work. In centralised vacuum cleaner Suction is generated at one point in the building. Soiling can be removed at vacuum points elsewhere in the building by suitable nozzles linked to detachable flexible hoses. The collected dirt is then conveyed by a network pipes to a central container For Floor cleaning machines scrubber polisher is meant for scrubbing and polishing of floors. Carpet shampoo machine is meant for the deep cleaning of the carpets that are heavily soiled. Stripping pads are black & brown for these machines. Scrubbing pads are blue or green in color. Polishing pads are white in colour. Spray cleaning pads are red in color. High pressure washer machine is designed to remove dirt by subjecting the surface to water, steam and sand under pressure. Water under high pressure physically dislodges the dust. The process can be assisted by the use of hot water, steam or sand. Scarifying machine are meant to remove high level of grease, mud and thick deposits from any surface. This is used when simple scrubbing machine is not effective. Here dirt deposits are broken by the chisel like action of a wire brush cutting tool.

Training session for staff

Training and motivating employees is the basic and most essential equipment in the present case. The increased use in mechanical equipments in housekeeping operations has placed managers of housekeeping in a position to training to its staff, maximum and proper use of equipments, supply and manpower to increase efficiency in operational work. The housekeeping job is going too mechanical gradually and providing trainings are a basic requirement to maintain highest level of performances and productivity standard. It is the need of the hour to have collaborated efforts required between the hotel housekeeper and hotel management institution for theory and practical knowledge for overall developments. As the new types of cleaning equipments are coming to the industry (Manual and mechanical cleaning equipment), proper training and guidance to the staff must be given as in how to operate the same, otherwise mishandling of equipment may damage the surface, or damage the equipment also. As the equipments are very costly, it may result in direct revenue loss for the hotel. So it is understood that proper training is necessary for the staff otherwise proper revenue generation and guest satisfaction for the hotel cannot be achieved. Grooming and hygiene of staff is very important as all employees have to present themselves in a tidy neat and manner matching with the physical environment where they are working. It is mandatory for all employees to wear company uniform on duty. Vacant room has to be serviced properly as guest room has to be properly clean at every given time.

Conclusion and recommendations

Cleaning is a method to remove unwanted particles, like dust, dirt, disease causing agents, and other impurities, from any object or environment. Cleaning happens in many different ways, and uses various methods. Without effective cleaning and proper hygiene no one will like the place whether it is the guest or the staff. In order to do the effective cleaning manual and mechanical cleaning equipment are used along with cleaning agents for creating a neat environment. So it is easily understood that continuous research should be done for the development of different cleaning equipment so that more accurate results can be achieved. Many organizations are working on this context and many more organizations should come forward to achieve this task. Both national and International hotel chains like The taj group of Hotels, ITC hotels, Hyatt Hotels, JW Marriott, Sheraton, Shangrila, Radisson, Lemon tree, The lalit, W hotels, Hilton, Novotel, and so on are using these latest equipment in their different units. As and when new technology will emerge and development in this sector will take place, it will help not only the hotel sector but the entire hospitality world.

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