

COURSE CODE:	FSM 309
COURSE TITLE:	Reception and Accommodation Techniques
NUMBER OF UNITS:	2 Units
COURSE DURATION:	Two hours per week

COURSE DETAILS:

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COURSE CONTENT:

This course affords the students the knowledge of front office procedures and their practical application. Basic procedures in housekeeping. Maintenance of appliances in hotel & catering industry.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

This is a compulsory course for students in the department of Foodservice and Tourism. In view of this, students are expected to participate in all the course activities and have minimum of 75% attendance to be able to write the final examination.

READING LIST:

1. Hotel, Hostel and Hospital Housekeeping, 5th edition. Joan C. Branson and Margret Lennox
2. Baily, M. (2001) "Travel Business: Rooms at the Top" *Asian Business*, 27, 9 September, 2001.
3. Eyster, J. (2003) "The Revolution in Domestic Hotel Management Contracts", *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, 34,1, February, 2003.
4. Landberg, D. E. (1994). *The Hotel and Restaurant Business*, 4th ed. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold.
5. The International Hotel Association, Paris, "The Management Game: How to keep One step Ahead" *Hotels*, 27, 6, May 2003.

LECTURE NOTES

The Front Office

The front office of a hotel generally performs the following basic activities:

- Processing advance reservations
- Registering guests
- Rooming guests
- Handling guests' luggage
- Issuing room keys
- Providing information
- Handling guests' mail and parcel
- Administering telephone service
- Accounting (making payments and billing)
- Checking out guests

Rooms Division

The structure of the rooms division will vary from hotel to hotel. These variations can be caused by differences in the size of hotels, the types and level of services, and the organization preferences of management. The major departments in the rooms division are front office and housekeeping. A few hotels may also include security. These departments come under the control of the Rooms Division Manager or Director of rooms.

Front Office Personnel

The front office is the nerve centre of hotel operations. Hotel personnel are there to serve guests. An important aspect of this is providing a good first impression of the establishment to guests. People are involved in serving guests are :

- Reception (Front Desk Clerk, Front Office Agent, Receptionist)
- Reservations Clerk
- Concierge

- Bell (Porter)
- Airport Representative
- Telephone Operator

Rooms Division Manager

A room division manager has the following duties:

- Responsible for the supervision of employees engaged in the operation of the front areas of the hotel.
- Coordinates with other departments in the hotel and maintains open communications with them to find better ways to serve the guests.
- Maintains responsibility for staffing, purchasing, and budgeting.
- Supervises the rooms' division payroll, availability controls, and monthly plans.
- Creates plans to maximize the average daily rate and percentage of occupancy
- Handles customer complaints and suggestions
- Stays up to date with events taking place in the market, in market segments, and in the competition.

Rooms division manager's knowledge required includes a complete understanding of hotel operations, specifically those operations involving the front office, housekeeping and basic accounting procedures.

Front Office Manager

It is the basic function of the front office manager to directly supervise the front desk, reservations, concierge and PABX.

He is also assists the rooms division manager in compiling information for reports.

Other duties of the front office manager include the following:

- Assists in the training and cross-training of front office employees
- Prepares monthly reports.
- Assists the room division manager in formulation and implementation of front office

policies and procedures.

Reviews and approves all room moves and room rate changes to ensure they were necessary.

Handles guest complaints and follows them up to reduce future complaints

Assists the room division manager in forecasting room availability to ensure that the optimal level of occupancy is attained.

Is available to work in the front office area where there may be a shortage of staff

Maintains the necessary stock of supplies in all front office areas, while controlling costs in these areas.

Front Desk Supervisor

It is the front desk supervisor's basic function to directly supervise the front desk procedures that include check-in and check-out. The front desk supervisor performs the following duties:

Trains and cross-trains front desk personnel in the tasks of registration, mail handling, information services, and check-in and check-out procedures.

Regulates the service given in the front desk

Acts as a liaison between the guests and management, particularly with regard to problem-solving activities

Is responsible for seeing that daily and hourly computer reports are run and distributed

Assigns VIP rooms to ensure guest satisfaction

Resolves room discrepancy report

Prepares the weekly/monthly schedule of employees

Assist the group coordinator with all group arrivals, either directly or through the delegation of this duty to other front desk staff

Reception (Front Desk Agent)

The reception provides the first initial contact a guest has with the hotel.

After this contact, guests feel that the reception is the place to call or go when they have a question or problem. The basic functions performed by the reception are the registration process and the assisting of guests with any requests they make.

The reception's duties include the following:

- Handles the guest registration process and adheres to all hotel credit policies in the process
- Handles guest check-out procedure
- Always answers the front desk phone with three rings or less
- Attempts to sell-up guest rooms, and informs and sells the guest on all hotel services and facilities
- Is aware of all daily events in the hotel and local area
- Handles guest mail and reservations when the reservations department is closed
- Coordinates room status updates with housekeeping department
- Ensure completion of guest registration card
- Identifies guests' length of stay requirement
- Coordinates maintenance work with the engineering and maintenance division
- Maintains guestroom key storage

Reservations Manager

The reservations manager's basic functions are to supervise and oversee all the operations of the reservations area.

He or she must assure that all reservations, both group and individual, are recorded and followed up on as necessary.

Other duties of reservations manager are to perform the following:

- Making sure proper telephone etiquette is used and correct information is being given to potential guests.
- Being sure that personal service is stressed and that sales techniques are being used appropriately.
- Following up on tentative booking, watching cut-off dates, and monitoring group tour business accounts blocks for productivity.
- Training reservation agents and setting up cross-training programs.
- Reviewing all VIP reservations and working with the rooms division manager and the front

office manager on assignments.

- Preparing and distributing to concerned departments a weekly, monthly reservations and revenue forecast.
- Handling requests for reservation information and room rates
- Developing and maintaining a solid working relationship with the central reservations office and travel agents.

Reservations Clerk

The reservations clerk is responsible for taking reservations and for providing future guests with information about the facilities of the hotel.

Duties performed by reservations clerk includes:

- Giving friendly and courteous service to future guests while involved in telephone Sales.
- Answering all reservation phone calls, taking reservations, and dealing with reservations Correspondence.
- Dealing with group bookings such as cancellations, changes, and rooming lists
- Checking to see that all equipment is working properly and that the needed amount of supplies is on hand.
- Conducting telemarketing under the direction of the director of sales and marketing.

Telephone Operator

The telephone operator may seldom be face-to-face with guests of the hotel, but plays an important role in representing the hotel to the guest. For this position, a friendly and courteous tone of voice is all-important.

The duties of the telephone operator include:

- Answers incoming calls
- Directs calls to guestrooms through the switchboard.

- Provides information on guest services
- Processes guest wake-up calls
- Answers inquiries about hotel facilities and events

Guest Relations Officers (GRO)

- Make guests feel welcome
- Provide personal services
- Handle guests problems and complaints
- Take care for VIPs and frequent guests, escorting them on arrival

Front Office cashier

- Prepare and settle of guests accounts
- Administer the safe deposit boxes
- Provide a foreign currency exchange service

Business centre

- Fax, photocopying and secretarial service
- Translation,
- Hire of equipment (e.g. lap-top computer & mobile phone)
- Meeting-room rental

Job Scope

The hotel receptionist is very often the first and last member of staff hotel guests will see.

They have to reflect the hotel's atmosphere and convey a sincere welcome to all customers.

In the larger hotels, the front office job is often split into three - that of receptionist, cashier

and reservations clerk. In smaller hotels, however, the receptionist could be performing the duties of all three.

Duties:

Receptionist

The front desk receptionist, has to play a very important role vis-a-vis the clients in not only selling rooms and services but also the image of the hotel as well.

When checking in guests, you should perform these tasks:-

- assign rooms and issue room keys;
- check with the housekeeping departments that rooms are ready for occupation;
- liaise with the bell desk to deliver luggage to the rooms;
- note requests for wake-up calls, transport arrangements and other general enquiries;
- settle guests' complaints with tact and diplomacy;
- communicate with other departments regarding group and VIP check-ins.

Reservations Clerk

The reservations clerk has to handle and process reservation requests and maintain reservation records.

Main duties:-

- keep a record of guests' arrivals, day and time of check-in, length of stay, and their special needs and preferences;

- liaise with other departments such as housekeeping, restaurants and security, regarding VIP and group check-ins;
- manage the booking of rooms.

Cashier

The cashier has to maintain accurate account balances for hotel expenses and collect payment from guests. Hotel expenses include room charges, overseas telephone calls, meals and laundry.

You should be able to:-

- transact foreign exchange, for example, converting foreign currencies and travellers cheques into local currency;
- settle bill payments and expenses quickly and accurately for guests who are checking out;
- maintain safe deposit boxes.

Personal Qualities:

- Pleasant appearance and warm personality to create a good first impression;
- tactful and patient;
- able to communicate clearly and willing to help others;
- eye for accuracy for checking reservations and processing room requests;
- flexible and diplomatic when dealing with demanding and unreasonable guests;
- aptitude for numbers and good at handling cash and accounting machines.

Classification of Hospitality Services

The hospitality and tourism industry, like any other industry, has different classifications of hotels and accommodations and also different segments and sectors. Hotels can be classified according to location, price and type of services they offer.

Examples of these are:

- i. City centre hotels whose characteristics include luxury, first class midscale, economy and suites;
 - ii. Resort hotels, characterized by luxury, midscale, economy, suites, condominium (individually owned apartment) and time share convention;
 - iii. Air port hotels, they are midscale, luxury, economy and suites.
 - iv. Free way hotels and the normal - hotels are midscale, economy and suites;
- and
- v. Casino hotels, which constitute of luxury, midscale, and economy.

Hotels are also segmented according to price and this segment is called diamond or star. The segment is divided into five as follows: (i) One, diamond/star hotels which have simple roadside appeal and offer basic accommodation needs, (ii) Star/diamond hotels that have an average road side appeal. They also have some kind of landscaping and a noticeable interior decoration (iii) Star hotels have levels of sophistication through higher services and comfort. (iv) Star or diamond hotels have a very good roadside appeal and very good services that the guests require and (v) Five star hotels which are at the peak of this segment, have the highest level of services and a sophisticated interior decoration and landscaping with an excellent roadside appeal. Another way to classify hotels is by the degree of service offered. We have the full service hotels, economy hotels, extended stay hotels and all suites hotels.

Hotel Classification

Another way to classify hotels is by the degree of service they offered. We have the full service hotels, economy hotels, extended – stay hotels and all suit-hotels. Now we are going to discuss these classifications one after the other.

The first is the full service hotels, which offer a wide variety of services and facilities like what you expect to get in any luxury or five star/diamond hotels. Services and facilities include a variety of food and beverages outlets, restaurants and bars, meeting, convention and catering services and also business features like a business centre, secretarial services, fax, internet etc.

The second class of hotel, is the economy or budget hotel. These types of hotels do not offer the services of the full-service hotels but they have clean reasonably sized and furnished rooms. They usually sell rooms without meals or meeting places and this enables them to offer rates at about 30 percent lower than mid-priced hotels.

The third in this classification is the extended – stay hotels. These hotels cater for guests who stay for an extended period of time. People take advantage of the reduction in the rates based on the length of their stay. Most of the guests that patronize the extended – stay hotels are business people, professional or technical people or families that are relocating. Some properties or hotels in this class have shopping services and kitchen facilities on their premises while some properties may offer a business centre and recreational facilities.

The fourth in this classification is the all-suite hotels. These properties provide a closer-to-home feeling for guests who are relocating and are yet to get an apartment. People attending seminars or work relocated project that makes it necessary for one to stay for about a week or more. The all suit hotels have larger space for the same amount of money as the regular hotel.

Franchising in the hospitality industry

Franchising in the hospitality, travel and tourism industry is a concept that allows a company to expand more rapidly by making other people to invest their money, which is better than if it had to acquire its own financing. The company that wants to become a franchise grants certain rights to interested organizations for a fee. These grants and rights include the use of its trade mark, signs, proven operating system, operating procedures and possibility

reservation system. In return, the franchisee agrees to sign the franchise contract to operate the restaurant or hotel as the case may be in accordance with the guidelines set by the franchisor. Franchising is a way of doing business to bring benefits to both the franchisor who wants to expand his or her business at a fast pace and the franchisee who has the financial backing but lacks specific expertise and recognition. Some typical examples of franchising in the hospitality and travel industry and also the most earliest development were in 1907, when the Ritz development company franchised the Ritz-Carlton name in New York City United State of America. One of the first persons to franchise his hotels was Haward Johnson in 1927. This allowed for a rapid expansion at first on the east coast of America and later to the Midwest and finally in the western State of California in the mid-1960s.

Today, there are more than 900 restaurants in the chain of franchising. Among the most popular largest and the most successful hotel in Nigeria and indeed the world are the Hilton and Sheraton Hotels and Towers. These hotels began their franchise names in the 1960s. Franchising has become the primary growth and development strategy of hotels and motels. The world's largest franchisor of hotels with 5, 300 hotels is the Hospitality Franchise System (HSF) of Parsippany in New Jersey, United States of America. Choice Hotels International, ranked second with 3, 130 franchised hotels. It is a subsidiary of the Blackstone Group, New York. Holiday Inn world wide is now the third largest franchisor with 2, 082 hotels. Franchising provides benefits to both the franchisor and franchisee. Some of the benefits to the franchisee are:-

- i. A set of plans and specifications from which to build;
- ii. National advertising;
- iii. Centralized reservation system;
- iv. Participation in volume discounts for purchasing furnishings, fixtures and equipment;
- v. Listing in the franchisor directory; and
- vi. Law fee percentage charged by credit card companies.

City Centre, Resort, and Airport Hotels

City centre hotels meet the standard needs of the traveler, either for business or pleasure. This is due to their central location and also a range of other services they offer. There are in addition to accommodation, services like butter services, secretarial services like the fax machines, telephone and computers, 24 hour room service, a lounge, bar, meeting and convention rooms among many other services and facilities. The city centre hotels together with convention centres have been one of the catalysts of inner city revitalization. Resort hotels are more like pioneer hotels. They were among the earliest hotels because they came with the railway system. They were built to accommodate travellers. Some resorts focus on sporting activities like golf, skin and fishing. With the improvement in travel by automobiles and the invent of air travel more of these exotic locations have become accessible to tourists. Air-port hotels have an advantage of enjoying patronage because of the large number of travellers that travel by air. These hotels are usually in the 200-to-600-room category and some run twenty four hour service which include, room service and extended restaurant hours for guests that still feel they are in a different time zone.

Accommodation and Food Service Sectors

The demand of accommodation came as a result of people traveling, and as travel increased the need for more accommodation to cater for a large number of people became necessary. The industry began small with inns (bar) and taverns (café), to bed and breakfast and private hotels. It had to evolve bigger and more sophisticated in order to serve the increasing number of travellers due to the progress made by the travel industry and also for the more educated population. The type of customers served by the accommodation sector can be divided into people that travel for business or pleasure and those that stay away from home on a temporary basis like students in hostels. Basically, the travelling customers are served by the commercial hotels and the non-travelling by the not-for-profit sector. At present there is an organization called, the Hotel Booking Agents Association (HBA) which was formed in 1997 with only four members. There are about 36 members of recent and they are booking more

than 300 million clients a year. The food service sector come into the hospitality and tourism industry due to the need to offer travellers something to eat while sleeping away from home; but gradually the food sector has seen a lot of reasons why people choose to eat outside.

There are several reasons for this convenience. This factor includes all those people who are away from home for one reason or another, for example either shopping or traveling or during a lunch break in schools and offices. Two, variety: There is a saying that variety is the spice of life and so people usually want to try new foods or drinks in different restaurants. There are some people who may want to impress their guests or friends by taking them out and the business is usually a way of sealing a deal. Three, Labour: some people might be tired or better still have a desire for another person to cook and serve a meal for them and even wash their plates which is an influence on people choosing to eat outside. Four, culture/heritage: It has become part of man to celebrate special events like anniversaries and birthdays by eating out with loved ones. Five, impulse: Sometimes for no particular reasons, people would decide to eat outside their homes. In the food service industry we can identify five main types of front-of-house service style: First, there is the table service, which includes silver service, plate service and family service, this type of service is for customers sitting under a laid cover. Second, there is the Assistant Service. This is a combination of table service in which customers move around to pick what they prefer because there are varieties of food and drink/items. They offer use trays to make it easier for people to serve themselves and pay at a till point. Four, is there is the single point service. Examples of a single point service include take away, kiosk, vending and bar. Costumers are usually served at a single point as the name implies.

Finally, there exists the specialized spots or where food and drinks are being served in places not really designed for food service consumption. Examples of this are hospitals, airlines, home delivery and the likes. The food service industry also started at a very humble beginning to become an industry to reckon with within this industry we have: restaurants, food service operators in hotels, motor way and roadside dining, licensed trade food service, fast food, employee feeding, welfare catering, travel catering and outside catering.

Integration in the Hospitality Industry

Integration in the hospitality industry which is a trend that began a few years ago, is in two ways. These are the vertical integration and the horizontal integration. The vertical integration is a trend that started some years ago. Vertical integration means that a business organization may increase its operation by taking over or merge with similar business organizations involved in the same business. For example, Sheraton or Nicon Noga Hotel can take over or merge with Hill Station Hotel in Jos. Horizontal Integration on the other hand, implies that a business organization takes over or merges with another business organization that is involved in a completely different business undertakings. For example, airlines that acquire and own hotels. Lodging companies realize that guests' accommodation needs are not just at one level, rather they seemed to vary in price and facilities.

Hospital Catering Services

Catering services that are provided in hospitals particular in industrialized economics such as those of the United States of America and the United Kingdom are basically the same type of services that residential hotels provide for their guests. Such services include food and beverage, cleaning and laundry, pottering, security and transport. This situation is not the same in Nigeria and other developing economics because of the level of our development and underdevelopment.

The importance of providing catering services in the health services sector especially the hospital segment is based on three major reasons. These are:-

- i. To control the spread of diseases and infection by cleaning all the areas within and the surroundings of the hospital.
- ii. To keep the hospital buildings and its surroundings in a condition of absolute serenity by using the right materials and equipment on a regular basis.
- iii. Finally, the overall hospital environment must be kept a life and bright by the employees of the hospital as an establishment for the purpose of both the staff and patients. This is very

important because the hospitals accommodate two main groups of the society – the sick and the infirm who are incapable of looking after and taking care of themselves for a variety of reasons that range from old age to accidents and other forms of disabilities.

The source of accommodation demand has made the accommodation industry to grow and as more establishments keep springing up in the industry, the awareness of the accommodation market available is essential to the manager of a successful accommodation. People stay away from home for a number of reasons. There are people who principally stay away from home because of business, while some stay away for leisure and also for institutional reasons. As travellers and people who stay away from home get more educated and more exposed, they expect their accommodation provider to have a wide range of products and services available to them. In the same way the accommodation industry came up, so did the food service industry. In this unit we have seen how the food sector came into being and the reason why people eat outside and the various factors that influence costumers, which include enjoyment of meals outside their homes.

Hotel Housekeeping Operating Procedures

- One of the most important elements to a hotel's success is how clean the rooms are kept. Guests are unlikely to return to a hotel that isn't clean, and even less likely to recommend it to other people. Most hotels avoid this by following certain hotel housekeeping operating procedures that ensure every room is clean and safe for guests.

Tidying

- Most day-to-day housekeeping at a hotel involves procedures for tidying the room. When a guest has not yet checked out, housekeepers are usually required to follow a shorter list of procedures. These include making the beds, replacing used towels with clean ones, vacuuming the floor, removing trash and emptying ash trays.

Daily housekeeping may also include replacing certain items in the room, such as toilet paper, tissues and bath products. In rooms that have a minibar, housekeepers may restock the bar on a daily basis as well.

Cleaning Linens

- Many of a hotel's housekeeping procedures take place outside the guest rooms. This includes washing bedding and towels. Hotel housekeepers use high-temperature washers that disinfect as they wash, along with strong soaps and whitening agents.

Because of the high cost of washing linens, along with the large amount of water the procedure uses, some hotels offer guests the option of not having their linens washed daily. Bedding may be left on the bed unless a guest removes it or specifically asks for it to be laundered. Some hotels also follow a policy of only replacing towels left in designated areas so that guests can choose to reuse towels.

Disinfecting

- Between guests, hotels follow a more stringent housekeeping procedure to prepare a room. This usually involves all the tasks of daily housekeeping, along with a thorough vacuuming and the replacement of sheets and pillowcases.

This is also when housekeepers disinfect a room using powerful cleansers. Besides keeping the toilet, sink and shower free of germs, housekeepers also clean other surfaces such as tabletops, remote controls and doorknobs. Housekeepers will also remove anything left behind by the previous guests and restock the room with stationary, comment cards and other paperwork.

Housekeeping Procedures for Hotel Guest Rooms

When you check into a hotel room, remember you were not the first person to sleep there.

There are rules when it comes to keeping the place where you stay neat and tidy.

Significance

- It might surprise you to know there are no "blanket" rules regarding the cleanliness of hotel guest rooms. That said, some states have guidelines regarding lighting or heating.

Bed

- Bedsheets are changed between guests at most hotels. If you are staying for an extended period of time, expect your sheets to be changed about once every three days. There are no rules regarding how often the comforter should be changed and/or washed.

Bathroom

- The housekeeping staff will change towels each day if guests leave them on the floor. Housekeepers will also clean the toilet and mirrors, and wipe around the sink. They might also run a cloth over the floor if necessary and wipe the inside of the shower.

Sleeping Area

- Housekeepers might not clean this area daily. If there is something on the floor, they might run the vacuum as they see fit.

Replacement Practices

- While rules vary from one property to the next, housekeepers will generally replace plastic cups, ice bucket liners and soaps if guests have used them.

Housekeeping Room Attendant Standard Operating Procedures

Housekeeping room attendants are responsible for cleaning a hotel room during a guest's stay and immediately after his departure. They are also responsible for services such as laundry drop-off and pickup. In some cases, they are required to run errands.

The average annual salary for housekeeping room attendants ranges from \$15,000 to \$17,000. They also receive tips from guests, depending on the level of service provided.

Trash removal

- Housekeeping attendants are responsible for removing all trash from the hotel rooms, whether in waste baskets or on floors and countertops. A new bag should be placed in all waste baskets every time the room is cleaned.

Dusting

- The attendant dusts all areas of the hotel room. This includes dressers, counters, desks and TVs. This requires that any books or magazines on tables be moved for dusting.

Bedding

- All bedding is changed daily. This includes sheets, pillowcases, covers and blankets. Some hotels require housekeeping room attendants to replace sheets and top sheets using military corners. This means that the sides and foot portion of the sheets are tucked neatly and tightly under the edges of the mattress.

Scrubbing and mopping

- Housekeeping room attendants clean all countertops in the bathroom and vanity areas with disinfectant. This also includes scrubbing the toilets and the showers inside and

out with disinfectants. They must also mop the bathroom and any other tiled areas of the hotel room.

They remove used washcloths and towels. Clean ones should be neatly stacked on the shelving.

Vacuuming

Housekeeping attendants vacuum the entire carpeted area of the hotel room. In some hotels, they are required to move furniture to vacuum underneath. They also vacuum the upholstered furniture, such as couches and chairs.

Customer Service

- Housekeeping room attendants must fulfill any request made by the guest. This may involve laundry requests, room service orders to be filled and even special favors such as ordering from the hotel gift shop. This ensures a better level of customer service for the guest.

Hotel Attendant Job Description

Hotel attendants, more commonly known as housekeepers, must be well-rounded individuals serving guests and tending to rooms. It is their responsibility to keep hotel rooms in accordance with a hotel's standards. Once they receive training, hotel attendants work under the supervision of hotel management. With ample experience and demonstrated leadership qualities, hotel attendants may earn promotions into management roles.

Experience

- Specialized education is not required to work as a hotel attendant. Most receive training on the job. To work in more high-end hotels, candidates must have other housekeeping experience.

Skills

- Hotel attendants must be hard working and reliable. They must take instruction well and be trusted to accomplish tasks independently. Hotel attendants must speak and understand English, and have basic math skills to keep accurate inventory of hotel room supplies.

Responsibilities

- Hotel attendants must always greet guests with a smile.

They must check each room to ensure guests have vacated as scheduled by the predetermined checkout time. They knock on the door to ensure no guests are present, and visually sweep the room for inconsistencies before beginning the cleaning and restocking. Hotel attendants must report any missing items to their managers and also submit requests for maintenance.

Hotel attendants begin cleaning each room starting with the farthest surface from the door and working their way out. They wipe down every surface in each room, including tables, dressers and headboards using the appropriate materials. They must strip each bed of sheets, covers and pillowcases and replace them with fresh linens.

Hotel attendants wear gloves to clean each hotel room's bathroom. They pick up wet towels and replace them with fresh ones. They must wipe mirrors and scrub countertops. They clean and sanitize toilets and shower stalls or tubs. They also replace any toiletries, such as soap and shampoo.

They may deliver rollaway beds and ironing boards to rooms as requested by guests.

Maintenance priorities in catering

Introduction

Poor standards of maintenance are a major underlying cause of accidents in the catering industry. Including accidents that occur during maintenance work itself and cleaning, nearly two-thirds of accidents investigated in catering stem from maintenance in one way or another. In some cases the problem is a lack of any maintenance at all.

All these accidents can be very costly, both in financial terms as well as in pain and suffering.

Most accidents resulting from poor maintenance involve equipment, but maintenance of the fabric of the building is also involved.

Good maintenance by competent staff ensures that equipment performs well and reliably, and helps prevent accidents. The maintenance work itself must be done safely.

This information sheet is aimed at those responsible for managing maintenance of equipment and premises in catering businesses; it highlights priority areas based on accident experience.

Accidents

There are five main types of accident caused by poor maintenance in the catering industry:

- slips;
- exposure to hot or harmful substances;
- electrical injury;
- fire and explosion; and
- machinery accidents.
-

Table 1: Preventing accidents

Accident category	Relevant factors	Prevention
Slips	Most slips are due to uncleared leaks and spillages, unsafe wet cleaning methods and not drying floors after cleaning.	To prevent accidents, mend leaking equipment, use lids on containers of liquid being carried, clean up spillages immediately, dry floors immediately after cleaning and repair damaged areas. Display a 'Wet Floor' safety sign whenever a slippery area is not cordoned off.
Hot or harmful substances	The most common causes of accidents are poor maintenance of equipment (leading to leaks), exposure to hazardous cleaning materials and hot oil while cleaning fryers.	Establish safe cleaning and oil draining procedures. In particular maintain and inspect steam plant and dish washing machines.
Electrical injury	Faults in plugs or cables and poor maintenance of heated food trolleys are the commonest factors leading to accidents.	Regular checks and inspection.
Fire and explosion	Poor or no maintenance of gas appliances accounts for almost all of these accidents.	Regular inspection and maintenance of appliances by competent people is essential. To help prevent fires, remove dirt and deposits in ventilation filters and ducting.
Machinery accidents	Most machinery accidents are caused by incorrect cleaning and reassembly of slicing machines and poor maintenance of guards.	Training of operators in cleaning, assembly, and test procedures; regular checks (for example, daily guard inspections) and repairs are needed.