



# INTRODUCTION TO HOUSEKEEPING

Every house, whether private, like yours, or commercial like offices, shops, hotels, hospitals, clubs, etc., needs to be kept clean and tidy, so that it looks inviting to all. This is where housekeeping comes in. Cleaning and maintenance services can be spotted very easily anywhere.

The basic concept of housekeeping has started from keeping a domestic house clean and has gradually come to maintaining high standards of cleanliness and maintenance at commercial levels. Besides this, housekeeping should also contribute to the saving in costs of labour, cleaning material and equipment, furnishings and the like in every type of establishment.

But before we move into the actual working and detailed procedures of this interesting and probably the most important activity of our daily life, it is important to get introduced to the commercial concept of housekeeping, its role and importance, the various functions of housekeeping and the responsibilities of personnel involved in housekeeping services. Besides, it is also important to know the grooming standards of these personnel.



## OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson you will be able to:

- explain the meaning and importance of housekeeping;
- identify the areas which require housekeeping in a building;
- list the personnel involved in housekeeping in commercial establishments and elaborate functions of each personnel;
- explain the need for grooming of personnel involved in housekeeping.



### 28.1 WHAT IS HOUSEKEEPING?

Housekeeping in simple words means maintaining a house on a daily or long term basis or looking after its cleanliness, tidiness, upkeep and smooth running. When you keep your house clean and well maintained, you would also like to make it as beautiful as possible. How do you make sure that everything in the house is in usable condition? None of the objects are broken or chipped and fabrics are not torn. All the fixtures like taps, geysers, electric wiring, bulbs, tubes, fans, plug-points, are in good working condition, geysers are not leaking, electric wiring is proper and there is no danger of fire due to short circuiting, and so on.

Thus, the different procedures followed to keep and maintain everything in the house in a good and presentable order, are collectively known as good housekeeping. In other words, we may also say that housekeeping is a process of keeping a place clean, beautiful and well maintained so that it looks and feels pleasant and inviting to all, either living, visiting or working there.

### 28.2 IMPORTANCE OF HOUSEKEEPING

To know the importance of housekeeping, let us examine the following situation.

Rohan gets up with a backache as his mattress is lumpy. He has to catch a train; he opens the tap for bathing but there is no water! He goes to the roof to check the tanks, a leak in the pipe has drained out all the water!

He sits for his breakfast and manages to save himself from falling, as the chair is broken. To his horror, he notices a tiny cockroach in his food.

Now, would you like to be in Rohan's place? Would you like to use a dirty toilet? or wear dirty, torn clothes? Would you like to work in a shabby, dirty place? If eating out, would you like to go to a restaurant with broken furniture or pests crawling all over? Would you like to sleep on a dirty and lumpy bed?

I am sure the answer to all the above is 'No'. These are very small things but can make a lot of difference in your daily life. These small things are the very essence of a good housekeeping. Had Rohan attended to the leak in time, repaired the dining chair when it had just started creaking, or unclogged the drain the first time it showed minor blockage, regularly disinfested his house at periodic intervals,— it would have ensured a clear, comfortable environment in which Rohan would have been happy and relaxed. He would not have felt uncomfortable, depressed and frustrated or suffered from an inferiority complex. A good housekeeping would have ensured smooth functioning of all gadgets, no leaks, a comfortable environment in which Rohan would have enjoyed a hassle free living. Thus housekeeping means attending to the small tasks in time.



#### Activity 28.1

- 1) Observe your own house and make a list of areas that are :-

- Well maintained
- Neglected.

**28.3 AREAS OF HOUSEKEEPING**

You must have understood by now how important good housekeeping is to your own house. Similarly, it is equally important for any other kind of establishment, be it a shop, a trading center, an office, club, guesthouse, hospital, hotel or a hostel. Every area in the establishments mentioned above needs to be kept clean and tidy and everything placed here has to be in a presentable and working condition. Thus, housekeeping is an essential and regular feature in all types of establishments.

In commercial establishments, the housekeeping services are done by a team of specialized people according to different areas. Here is a detailed list of areas which need housekeeping. You can add to the list if you like.

- i) Rooms and corridors: - ceiling and wall paint, wall paper, fans, air-conditioners, electrical switches and sockets, wiring, windows, doors, glass panes, bed, bed-making, carpets, locks, keys, etc.
- ii) Toilets: - taps, sinks, water closet, geysers, water supply, electrical sockets and switches, supply of towels, toilet paper, toiletries (soap, shampoo, etc.)
- iii) Linen: - linen (table napkin, tablecloth) towels, bed sheets, bed covers, blankets, garments of guests, staff uniforms, etc
- iv) Furniture and furnishings: - furniture, curtains, table lamps, tube lights, chandeliers, bulbs, sofas, dining tables and chairs, etc.
- v) Gardens: - Plants, pots, lawn (grass), flowers, trees, bushes, hedges, etc.
- vi) Public areas: - stair case, corridors, lobby, conference/ seminar room, waiting halls, recreation room, parking area, clubs, swimming pool, offices, common toilets etc.



**Activity 28.2**

Go around your bedroom, toilet and kitchen. List five things which may require housekeeping.

Area	Housekeeping needs
Bedroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Example: Knob screws of cupboard need to be tightened</li> <li>ii)</li> <li>iii)</li> <li>iv)</li> <li>v)</li> </ul>



**Notes**



**Notes**

Toilet	i) Example: Leaking cistern needs to be fixed ii) iii) iv) v)
Kitchen	i) Example: Chipped door needs to be repainted. ii) iii) iv) v)



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 28.1**

1. Correct the following statements:-
  - a) Housekeeping refers to cooking nutritious meals for your family.
  - b) Housekeeping refers only to residential premises.
  - c) Housekeeper is a person responsible for keeping the house.
  - d) Housekeeping at home is done by maid-servant.
  - e) Housekeeping in a big hotel is done by a single person.
  
2. Given below is a list of areas/appliances. Suggest the kind of maintenance services required for each.
 

i. Fan	i Tap
iii Gas stove	iv Mixer grinder
v Pipe	vi Wall
vii Window pane	viii Air conditioner
ix Lawn	x Bedsheets

Now let us see who is responsible for carrying out the above activities.

**28.4 PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN HOUSEKEEPING IN COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS**

Looking at your own home, who is the person most responsible for upkeep of your house? Yes, it is your mother, who may be helped by other family members or a hired help. Similarly, in most commercial organizations, the responsibility of housekeeping is assigned to a person called a housekeeper. She or he is responsible for upkeep and maintenance of the premises. Depending on the size and type of



organization, there may or may not be a separate section meant to look after various aspects of housekeeping. A small shop may depute a single person to look after these aspects. Yet bigger offices, commercial establishments, guest houses, hotels, hospitals, hostels, clubs usually organize a group of people to look after their housekeeping. These groups of people constitute a housekeeping department. Some establishments may also seek outside help and make use of certain agencies which specialize in such kind of work.

Wherever there is separate housekeeping department a proper organisational structure is necessary with different kinds of people responsible for different tasks and some people to supervise them. Let us now discuss the duties and responsibilities of each of them individually.

**Housekeeper-** the housekeeper is the overall in-charge of the housekeeping department. He or she directly controls all the personnel as well as all aspects of housekeeping. She/ he is responsible for the cleanliness, beautification and maintenance of the premises.

**Assistant housekeeper –** he or she is responsible for all the aspects similar to that of the housekeeper. In case the organization works round-the-clock, there maybe more than one assistant housekeeper to work in different shifts.

Housekeepers / assistant housekeepers are in turn assisted by the following members. These members also have workers to assist them.

**Control desk supervisor :** this person communicates with the staff and coordinates with various departments of the organization. He becomes the centre point of all messages, complaints etc., and also keeps records of what work has been assigned to whom and maintains the general follow-up of the same.

**Linen storekeeper:** he/she is responsible for storage, issue, cleanliness and maintenance of linen. (Napkins, table cloths, bed sheets, bed covers, pillow covers, blankets, curtains and uniforms )

**Floor supervisor:** for multistoried buildings, each floor is attended by a floor supervisor. He/ she is responsible for the cleanliness and maintenance of the assigned floor which includes rooms, corridors, rest rooms, stair case, etc., for jobs like changing or repairing lights, switches, etc.

**Public area supervisor:** he/she is responsible for cleanliness and maintenance of waiting halls, lobby, conference/seminar room, recreation rooms, parking area, clubs, offices, etc.

**Cloak room in-charge:** he/she is responsible for the maintenance and service of common toilets.

**Hotriculturist-** he/ she is responsible for all the floral and plant decoration as well as the upkeep of gardens in the premises.



**Notes**

Skilled workers- skilled workers like plumbers, electricians, carpenters, painters are needed to do minor repairs. There may be a separate department for maintenance and engineering work and the housekeeping can coordinate with it to do these jobs.

These services are to be rendered with the highest degree of efficiency. Besides this efficiency, housekeeping should also contribute to the saving in costs of labour, cleaning material and equipment, furnishings and the like in every type of establishment.



**Activity 28.3:** Prepare a list of maintenance activities performed by your mother, father, brother, sister and yourself in your house.

Family member	Activities
Father	
Mother	
Brother	
Sister	
Yourself	



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 28.2**

- I Your relative has been admitted in a hospital. Specify the personnel you will contact in case of following situations.
  - i. You want the bed sheets and pillow covers replaced.
  - ii. There is a fused bulb outside your room in the corridor on the 1st floor.
  - iii. Food has spilled on the sofa of the lobby.
  - iv. The toilet in the cloak room is dirty.
  - v. Plants in the garden have dried up.
  - vi. You wish to file a complaint about general management.
  - vii. You want to contact the person responsible for the complete maintenance and upkeep of the whole building.

Now that you know about housekeeping personnel, it is necessary to prescribe certain grooming standards for them.

**28.6 GROOMING OF PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN HOUSEKEEPING**

A well-groomed personality projects a good image and speaks well of hygiene and efficiency. As far as possible, personnel involved in housekeeping should —

- be fresh, well groomed and clean, not half asleep or unkempt in appearance while reporting on duty
- have their hair neatly cut and tied properly
- have nails neatly trimmed
- dress in simple, clean and well ironed clothes
- avoid rings or other jewellery
- use light makeup, in case of women
- use footwear that is light, without heels and noiseless
- be healthy and not suffer from any skin disease, colds, etc
- avoid bad habits such as nail biting, nose picking, leg shaking, sitting on work table, spitting, chewing pan, smoking, etc.
- bathe daily.

If these hygienic standards are not maintained, it can spoil the reputation of the organization.



**Activity 28.4** Observe your mother as a housekeeper. List five cleanliness habits that she practices.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 28.3

While travelling, you may have stopped at a road side restaurant/motel. List 8 unhealthy practices adopted by the workers employed there that you may have observed.



### TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. What do you understand by the term 'housekeeping'? Why is it important?
2. Identify the maintenance activities required in the kitchen, verandah and lawn of your house.
3. Specify five ways each by which a housekeeper helps in maintaining the bedrooms, corridors, lobby and toilets of a hotel.
4. Reena got employed as a housekeeper. Educate her on 10 personal grooming habits she should adopt.



### ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 28.1** 1. (a) Housekeeping refers to keeping a place clean, beautiful and well maintained.



Notes



- (b) Housekeeping refers to commercial as well as residential establishments.
  - (c) Housekeeper is a person responsible for keeping the premises clean and well maintained.
  - (d) Housekeeping at home is done by the home maker (mother), other family members and by any hired helpers.
  - (e) Housekeeping in a big hotel is done by a team of specialized workers.
- 2.
- i. Fan- grease, replace bearing
  - ii. Tap- change rubber washer, tighten nut
  - iii. Gas stove- change gas knob, clean burner
  - iv. Mixer grinder- sharpen blades, clean grime
  - v. Pipe-repair leaks
  - vi. Wall- repaint, change/ stick back wall paper
  - vii. Window pane-change cracked window glass, tighten screws of hinges.
  - viii. Air conditioner- fill gas, clean filter
  - ix. Lawn- manure, trim, deweed
  - x. Bed sheets- remove stains, wash, iron.
- 28.2
- i. linen room supervisor
  - ii. Floor supervisor
  - iii. Public area supervisor
  - iv. cloak room attendant.
  - v. horticulturist
  - vi. control desk supervisor
  - vii. housekeeper
- 28.3
- (i) Unkempt appearance
  - (ii) Picking nose
  - (iii) Wearing rings
  - (iv) Sleepy (not alert)
  - (v) Dirty clothes
  - (vi) Long nails
  - (vii) Painted nails
  - (viii) High heels
  - (viii) Has skin disease
  - (ix) Hair not covered