

New Hotel Cleaning Procedures After COVID-19 - A Study of New Housekeeping Practices in Hotels

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Abstract

The hotel housekeeping department is responsible for aesthetic upkeep of hotel rooms, cleaning of public areas as well as maintaining of all public areas. Post-COVID-19 challenges are that after cleaning an area housekeeping department must ensure that area is clinically clean to eliminate all the possibilities of any infection. The hotel guest is exposed to variety of environments, and the possibility of bringing infection into a hotel cannot be overlooked. The hotels need to be very mindful of the point that they must follow COVID-19 protocols and hotel cannot hurt guest sentiments while following the protocols. For hoteliers, the prosperity and wellbeing of guest is very critical as they must follow proper cleaning methods so that no one should get affected with COVID-19 and ensure guest satisfaction. This pandemic has a major and detrimental impact on the hospitality business, among other industries. Given the qualities of services, sophisticated technology alone will not enough to provide a memorable experience in the absence of actual touch between customer and hotel. The new cleaning procedures will help fight against COVID-19 and will also to attract potential guest. Cleanliness and sanitization have become more important to people. People are apprehensive about travelling and they have started travelling once again. This article demonstrates how hotel sanitation and housekeeping have improved in order to attract more clients. Demand rises to near maximum capacity from near closure (and then back down) in a matter of days in several marketplaces. As any general manager knows, having the correct team in place to serve the unknown number of guests who may come through the door at any time in a fashion that the hotel can still be proud of is no easy task in today's environment.

Keywords: Housekeeping Department, COVID-19, Pandemic, Public Areas, Aesthetic, Protocols

INTRODUCTION

This study outlines a research objective for finding out what new cleaning procedures or methods are being employed in hotels post-COVID-19. The goal of this article is to look at the new housekeeping practices that were implemented in response to COVID-19 keeping in mind guest safety. The housekeeping department keeps hotel room neat and clean and fresh for the guest and make it welcoming for the guest (Sadhale, 2021). The housekeeping department follows high standards and follows proper standard operating procedure for cleaning, as guest pay high room rates for the rooms and standards needs to be maintained. Cleaning and housekeeping staff must follow basic protective measures and precautions against COVID-19 because they come into direct contact with guests while cleaning rooms and performing other housekeeping duties so they should follow all basic protective steps precautions against COVID-19 (WHO, 2021). We are living in a new era in which COVID-19 is the focus for our guests and our employees. "According to Arne Sorenson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Marriott International."

CLEANING PROCEDURES ADOPTED BY INTERNATIONAL BRANDS

Extra Precautions are being taken to ensure guest safety and peace of mind. Touch free options, more frequent sanitization with hospital-grade disinfectants and the use of electrostatic sprayers are being implemented. (Hyatt's global care & cleanliness commitment). In hotel housekeeping department is responsible for three major areas Guest rooms, public areas and Back of the Houses.

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The housekeeping staff needs to be well trained to fight against these viruses as they are responsible for all these places. Cleaning and disinfecting protocols are used by hotels to clean rooms after guests leave and before the next guest arrives, with special attention paid to High-touch points. (Bethesda MD, Marriott International, 2020) Hotels have increased the frequency of cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, with an emphasis on the reception, elevators (and elevator buttons), doorknobs, public toilets, and even keys to the rooms. In Hotels they are offering less amenities like menu cards and welcome cards so that to avoid contamination and more of digitalization has been followed to reduce the contamination. In the areas wherever associates work “behind the scenes,” hotels are increasing the frequency of cleanup and that specialize in high-touch areas like associate entrances, locker room, laundry rooms and employees’ offices. In one of the studies shows that room looks clean but according to microbial analysis revealed almost all hotel rooms surfaces would fail to meet hygiene requirements set out in other industries. The hotel guests can use the disinfection station equipped with wet wipes and hand disinfectant. In addition, public areas and team areas are cleaned regularly, including hourly maintenance of frequently used areas, such as elevators and toilets. (Hilton clean stay). The sprayers quickly clean and disinfect entire areas and may be utilized in an edifice setting to wash and disinfect guest rooms, lobbies, gyms and alternative public areas. In addition, the corporate is testing ultraviolet radiation technology for sanitizing keys for guests and devices shared by associates (Bethesda MD, Marriott International).

MANAGEMENT DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Management should inform all employees about the precautions that can be taken to protect their health and the health of others, including the recommendation to stay at home and seek medical attention if they have COVID-19 symptoms. Management should organize regular information briefings that cover all basic COVID-19 protective measures as well as disease signs and symptoms and keep staff up to date on new developments. Specific procedures, such as Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to be implemented in the case of isolation of a suspected case (while awaiting ambulance transfer or according to national procedure), cleaning, disinfection, and any other measures, may necessitate training.

PHYSICAL SEPARATION, HAND WASHING, AND RESPIRATORY HYGIENE ARE ALL RECOMMENDED

Physical separation, as well as frequent hand and respiratory hygiene, are the primary preventative measures for COVID-19 transmission. If the facilities do not allow for proper physical separation, the occupancy rate should be reduced. Although it is likely that guests are already aware of physical separation, hand washing, and respiratory hygiene, they should be reminded as a form of hospitality. In restaurants and other places social-distancing is mandatory.

ENHANCED USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGY TO COUNTER VIRUS SPREAD

Electrostatic spray technology uses high-quality disinfectants recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) to treat known pathogens. Electrostatic guns to collect fine dust, a small piece of stain.

IMPORTANCE OF CLEANLINESS AND OTHER IMPORTANT CRITERIA

Besides the danger of catching COVID-19 in hotels, there are various studies antecedently that show the risk of infection within the industry. In keeping with a 2015 report, guests is exposed to a large vary of diseases throughout their stay, together with the common cold, athletes’ foot, influenza, herpes, Staphylococcus infections, Streptococcus infections, hepatitis, salmonellosis, acute gingivitis, enteric flu, mononucleosis, tuberculosis, Legionnaires’ disease, severe acute metabolic process syndrome (SARS), and norovirus (Ophardt Hygiene, April 2020). Despite its status as a global industry with a multi-billion dollar turnover, there is currently no universal standard for housekeeping in hotels. Visual rating is the main indicator of cleanliness in hotel rooms, although it has been proven to be an indicator of poor hygiene. Guests can become infected from surfaces contaminated by previous guests, as well as from housekeepers during cleaning.

Cleaning is an important first step in any disinfection process because it helps to remove pathogens or significantly reduces their load on contaminated surfaces. Cleaning with water, soap (or a neutral detergent), and mechanical action (brushing or scrubbing) removes and reduces dirt, debris, and other organic matter such as blood, secretions, and excretions, but it does not kill microorganisms.

Determining the room cleaning schedule has become significantly more difficult, and it can now add a significant amount of time to the morning administration and allocation process. Regardless of the increased cost in terms of personal protective equipment and effort, there is little doubt that being able to verify a space is clean will remain a top priority for some time (Grass, Hotel Management, October, 2020).

Radisson hotel group's enhanced cleaning and disinfecting guidelines have been developed in collaboration with Diversey, a global hygiene solutions provider uniting best in class cleaning and hygiene solutions with reinforced protocols and patent technology designed for healthcare.

AVAILABILITY AND USE OF CLEANING MATERIALS AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT'S

Housekeeping staff should have access to enough disinfectant solutions and other supplies, and they should follow the manufacturer's instructions to ensure that they are properly prepared and handled. To avoid chemical exposure, employees should wear appropriate PPE.

Staff must be trained in how to use the kit, including when to use the full PPE kit and how to put on, remove, and dispose of the PPE. Local health authorities may assist in providing the required PPE if necessary.

Physical distancing entails keeping a distance of at least one meter between guests. Wherever possible, the establishment should put up physical barriers between the staff and the guests (for example a protective Plexiglas's board at reception and concierge desks).

Hand hygiene entails thoroughly cleaning hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or washing them with soap and water on a regular basis. After exchanging objects (money, credit cards), it is best to wash your hands.

When coughing or sneezing, respiratory hygiene entails covering the mouth and nose with a bent elbow or a tissue. Used tissues should be disposed of immediately in a lidded bin. Following that, hand hygiene should be performed.

NECESSARY EQUIPMENT AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE KIT IN RECEPTION DESK

Personal protective equipment (PPE) kits should be available at the reception desk in the event of a suspected case of COVID-19. The following items should be included:

- Surface cleaning disinfectant and cloths or disinfectant wipes.
- Separate or combined medical mask and eye protection, face shield, and goggles (disposable).
- Gloves (disposal).
- Plastic apron (disposal).
- Isolation gown (disposal).
- Biohazard disposal waste bag.

NECESSARY THINGS SHOULD BE THERE WITH CLEANING STAFFS ARE:

- Rubber gloves
- Impermeable apron
- Closed shoes
- Eye protection and medical masks

INSIDE THE ROOM NEW CHANGES

A personalized Sani kit is in every room, which includes a small bottle or disinfectant spray, gloves and disposable masks. A separate disinfectant is provided in each room next to the door so that guests can use it when entering the room.

Towels given must be used just once. Provide a receptacle for guests to drop their towels in after they've been used so they may be washed.

Convenience items such as notepads and pens should be deleted or deleted after each inspection. It is provided only by the request of the guest.

Guests can request hotel services and amenities with TV remote control that's why many hotels have already provided extra amenities so that there is less contact.

Zero contact/minimal associate engagements have been re-engineered to provide better guest experiences (ITC hotel, groups).

MONITORING OF SICK GUESTS

Housekeeping and cleaning staff should immediately inform management if they see any sick guest. After check-out rooms should be thoroughly cleaned, and sanitization is compulsory. After sick guest leave the room, it must be thoroughly sanitized and person who cleaned the room must be monitored for any symptoms. According to Accor Hotels they used cleaning and disinfecting protocols to clean rooms as soon as guest depart and before the guest arrives, with particular attention to high touch points. The housekeeping department needs to make it easy for guests to know when and how much the room has been cleaned. Transparency is the key to reassuring guests that the hotel is doing everything in its power to keep them safe (Guzman, M).

DISHWASHING AND LAUNDRY EQUIPMENT

The proper operation of the dishwashing and laundry equipment should be checked to ensure that it is operating in accordance with the specifications on the machine's data plate, particularly about operating temperatures and the correct dosage of cleaning and disinfecting chemicals.

Regular checks should be performed to ensure that soap and alcohol-based hand rub dispensers, hand dryers, disposable tissue dispensers, and other similar devices are working properly, cleaning, and disinfecting. Defective units should be repaired or replaced as soon as possible.

The hotel action plan should include installing units that dispense alcohol-based hand rub in various areas of the hotel, including public restrooms used by both guests and staff, as well as other high-traffic areas (e.g., entrance to the dining hall, restaurants and bars).

Textiles, linens, and clothing should be placed in special, clearly designated laundry bags and handled with care to avoid creating dust, which could contaminate nearby

surfaces or persons. Instructions for washing them in warm cycles (60-90°C) with common detergents should be provided. To reduce the risk of potential transmission, all used goods must be treated properly. Disposable materials (hand towels, gloves, medical masks, tissues) should be placed in a lidded container and disposed of in accordance with the hotel's action plan and national waste management rules. Presoaking and washing procedures will be modified as per guidelines from WHO and MoHFW (linen processed with sodium hypochlorite). Linen will be washed at higher temperature disinfectant. Laundry staff will wear complete set of PPEs during laundry operations and laundry pick-up will be taken place in strict supervision and guidelines of WHO and local bodies (Taj, Hotels).

IMPORTANCE OF DISINFECTING THE AREAS

Focusing on disinfection, rather than simply cleaning hotel room surfaces among guests, can help to control bacteria that contribute to the spread of infections established in the community. Hand hygiene is most important to stop this community acquired infection. Modular dispenser should be installed in the rooms, lobby, spa and gym.

High touch surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis to reduce the risk of SARS-CoV-2 contamination in public places. Cleaning and disinfection procedures in common areas (such as restrooms, halls, reception areas, corridors, and lifts) should be used as a general preventive measure (Accor, Hotels). Frequently touched objects, such as handles, elevator buttons, handrails, switches, doorknobs, and dispensers, should be given special consideration. Cleaning personnel should be given specific instructions.

Moreover, all touch points in public spaces of the hotel (from elevator buttons, railings, door handles to counter tops), are routinely cleaned with a disinfectant. All the supplies and materials that are allowed in the hotel premises are also sanitized thoroughly (Oberoi, Hotel and Resorts).

In accordance with WHO recommendations for environmental cleaning and disinfection of surfaces in non-health care settings in the context of COVID-19 (16), the disinfectant and its concentration should be carefully selected.

Use only disposable cleaning supplies whenever practical. Before usage for other rooms, any material that will be reused should be non-porous and disinfected with 0.1 percent sodium hypochlorite solution or according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

In general, public places where a person with COVID-19 has gone through or spent short time (for example, corridors) do not need to be specially cleaned and disinfected if a protocol for normal cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces is in place, as described above.

When bleach is not appropriate or is potentially hazardous to the surface (on devices such as telephones and remote-control equipment), 70 percent alcohol or another coronavirus-safe disinfection product can be used.

The concentration of disinfectant in drinking water and in pools or spas must be kept within the limits recommended by national norms and standards.

WASTE DISPOSAL

Cleaning workers should be trained to support environmentally appropriate waste management in order to avoid environmental harm and negative health effects from polluted air, water, land, and the food chain. Cleaning workers should be encouraged to follow COVID-19-specific national waste management guidelines as well as WHO waste management guidelines for the virus (SARS-CoV-2) (15).

OPERATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF NEW CLEANING PROTOCOLS OF VARIOUS HOTELS

Accor Group of Hotels is ensuring that they give trainings to all housekeeping staff related to housekeeping and hygiene protocols, hotel associates are also completing enhanced COVID-19 awareness training. According to hotel IHG improves the guest experience with new cleaning processes, service standards, and partners, as well as a Clean Promise to reassure guests as they return to their old travel habits.

In front office to Reduced contact at check-in, touchless transactions, front-desk screens, sanitizer stations,

sanitized key cards, paperless checkout has been practiced.

Guest Room: Visible verification of sanitized items (e.g., glassware, remote control), reduction of in-room furnishings/high-touch items, new laundry protocols, use of new technology as IHG, group hotels. Reception and lobby high-touch items are disinfected every 4 hours (Radisson, Hotels, 2021). The reception counter and credit card machines are disinfected after every guest. All associates entering the guest room at any point will wear enhanced PPE. Collaboration with accredited labs and fixed experts will be doing hygiene and certification process. Air quality in the room will constantly monitored to be SPM and pathogen Free. (Taj Hotels) The rooms are sanitized thoroughly before check-in and kept vacant for 48 hours before being allocated to a new guest. The housekeeping staff wear new masks and gloves for each room (Oberoi Hotels and Resorts).

Advanced & stringent deep-cleaning protocols & sanitized rooms. (ITC, Hotel Groups) Public Spaces and Facilities: Additional deep cleaning of high-touch surfaces, social distancing, "last cleaned" charts, best practices for pools, fitness centers and lounges are being followed as per IHG group of hotels on Food & Beverage department new standards and service approach to buffets, banquets, room service and catering (IHG, group) Remodeled hotel layout to support safe distancing. State-of-the-art technology such as UV sanitization, ozonizes, ISO 22000 certified facilities with microbiology lab, advanced disinfectants for long-lasting protection, and more (ITC, Hotels).

Public Areas: Entire Lobby will be sanitized by thorough misting of Virucidal disinfectant frequently (Taj Hotels). Jaipur, Udaipur, New Chandigarh and Ranthambhore Oberoi hotels have taken lot action and given concentrations maintaining standards and, they do frequent sanitization of all the areas. Sanitizer stations on lifts and all guest corridors and limiting the number of guests within the elevators to maximum 2 to 3 guests depending (The Park Hotels).

In Hotel Shangri-La resorts the room linens are changed in two days or only on request, no turn down service has been given to facilitate minimal contact. Instructions is given in the receptions for the guest how room is been cleaned in the regular intervals of time. All the paper collaterals such as hotel directory, in-room dining menu,

laundry list, Minibar list, spa menu, etc. will be replaced with QR codes which can be accessed using mobile phones to reduce high touch points. (Ritz Carlton, Bangalore June, 2020), housekeeping staff will also monitor and keep records of cleaning of high touch points across hotels for sanitization and cleaning. Belmond Hotel has founded procedures for deep cleaning of its properties, for example after a period of seasonal closure. They conduct a full deep cleaning process, following COVID protocols. For extra protection, specific anti-COVID-19 measures will be carried out.

These measures include deep cleaning of curtains, fabrics, quilts, pillows, and cushions; Floors and hard surfaces will be cleaned with an approved anti-COVID 19 product. Carpets will be disinfected, and upholstered furniture and mattresses will be steam cleaned. Housekeeping staff in hotel are being trained regarding removing gloves and disposal of gloves in proper place to avoid cross contamination (The Belmont Shore INN).

Hotel Hilton, the hotel has given extra assurance by placing a room seal on doors to indicate guest that their room has not been opened since being fully cleaned.

CONCLUSION

COVID-19 has brought many changes to human life and has affected many industries as well as the hotel industry. The hospitality industry can use new skills and new cleaning methods to overcome this COVID-19 condition and get their business back. The various hotel's although the initial stages were tough, but the new knowledge has raised the bar for hotel cleaning, which provides several welfares to the hotel and its guests. Determining a plan of action regarding deep cleaning of rooms, meeting rooms, the fitness center and other public areas can help the hotels. Apart from that using of more modern technology and less amenities can help the hotels in pandemic and post pandemic. Educate team members and involving front office and engineering department together to schedule right actions will avoid any major disruption. Frequent cleaning of High touch points and providing ample hand sanitizer in all areas will prevent virus and infections.

First thing is important that we should not get affect with COVID-19 especially in hotels. Hotel business completely depends on now hygiene and sanitation, without that guest will not visit hotels. Sanitation and

sanitation standards have been improved and the hotel has begun the cleaning and disinfection of all areas now known as clinically clean. Through my research, I have collected many new cleanings ways that can be applied in hotels for future use, as well as in recent days for the safety of guests and staff. During, uncertain times the need of efficient processes and best practice guidelines are an absolute must for every hotel. With my learning I have learnt cleaning is very imperative in all areas and we have erudite its importance in human life. Regular training to the employees and regular sanitization of high touch points is compulsory for all hotels. All hotels are using various cleaning and disinfecting methods to fight against COVID-19. Housekeeping department plays a major role in keeping the entire hotel safe and sanitized.

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