

Housekeeping In Eye Hospitals

Ms. Anoopama, Housekeeping Department, Aravind Eye Hospital, Madurai

Introduction

The major concern of housekeepers is the maintenance of environmental sanitation within acceptable levels of bacteriological, as well as visual cleanliness in the hospitals. The principal duties, which are to advise, supervise or perform work involving the development, coordination, direction and management of the hospital keeping. Housekeeping is defined as the provision of a clean, comfortable and safe environment for the patients and public in a hospital setup. It is an extension of basic home keeping multiplied into commercial proportions. The need for a separate housekeeping department has arisen due to the increasing public awareness of health care, technology and increasing competition in healthcare fields.

The concept of housekeeping is simplistic but when one considers maintaining a 'house' of several hundreds of rooms and numerous public areas, the task becomes gigantic.

In most of the hospitals of modern times, the housekeeping workers are under the direction of housekeeping department and not under the direction of nursing service personnel. The advantage of this arrangement is that the head nurse is relieved of the housekeeping responsibilities and has more time to devote to nursing administration. On the other hand, members of the housekeeping department are experts in the methods of cleaning and organizing in-house activities.

The housekeeping department in a hospital is responsible for the

- Cleanliness (Includes Infection control)
- Maintenance (Civil, Electrical, Plumbing, Carpentry & House keeping related activities)
- Aesthetic upkeep of the hospital

Aims of Housekeeping department

- * Achieve the maximum efficiency possible in the care and comfort of the patients and in the smooth

running of the hospital.

- * Establish a welcoming atmosphere and a courteous, reliable service from staffs of all departments.
- * Ensure a high standard of cleanliness and general upkeep in all areas.
- * Train, control and supervise the staffs of housekeeping department.
- * Establish a good working relationship with other department.
- * Ensure that safety and security regulations are made known to all staff of the hospital.

Recruitment and Orientation

The Housekeeping in Aravind is a two-year training program. Girls from very poverty stricken family of rural villages apply for the training. The interview will be both Written and Oral with the candidate and their parent / guardian. After the selection process they undergo orientation for one week. The orientation programme will be about Genesis, Culture and value of Aravind. The trainees will go for observation to all the departments to have an overall idea about the organisation and their role in each department. Then they go for basic training programme. The basic training programme will be planned for a specific period to cover all the areas like introduction about Microbiology, Anatomy and Physiology of the eye.

After the basic program the trainees undergo specialized training in Housekeeping and work under the supervision of a senior housekeeper. The housekeepers are evaluated every six months. The final evaluation will be done after two years.

Work Description

The general abilities of a housekeeper are to:

- Develop procedures with specific goals of the hospital housekeeping department and with a broad overall goal of the hospital
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- Coordinate programs
- Delegate authority
- Analyze problems and make decisions, taking into full consideration a wide range of factors and requirements
- Communicate effectively with a wide variety of people.
- Develop familiarity with hospital rules and regulations, in areas such as budget, personnel
- Develop knowledge of hospital housekeeping methods and techniques; of various floor, wall, and ceiling covering materials and their properties; and of current developments concerning new cleaning agents, techniques and equipment.

Supervisory Housekeeper's Tasks

The main tasks of a supervisory housekeeper are to,

- Coordinate and supervise work activities of cleaning personnel, to ensure clean, orderly, and attractive rooms.
- Assign duties, inspect work, and investigate complaints regarding housekeeping service and equipment
- Confirm to prescribed standards of cleanliness and take corrective action.
- Take periodic inventory for purchase of housekeeping supplies and equipments.
- Prepare reports concerning room occupancy, payroll, and expenses.
- Recommend for improvement of service and ensure more efficient operation.
- Conduct meetings to discuss policies and patrons' complaints.
- Evaluate records to forecast manpower requirements. Conducts orientation training and in-service training to explain policies, work procedures
- Demonstrate use and maintenance of equipment.
- Record data regarding her subordinate's work assignments, personnel actions, time cards and prepare periodic reports and recommends for promotions, transfers, and dismissals.
- Obtain list of rooms to be cleaned immediately and list of prospective checkouts or discharges to prepare work assignments.

- Perform cleaning duties in cases of emergency or staff shortage.

Junior Housekeeper's Tasks

They are responsible to,

- Make note of complaints and arrange for relevant person to deliver it.
- Make note of meetings / seminars / workshops / examinations and the events of the hospitals and make necessary arrangements like chair arrangements, over-head projector, drinking water etc.
- List the inventories like cleaning solutions etc., and bring to the notice of the Supervisory Housekeepers.
- Examine building to determine need for repairs or replacement of furniture or equipment, and makes recommendations to the management.
- Supplies equipment and accessories to workers.

Coordination with other departments

The department should co-ordinate and ensure maximum co-operation with other departments to provide high quality work. To be successful, a well-planned work schedule should be prepared so as to ensure minimum disruption to the patients and work flow of other departments. The senior housekeeper is responsible for ensuring this by supervising a group of staff or working closely with staff from other departments.

Housekeeping control desk

The housekeeping desk is the nerve center of the entire department and its efficiency determines the smooth operation and effectiveness of housekeeping. It is the focal point for the dissemination of information and communication to various points in the housekeeping department as well as to other departments for co-ordination. The area of the control desk must have a large notice board, which serves as the main information display for housekeeping staff.

The housekeepers maintain some registers like Inventory Record, Stock Verification Register, Sanitary Workers Register, Work Allocation Register, Day and Night Duty Worker's Register, Check lists and forms.

Routine inspection of work

Routine inspection will be required to

- Ensure that the correct procedure and methods are used and to correct any faults
- Ensure that standards are maintained
- Allow action to be taken to correct defective work to either maintain standards or health and safety
- Identify responsibility for defective work
- Enable complaints to be dealt with effectively.

The supervisor should check each employee's work on each area at least twice during a work period. The first check should be at the beginning of the work to ensure that it has been started on time and that it is being carried out satisfactory. The second check should be made before the work in each area has been completed, to ensure that the work is satisfactory and to instruct the operative to correct any faults if necessary. It is also important to check that the work is being achieved in the allowed time

Checks should not be carried out at exactly the

same time each day. Staff would soon be able to predict the arrival time of the supervisor and react accordingly. Spot checks in the course of the work period are useful. When an operative is inexperienced or unreliable, more frequent checks will be necessary for further training and instruction.

Conclusion

The housekeeping department is a non-revenue-producing service department in the hospital. A poorly run department results in money needlessly spent and creates a negative impression on patients, visitors and staff, which will adversely affect their perception of the quality of care provided by the hospital. But a good housekeeping department can serve to enhance the image of the hospital and create a healing environment for the patients.

References

1. *Housekeeping Manual for health care facilities* by American Hospital Association