

Facilities Housekeeping and Maintenance Management

By Ron M. Chandler, FCBA

Four billion dollars is spent every year in the United States on housekeeping and sanitation. The undertaking involves the efforts of a half-million housekeeping workers. At least a fourth of the effort is wasted. This enormous waste is recoverable - not in some sense, but practically.¹

The concept of housekeeping and maintenance management is not new or hard to understand. The difficulties inherent in the proper maintenance of a

facility, whether it is a hospital, elementary school, industrial plant, office building, shopping mall, or church, are compounded by the fact that it takes no specific level of education to identify when maintenance is working or when it has failed.² Churches certainly fall into the same category. To the church staff member and committee charged with the responsibility of management, critics abound. The importance of maintenance and housekeeping is easily documented, yet achieving acceptable levels is difficult.

Overall facilities maintenance can be separated into the following categories:

- ✓ housekeeping,
- ✓ general maintenance,
- ✓ preventive maintenance,
- ✓ repair,
- ✓ replacement,

- ✓ improvement,
- ✓ modification and utilities.

Facilities maintenance is a science and requires careful study.

Housekeeping is that group of activities which make the facility presentable and fully usable to its clients, preserving the proper day-to-day operation of a properly functioning facility.³ The basic functions of housekeeping are the cleaning of spaces, emptying of trash receptacles, replacement of restroom paper products, sweeping, mopping, and dusting. These tasks are usually performed by unskilled labor on a daily basis.

General maintenance could be called infrequent housekeeping. Skill level demands in general maintenance are usually higher. Equipment used is typically more specialized. General maintenance functions include stripping and re-waxing floors, repainting walls and trim, sweeping walks and parking areas, carpet cleaning, equipment care and maintenance, upholstery cleaning, and other specialized care. Moderate repair also falls into this category.

Moderate repair work includes repairing and replacing water faucets, tightening loose door or window hardware, tightening valve packings, adjusting door closures, replacing light bulbs, toilet tank repair, and some light equipment repair. Maintenance, together with housekeeping, is often the most visible of maintenance activities.

General Maintenance needs are seldom crucial to the operation of the church. However, if maintenance is ignored, worse



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problems may result. Additional expense will also be incurred. The identification of appropriate building standards is a key factor in determining the maintenance workload.⁴

Preventive maintenance is any task performed on equipment or the facility to allow each to continue to function without interruption. These activities are performed at regular intervals and annually involve skilled personnel. Preventive maintenance emphasizes elimination and reduction of maintenance need wherever possible, inspection and detection of pending failures before they happen, repair of defects, monitoring of performance conditions and failure causes, and accessing the equipment on a fixed interval basis only if no better means exist.⁵

Repair refers to the work done to restore the equipment or facility back to its function after it has failed. Repair needs usually come about at inconvenient times and draw much attention. Plumbing, air conditioning, and heating systems usually draw the most attention.

Replacement is defined as a planned program of component replacement. This function requires intense record keeping and planning to utilize cost effectiveness.

Improvement work usually enhances the existing functions of a facility and helps reduce the operating costs. This work is most often exemplified by projects such as thermal insulation, more efficient heating and cooling system components, flow restricting faucets, and en-

vironmental control enhancements.

Modification projects usually involve structural additions or changes which enhance the function of the facility. These projects are costly and require careful planning. Growth and technology changes usually help initiate such projects.

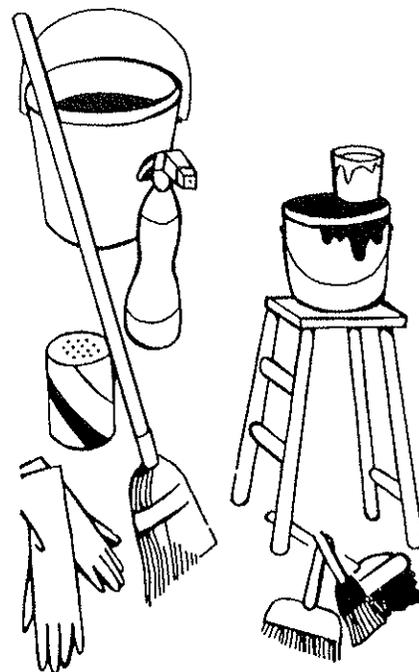
The following is a sample set of goals and objectives for a church maintenance and housekeeping plan. They can be helpful in defining the task of a committee and staff members given the responsibility of maintaining the church facility.

Goal:

To provide effective maintenance and housekeeping service to all facilities utilizing good stewardship of time, resources, and money, allowing the church to fulfill its mission.

• **Specific Objectives**

1. Perform daily housekeeping and cleaning that portrays a properly maintained facility which is God's house.
2. Respond in a timely way to general maintenance and repair needs.
3. Develop and carry out a system of regularly scheduled maintenance actions to prevent premature failure of the facility and its systems and components.
4. Complete major repairs with greatest savings.
5. Identify, design, and complete improvement projects to minimize operating and maintenance costs.
6. Schedule and operate utility systems in the most economic way without com-



promising comfort and reliability.

7. Establish convenient and complete recognition practices and reporting of all repairs and maintenance.
8. Evaluate all costs to ensure the most economical solution to maintenance and housekeeping needs and problems.
9. Inventory necessary materials and parts to facilitate timely maintenance and repairs.
10. Track and budget for costs of all maintenance work.
11. Schedule and allocate planned work in advance.
12. Standardize and carefully monitor maintenance and housekeeping work.
13. Maintain historical data with regard to facilities maintenance, repairs, and improvements.
14. Continue to evaluate technological solutions and advances for possible efficiency improvements and cost savings.

Many times, those charged with the responsibility of management do not realize the real costs associated with housekeeping. That housekeeping and other indirect costs are not minor items is borne out by the fact that the initial cost of many buildings is duplicated in maintenance costs over a period of twenty years or less."

Good planning requires ability, experience, and good judgment if it is to produce a plan that will work.⁷ When planning, projecting, or evaluating the costs associated with housekeeping, the following factors should be kept in mind:

1. Direct wages of maids and custodians
2. Salaries of Supervisors
3. Overtime costs
4. Cost of cleaning performed on contract
5. Cost of housekeeping materials
6. Cost of housekeeping equipment (may want to amortize)
7. Costs borne by personnel outside the housekeeping staff in cleaning operations (carpet cleaners, kitchen cleaners, etc.)

• **Other items that should be reviewed are:**

1. Space devoted to housekeeping storage and facilities
2. Overhead costs for housekeeping (utilities, services, etc.)
3. Purchasing and inventory control costs
4. The value of supervisory and management time consumed in housekeeping
5. Fringe benefits

One major factor to keep in mind is that adequate consideration be given to constant supervision. Timely supervision aids quality control and helps assure positive results. Time management standards can also be followed.

Good stewardship can be maintained in housekeeping. However, improvement must be timely and periodic review should reveal outmoded practices. It must be remembered that housekeeping is an annually recurring expense (with constantly rising costs) and that any improvement made would tend to be recurrent.⁸

A brief review of sanitation history provides us with some background. The Egyptians provided history with the earliest noted uses of sanitation. The Hebrews continued the tradition that sanitation and health could not be separated. The Bible records hygienic practices by the Hebrews in the use of prophylaxis. Research reveals that part of the responsibility of the high priest was guidance for hygiene and sanitation. The law of Moses even contained these same principles.

Archaeology has also revealed a deep respect of sanitation by the Greeks, particularly with regard to the practice of medicine. The book of Deuteronomy tells of Moses'



instructions for the hygienic and policing procedures for military camps. Through the years, military strategies of mankind have contributed greatly to the development of sanitation and housekeeping strategies used today.

Tribute for an organized approach to the housekeeping of buildings must go to John Howard who, at about the time of the American Revolution, devised methods for the sanitation of hospitals and prisons. He recommended smooth floors for easy cleaning and set up delousing and isolation systems.⁹

Facilities size is the most likely factor used to determine the staffing needs for maintenance and housekeeping. Even in the smallest of facilities, personnel should be provided with information and guidance with respect to what work is to be done, when it is to be done, and how it is to be accomplished. This can provide worthwhile benefits which exercise good stewardship.

Contract Cleaning

In recent years contract cleaning, cleaning services provided by a private contractor, has become an alternative worth considering for churches. Contract cleaning can provide regular, worthwhile cleaning of facilities with cost savings. It can also provide many disadvantages.

• **Reasons for ineffectiveness of contract cleaning**

1. Supervisors lose control of the housecleaning operations.
2. Lessens the responsibility of the service employee.

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3. Costs may be too high for services rendered.
4. No service employee loyalty and cost consciousness.
5. Lowered level of housekeeping achievable.
6. Danger to facility through use of cheaper cleaning materials by service company.
7. Poorly trained service personnel who are a danger to themselves and others.
8. Lack of supervisory responsibility.
9. Loss of flexibility to respond to last-minute and irregular jobs.
10. Loss of security.
11. General poor attitude by service employees.
12. Poor attitude of public toward those church staff responsible for housekeeping and maintenance, due to the staff's lack of control in the above mentioned areas of concern.

• **Advantages of contract cleaning**

1. Contractor may be able to provide updated equip-

ment which does a better job.

2. Hazardous jobs can become the responsibility of the contractor (window cleaning).
 3. Infrequent jobs which become the responsibility of the contractor to cover, within the contract.
 4. No wage, tax, and benefit responsibilities by the church.
 5. Dependability for emergency and temporary cleaning needs.
 6. Allows for good budgetary planning.
- **Contract cleaning implementation considerations**
1. Clear contract specifications must be written.
 2. References must be checked thoroughly.
 3. Contractor should submit his organization structure for review.
 4. Hiring and screen qualifications of contractor should be reviewed.

5. Additional service unit costs should be specified and priced.
6. Quality of equipment and materials used should be specified. Specific brands of materials should be named when necessary.
7. Cost, method of payment, and notice of termination of the agreement should be precisely defined.

Benefits of in-house housekeeping

1. Improved hygienic conditions are provided.
2. Safety is improved.
3. Other hazards are improved.
4. Overall staff morale should be better.
5. Most abnormal wear is avoided, resulting in lower maintenance and replacement costs.
6. Public attitudes are generally better.

7. Normal inspection time is reduced and quality should be improved.
8. Improved flexibility is available to handle emergencies and special situations.
9. Communications are improved.
10. Budgets and expenses can be tracked specifically.

The art of developing maintenance and housekeeping standards follows the basic process of determining the type of personnel needed, assignment of job specifics, training, and evaluation. When evaluating these areas it is important to keep in mind it certain other factors.

When the basic cleaning is done at night, it should be followed during the day by a policing operation.¹⁰ Most policing is dedicated to the areas of restrooms, locker rooms, high traffic-areas, food-service areas, waste removal, and offices. Supervision is difficult in policing procedures. However, rigid schedules should be utilized to overcome this problem. Non-housekeeping responsibilities, such as running errands, can also cause schedule problems.

Team cleaning is defined-task cleaning done by 2 - 6 or more persons. Choosing to use this concept should be a decision based upon technique rather than technology. Work assignments can obviously be com-

pleted much quicker with the team approach. Supervision can be intense if the team leader is given that responsibility. New personnel can be trained quickly in a team atmosphere. Specialization, better morale, and time savings can yield positive results.

Conversely, individual work assignments can provide a custodian with a proprietary attitude toward his work and area of responsibility. He will have an improved sense of pride in his work. Individual quality of performance and responsibility can be easily identified.

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Endnotes

1. Edwin Feldman, Housekeeping Handbook For Institutions, Business, and Industry (New York: Frederick Fell, 1969), p.1.
2. Gregory H. Magee, Facilities Maintenance Management (Kingston: R. S. Means, 1988), p. 3.
3. Ibid, p. 6.
4. Reginald Lee, Building Maintenance Management (London: William Collins Sons, 1987), p. 5.
5. Joseph D. Patton, Jr., Preventive Maintenance (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1983), p. 5.
6. Feldman, op. cit., p. 2.
7. Bernard T. Lewis and William Pearson, Maintenance Management (New York: John F. Rider, 1963), p. 99.
8. Feldman, op. cit., p. 3.
9. Ibid., p. 13.
10. Ibid., p. 70.