

Sanitation and Safety in Laundry Operations

Catherine H. Strohbahn, PhD, RD, CFSP

HRIM Extension Specialist/Adjunct Associate Professor

Options for Operations

- On-premise facility with linens purchased by operation
- Operation's linens sent off-site for cleaning
- Operation rents linens
- Foodservice operation uses disposable products
- Operations uses a combination of above

Pros and Cons of each option

On-premise laundry

- **Pros**

- cost-effective over time
- client service capability
- dependable supply

- **Cons**

- initial equipment purchases
- linen investments
- utility costs
- detergents and other cleaning costs
- labor costs
- equipment repair
- inventory control of linens
- water quality issues

Equipment Needed On-Premise

- Commercial washers
- Commercial dryers
- Iron – roller style (depends on fabrics)
- Folding table
- Cleaning agents – regular and special treatments
- Automatic soap dispensers
- Container for biohazards
- PPE

Food Code 2005

Addresses points for foodservice operations:

- Separate linens used for foodservice and rooms
 - i.e. room towels not mixed with cleaning cloths in restaurant
- Backflow prevention devices in place

Other considerations lodging operations:

- Cleaning treatments
- Schedule of all linens – i.e. bedspreads
- Inventory

Examples of Types of Linens Used Lodging

- Sheets – king, queen, twin, crib
- Pillowcases – various sizes
- Towels – washcloths, bath, hand, bath mats
- Bedspreads
- Tablecloths
- Uniforms
- Bathrobes
- Floor mops
- Bedspread covers - rationale
- Etc

Inventory Control

- Housekeeper or Laundry Manager
- Issues to Housekeepers and other functional areas
- Quantity Control - ie theft
- Quality Control
 - Cleanliness – i.e. bedspreads in court cases
 - Hair restraints
 - Special treatments
 - Bio hazards
- Dependent upon capacity of operation and extent of service
- Selection factors

Selection Factors: Fibers and Fabrics 101

Natural fibers – each own attributes

- Linen
- Silk
- cotton
- wool

Synthetic fibers

- over 20 patented
- advantages such as wrinkle resistant, ease in cleaning

Examples of make-up – many fabrics are blended fibers i.e. cotton/poly

Fabric Quality Characteristics

- Fiber content
- Thread count
 - number threads per square inch
 - higher thread count is more durable with better “feel”
 - over 200 thread count is desirable for sheets
- Weave type
 - warp and weft of cloth
 - type of knit
 - affects touch and feel of fabric
- Tensile strength or durability

Laundry Operations

- Sort linens by
 - Fabric type
 - Color
 - Functional area – ie cleaning cloths, soiled mop heads, room towels each own loads
 - Special treatments
- Factors of fabric type, color and type of stain influence
 - wash time
 - Temperature
 - Agitation
 - type of cleaning agents used

Special Treatments

- Precautions taken for biohazards
- Example of Blood stained towel
 - Housekeeper and Laundry room staff wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – gloves
 - Linens kept separate by housekeeper and placed earmarked container in laundry room
 - Treatment – may depend on type of stain
 - Example is soak in bleach solution and wash with other special treatment items hot water

Types of laundry cleaning and sanitizing agents

- Detergents – type should work with water pH; cleaning purposes
- Fabric brighteners – can help brighten fabric colors
- Bleaches – usually chlorine based; used special treatments or whites; note water pH
- Mildewcides – can help prevent mold growth
- Sours – used with detergents to modify pH if needed

Training Laundry Operations Staff-

Based on written policies

- Use of equipment
 - Safety features and cautions
 - Correct operation
- Procedures –
 - Bio-hazards
 - General cleanliness of room and hygiene
 - Use of Personal Protective Equipment
 - Inventory quality
 - Linen management
- Separation linens by functional area – i.e foodservice and rooms

Resources

**Standard Operating Procedure for
use of Linens available at
www.iowahaccp.iastate.edu**

**American Hotel and Lodging
Association**

<http://www.ei-ahla.org/>