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# OWNERS, DEVELOPERS & MANAGERS

By Caroline Shelly, HF Planners, LLC

## Amplifying workplace janitorial services during a pandemic

**H**ousecleaning and janitorial services during the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on a new meaning. The busy workday barely leaves enough time for an employee to finish their normal workload. By adding an additional task of maintaining their space to ensure their health and wellbeing may result in decreased productivity. The most optimal solution to providing maximized productivity and safety during these unprecedented times is to seek a team of advisors to help manage the housecleaning and janitorial maintenance in the workplace. These specialists should include the Facility Manager, Facility Planner and Janitorial Team.



Caroline Shelly

A powerhouse team of these experts can help prepare an efficient and clean workplace in three stages. Various stages ensure optimized janitorial and housecleaning services which include: Renovation, Enhancement, and Maintenance. Renovations cater to the design process. Enhancements include additional, minimal installation of products. Maintenance ensures the systems in the building function correctly both physically and strategically.

When starting the Renovation stage, the facility manager will pair with the facility planner to best understand the building's needs and how the occupants interact within the space in accordance with housecleaning and janitorial essentials. Whether it is a new space or changes to an existing space, the facilities team would help outline the requirements to determine the layout and assist in the specification of products. A facility planner plays an integral role during this stage to identify housecleaning and janitorial requirements. Selection of anti-microbial materials, specifying hands-free products ranging from faucets to door hardware as well as identifying opportunities to help employee's social distance such as demarcating flooring would all be chosen by the Facility Planner. This aids the cleaning teams to identify which areas are more

frequented and require more sanitizing. Initiatives such as access control garbage and recycling programs would be established and implemented by the facilities team as well. A strategically planned space improves employee workflow and allows housecleaning and janitorial teams to promptly and effectively complete their job without interruption. Other technologies, such as UV lighting can play an important role in keeping the office clean by working in conjunction with easily cleanable surfaces to eliminate germs and transmittable bacteria within the workplace. This incorporates another housecleaning method to protect employees and improve janitorial services.

The Enhancement stage can incorporate some of the ideas above; these retrofits include the addition of screens linking workstations. Screens to block the transmission of germs between employee workstations come in a range of products; glass, plexi-glass, acoustic board felt, plastic curtains and more. Cleaning requirements vary and the janitorial team can identify the best way to clean them. For example, they would know using window cleaners or cleaners containing alcohol can damage plexi-glass. Installation of hand-sanitizer stations near entry/exit doors, elevators and high touch points can help stop the transmission of germs. Setting out of barriers to restrict use in the bathrooms around urinals or sinks will be helpful and reduce the spread of the virus. Providing PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) at entry points is also key.

Managing the workplace and keeping up with the housecleaning and janitorial efforts, even after the renovation and enhancement stages are complete is called the Maintenance stage. An adept facility manager understands how occupants interact within a space and the frequency at which areas are used. During the maintenance stage, the housecleaning and janitorial teams can rely on the renovations and enhancements to enrich workplace cleanliness, health, and safety, but a facility manager maintains the systems put in place. These tasks include waste removal and cleaning schedules as well as maintaining permanent systems like HVAC systems

to provide better indoor air quality and circulation. Facility Manager, Jim Sheets from a Luxury Brand Jewelry and Retail company noted that in order to enhance the existing cleaning protocols, he's engaged his janitorial company to provide deep cleaning measures over the weekend. "COVID-19 has presented many unique challenges to the FM. In addition to keeping our buildings and systems functioning at optimum levels, we are now charged with ensuring our properties are safe for whatever level of reoccupation we are currently in or is upcoming. To that end, we have incorporated many COVID-19 protocols including many or all of the following: Limiting access to portions of our Facilities. Instituting one-way traffic patterns and socially distant seating. Establishing occupational limits in dining areas, restrooms, elevators and all other common areas. Installation of hands-free door opening devices and non-contact temperature check stations and associated protocol. Installation and maintenance of hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipe and protective mask dispensers. In addition to our daily janitorial staff ensuring every area is cleaned and sanitized daily, we are supplementing our cleaning efforts by performing a weekly sanitization of our Facilities."

Additionally, a facility manager promotes sustainability efforts like proper garbage and recycling removal that align with effective housecleaning and janitorial protocols. This includes the knowledge of proper cleaning supplies for various cleanable surfaces and materials.

A motivated team consisting of facility planners, facility managers and janitorial staff create a seamless housecleaning and janitorial process by utilizing one of the three stages of renovation, enhancements or maintenance. At HF Planners, LLC we are a full-service interiors firm that can help any workplace provide a safe and clean environment for all workplace occupants, especially when it comes to housecleaning and janitorial efforts. Contact us today to conduct a COVID-19 audit of your space

Caroline Shelly is founder and principal of HF Planners, LLC. MAREJ



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