

1<sup>ST</sup> PERSON

Harry Hobbs, Director of Engineering,  
San Francisco InterContinental Hotel

An Interview with  
Harry Hobbs:

### Sustainability and the “Triple Bottom Line”

By Robert Elliott

Harry Hobbs is Director of Engineering for InterContinental's prestigious San Francisco hotel. This hotel is only two years new. It has 32 floors above ground, 2 basement levels, 550 guestrooms, a Presidential Suite, 43,000 sq. ft. of meeting space, 2 ballrooms, 21 meeting rooms 3 outdoor terraces, 5050 sq. ft. spa, 1368 sq. ft. fitness center, 1430 sq. ft. pool area, Michelin One Star awarded restaurant, and bar. The property encompasses 607,221 sq. ft. total gross building area.

Perhaps most impressive is the fact that his property recently received the Department of Energy's (DOE) “Energy Star” rating for their entire building. This makes the InterContinental

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## MANAGING HOSPITALITY MRO INVENTORY

*Keeping your property in excellent working order is not only cost effective, it also helps ensure guest loyalty and boosts revenue.*

By John Sladek

Grainger – Direct Marketing Services

In the hospitality industry, well-managed maintenance, repair and operating (MRO) inventory can mean better service. Customer service is critical to keep guests coming back. If a light bulb is burned out or batteries are missing from a TV remote, it needs to be addressed in a timely manner. If these simple supplies cannot be sourced quickly or are out-of-stock in the central storeroom, the guests will feel that their issues are not being taken care and most likely, will not return as a future customer.

Day-to-day management of hotel operations can be challenging enough – even without the responsibilities of purchasing, managing and controlling MRO product inventory needs to support maintenance

activities. Hotels, by their very nature, have many moving “parts.” With hundreds (sometimes thousands) of guests moving about the property every day, facility managers need to keep the front-of-the-house in perfect shape. That means that sparkling lobbies, freshly made guest rooms and enticing food areas must be apparent at all times. Behind the scenes, mechanical and electrical equipment must be kept in good working order. To support all of these maintenance activities, a well-managed stock room is needed.

Keeping your property in excellent working order it is not only more cost effective in the short term, but also helps ensure guest loyalty which translates into revenues.

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#### Advertisements

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**HARRY HOBBS**

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*one of a small percentage of buildings with this exceptional designation, placing it in the nation's top 25% of energy efficient buildings in the United States. And, according to Harry, the hotel may become the most energy efficient hotel building in the entire United States. Harry's energy savings are not only getting the attention of Corporate Headquarters, but are attracting ecologically minded guests to the property as well. In fact, Harry's energy efficiency programs creating so much buzz and savings that IHG HQs respectfully refers to him as the "Rebate Man."*

**Harry, would you tell Lodging Engineer how you got started pursuing energy conservation at this hotel?**

In August of 2007 when Peter Koehler, the general manager of the hotel, asked me what I thought we should do for recycling and green programs for the new hotel. I told him that LEED (US Green Building Council's - Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) was the best way forward. At the time I didn't know how true that was, but I did know that he and I shared a vision of operations for the new hotel that would be socially responsible, ecologically respectful, and financially sound. We are fortunate to be a part of an ownership and operating partnership that is committed to providing a luxuriously responsible hotel experience in downtown San Francisco.

**How did you identify maintenance practices and operations that are sustainable and fit into the LEED criteria?**

For us right now the story is the struggle of identifying and implementing green operations and maintenance practices. In September of last year we found Jubilee Daniels our LEED consultant, and together with our newly formed "Green Team" we gathered enough information together to decide we could at least achieve LEED Certification or maybe even LEED Silver, for no additional costs, other than our energy improvements. We obtained our EPA - Energy Star Benchmark Score to see how we compared with other US hotels. We also obtained free energy, water and garbage surveys from our local utilities.



San Francisco InterContinental Hotel

This helped us identify costs and ROI's for improving our performance in these areas. In December of 2008 we did our 1st credit selection. During this process we reviewed all the available credits with the hotel management team and decided we could achieve silver certification and maybe even Gold. Each credit we have selected now has an owner and a plan to achieve the credit. When you come to our hotel you will see that our teams speak the

language of LEED.

**Can you tell me about LEED's Existing Building certification?**

The path to LEED has been challenging and exciting. LEED EBOM (Existing Buildings Operations Maintenance) is such a thorough review of all the ways we do business and has demanded that we foster a learning environment all along the way. Sometimes it seems like the only



thing we have to change is everything. This has provided us with an opportunity to go back and examine our current operations, change operations practices to reduce their environmental impact and save money in the process.

**Obviously you can't become LEED certified all by yourself. Can you speak to your partners and maybe to the owners or those who got behind your vision and championed your goal of becoming LEED certified?**

The good news is that everywhere we turn we find willing partners to help us on the path. Our customers expect us to help them offset their travel and to recycle their waste and we do. San Francisco State College has provided hundreds of hours of research through student projects and interns to help determine our direction. Pacific Gas and Electric expects us to be as frugal with energy as possible and they give us rebates for energy saving projects and practices such as Retro-Commissioning components of the LEED project. Across the street from the hotel is the Pacific Energy Center where I go for seminars and classes. We are also finding help from the Food Service Technology center who have provided a free energy audit of our kitchens. They are the ones who provide Energy Star labels for commercial food equipment. Recology provides the best trash and recycling program I ever seen. Last, but not least, is the city of San Francisco's Department of the Environment with its zero waste goals and all the free advice and even water saving devices. They have provided free low flow faucet aerators for every guest room. In San Francisco there is a lot of help if you ask for it.

**Can you tell us what motivates you to go that extra mile? What makes you want to improve your property's energy usage?**

If you are like me you probably got into or stayed in this business to make things better. I love to find ways to save energy, make workplaces healthier, see my buildings and plants shine. Many people do not remember the first Earth Day, I do and I thought these days might never come. This is our moment our time is now. Ninety percent of the problem today is in our hands due to the carbon emissions of our

buildings, to change or not. I choose to change and with any luck during the summer of 2010 the USGBC will certify that we have.

**I understand you received a rebate from Pacific Gas and Electric as a result of one of the projects you took on.**

We just completed retro-fitting our valet parking garage lighting system. Our garage is open 24/7 - 365 days a year. We replaced 140 light fixtures that had absolutely no controls consuming 210 watts each with compact fluorescent bulbs using only 43 watts each. This change reduced

**that you contracted to have a retro-commissioning. Would you tell us about this?**

We began our energy conservation measures when we contracted with two local firms, CB Engineers and Intergy, to perform a retro-commissioning of our building. A typical building's commissioning occurs at the initial start-up of various mechanical systems and verifies compliance with original design intentions. And, it is also when you receive and catalogue all the owners' manuals and warranties. I believe our retro-commissioning is unique and perhaps precedent setting as the revisit to one's building systems is typi-



the garage's illumination to the minimum lighting level allowed by building code to one foot candle per square foot. We spent \$40,000 replacing the lights in our garage and received a \$32,000 rebate from Intergy Corporation on behalf of Pacific Gas & Electric Company. And, we project continued savings of \$35,000 annually. This project is only one of many that we have identified and acted on. We received or qualified for over \$100k of rebates last year and reduced our cost compared to budget by \$250k. If you equate this to the revenue that would need to be generated to produce this in profit, it equates to an increase in sales of \$2,250,000.

**I understand as a part of identifying conservation measures for your hotel**

cally done years down the road from your building's initial start-up, not in the second year of operation. As a result of their efforts, CB Engineers discovered five (5) major categories to improve energy consumption in the building and by October we had produced year over year energy cost savings in excess of 15% of total usage. The commissioning cost \$60,000 in engineering fees. We were granted a rebate from PG&E of \$48,000 and expect to pocket annual savings in the range of \$200k compared to our baseline opening year's cost.

**You've accomplished quite a bit in a relatively short period of time. You mentioned that you want your prop-**

*erty to be self sustaining. That's quite a goal. Would you speak to this for our readers?*

Getting our property to be self sustaining and not reliant on others for energy won't come without challenges. However, we are working with PG&E's Emerging Technologies Group and with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to identify new technologies such as next generation LED technologies and digital lighting in an effort to find new savings and energy benefits. We are also beginning to work with the City of San Francisco's alternative energy group to identify solar, wind or fuel cell technologies to apply to our off the grid efforts.

*So now that you made some significant energy savings do you believe further reductions are possible for a property just two years old?*

We have identified additional cost effective energy-efficiency projects that should achieve an additional 30% reduction in the next couple of years for our property. I would like to see more hotels follow suit until collectively as an industry we make a bigger difference. I think hotels are seen as lavish and wasteful and I find some merit in that point of view in terms of energy consumption. The state of California has experienced basically zero energy consumption growth per capita since the early 1970's. This is due to what is called

the Rosenfeld effect, after Art Rosenfeld who is the father of California's conservation programs. The only other part of the world that can make this claim is Western Europe. Comparably, the rest of the U.S. has seen an energy consumption growth some where in the range of 30 to 35% for that same period. Typically a retro-commissioning project will yield between 15 and 25% savings and are often subsidized by the utility companies. Most engineers I respect find this the work they love and the satisfaction that makes the job a labor of love. The difference today is that now our labor can help attain energy independence and reduce climate change as well as saving money. ☺



## Be Aware of Suspicious Behavior

If you see any of the following examples of hotel guest behavior, keep in mind they could be of concern to law enforcement agencies:

- Guests who deny housekeeping attempts to perform routine room cleaning duties over a period of several consecutive days.
- Guests who, after permitting housekeeping to enter rooms, usually supervise or rigorously monitor their actions.
- Evidence that room occupants have intentionally changed their physical appearance, e.g., shaving/close cropping of hair.
- Identification offered for room reservations consisting of documents of questionable authenticity (e.g., misspellings on "official" papers; altered photos).
- Payment of expensive lodging bill with a large sum of cash rather than with a credit card.
- Reports of luggage or baggage theft whose contents contain sensitive documents such as passports/visas and other forms of identification.
- An unusual number of visitors admitted by a guest.
- A request at check-in for a specific room because of its view of another City Building.

Please remember that the conduct itself does not have to be criminal for you to report it to a law-enforcement agency. The above is based on information distributed to Hotels in NYC by the NYPD Intelligence Division.



## MANAGING INVENTORY

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Some issues that properties may experience in trying to manage their own stock room of MRO inventory might include:

- Uncontrolled spending
- Overstocking of seldom used parts
- Running out of stock of key parts and supplies
- Excessive labor activities (i.e., emergency runs to the local hardware store)
- Poor asset utilization
- Inefficient ordering process
- High inventory carrying costs (too many slow-moving items)

### ***DO YOU REALLY KNOW HOW MUCH YOU HAVE?***

Let's take a look at surplus inventory. Let's say that two years ago, you made a decision to convert all incandescent light bulbs in your facility to compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFL's). That's great for your bottom line energy costs. But now what do you do with the 40 cases of incandescent bulbs in your stockroom?

The average turnover of MRO inventory is a year or more, so at least half of it is commonly considered inactive. You might defend your "inactive" inventory as critical items with long lead times with sporadic

usage, but when they are needed, guests can't wait. It may be helpful to classify your MRO inventory items as critical, fast, slow or inactive.

Inventories are typically driven by fear, not experience. Some people are afraid of the consequences of a stock-out, regardless of whether or not they actually experience stock-outs. This fear may help drive demand and excessive supplies. The key is to understand the needs of the facility, not the individuals, and use the facility's requirements to generate demand and manage supply.

Stockrooms are kept for convenience, but





tend to be hoarded and piled up for that "just in case" moment in time. You may find parts and supplies in every nook and cranny, in desk drawers and unmarked cabinets in distant recesses of the facility. Even the best organized inventory can take valuable time to place orders, receive, put away, cycle count and issue. It may take upwards of 90 minutes to replenish an item depending on your system.



training. Hotel facility management identifies key supply items and organizes stock rooms. Reviews current usage reports to help understand the flow of inventory. Bins and shelves are labeled with bar codes to help track all movement in and out of the storage areas and provide detailed reporting. Hotel staff manages on-site inventory with scheduled replenishment from the supplier.



plenishment based on current usage levels. Supplier orders, delivers and restocks items at each storeroom.

Key benefits of the Supplier-Managed program may include:

- Possible reduced staffing costs since the supplier is managing the stocking levels.
- Storeroom inventory levels that can be mutually agreed upon
- Time savings from reduced product searches
- Cost savings on reduced rush shipment fees

**On-Site Management.** For this solution, the supplier provides an experienced inventory management specialist on the property site who is dedicated to the business using an automated bar code system. This specialist can track inventory, place orders and replenish inventory on a daily basis. Since this specialist is located on the property, they are always available

## Tools for effective inventory management include a bar code and reader system.

### INVENTORY SOLUTIONS THAT WORK FOR YOU

Vendor managed inventory (VMI) programs may be the most practical solution for saving time and keeping hotel maintenance supply costs in line. There are several types of programs available to suit the varying needs of a hospitality supply chain. These programs typically use turn-key web based tracking software with bar coding technology to manage stock room inventory. Optional detailed usage reports can be provided to track on supply costs. Here are three popular solutions to help manage the everyday supply logistics for a typical hospitality environment:

#### **Self-Managed, automated system.**

Outside supplier provides software, PC hardware, bar code labeling systems and

Key benefits to the Self-Managed program may include:

- Automated tracking that will allow your workers to focus on their jobs rather than trying to find what they need
- Easier ordering of MRO materials
- Reduced order processing costs
- Automatic detailed and timely purchase order history reports

#### **Supplier-Managed, automated system.**

Uses the same process and technology as the Self-Managed system. With this system, the designated supplier schedules weekly, bi-monthly or monthly visits based on the needs of the hotel facility manager. The supplier analyzes the inventory usage and places orders for re-

to handle high priority situations.

Key benefits of the On-Site Management program may include:

- Reduced staffing costs since the supplier is managing the procurement process and inventory management
- Storeroom inventory levels that can be mutually agreed upon
- Time savings from reduced product searches
- Cost savings from reduced rush shipment fees
- Possible reduction in surplus inventory

Well-managed MRO inventory means better business. No one knows that better than the Senior Buyer for a large hotel

resort in Lake Tahoe, Nevada. The resort encompasses three properties with multiple restaurants, a casino, convention facilities and hotel towers – all open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Buyer needs to make sure parts are available to keep dishwashers running and lights glowing. It's an important part of customer service. Planning is essential. Since the facilities are in a mountainous region, it's not practical to hop in a car to get the needed items. The closest supplier source may be two hours away.

One common pitfall that this particular resort was facing was a stockpiling of consumable and repair items. They did not have a program in place that would report out-of stock items. Therefore, facility employees did not trust the system and would hoard items in several locations to make sure it was readily available.

To solve these problems, a VMI program was put into place. Inventory is now kept in five storerooms located in three locations

on the properties: two for housekeeping, two for lighting and one as a central stockroom. The Buyer reports that hoarding is no longer an issue. They are also enjoying additional savings from quantity discounts and fewer rush order fees.

If you are considering moving to a VMI type program, here are some questions to help guide you through the decision-making process:

Are you always sending a staff member out to purchase random maintenance items? You may be surprised to learn how much time is being wasted.

Is your staff "hoarding" supplies since it seems that the high usage items are never on the shelf in the central storeroom? You may have excess dollars tied up in these types of items.

Does your storeroom contain many obsolete supplies that are taking up valuable space? A well managed VMI program can help eliminate this issue.

Is your supplies usage documented using an inventory tracking system? VMI reporting will help you document your true cost of MRO supplies.

Having trouble submitting a budget? A well-documented VMI program can help you track your ongoing MRO expenses.

With growing pressure to add value to the bottom, a smart inventory solution gives properties a competitive edge. Not only does it promise accurate and timely supply and new efficiencies, it can curb out-of-control costs, overstocks and waste. That means better guest service and loyalty for the long term. ☺



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## You Should Know, So, What's The Excuse?

By Manny Higazi

*As a department manager or supervisor it is important that you train the staff on what they need to know and show your support by making resources within reach so they can take care of things without hesitation.*



We as Chief Engineers or management staff in the engineering department come across the little hiccups that slow the operation down at times. This has a

lot to do with staff and our communication abilities in training. It is most important to have monthly meetings to re-energize the staff and to weed out the little hiccups that are slowing things down. The hiccups are where the staff is responding with I don't know notes or can't find something notes for you on your desk. This is a sign of poor communication from the top or the staff looking for an excuse. When I have my monthly meetings I reinforce my stand and say there is no excuse as an engineer not to complete the tasks assigned. All assigned tasks needs to be addressed and resolved. After training and reinforcing what the expectations are you get an idea of how much effort the staff is willing to take to complete the tasks. They know as I repeated over and over my phone is available 24 hours if they have any questions with their assignments. I share my experiences to give you an idea of what I came across.

Our shop is well organized and labeled. I assigned a staff member to take care of a plumbing problem that required a valve replacement. The response note I got was, "I looked all over the shop, could not find a valve, we ran out." The next day I was certain I had five left. So, I go to the

plumbing section and guess what? Five valves left. I assigned a staff member to do touch up painting. I got a note stating that they could not find a touch up brush. So, I go again and guess what? I found three. I can go on and on. During their shift they could have called me to ask about where the location of the materials can be found, but no calls were made. The effort of the staff is what helps the department move ahead or move in slow motion because of delays with the projects or tasks not completed in the time assigned. So in turn everything else piles up. So, as department managers we take everything into con-

sideration when it comes to evaluation. It is critical to the department to flow in the direction of success. Without success the foundation of maintaining the property will weaken resulting in poor appearance and negative impressions from top management to guest.

This article is written for both engineering staff and management in the engineering department. As an engineer, know what is required of you and what role you play. Your contribution and efforts makes a big difference and impact on how successful the department can become. Always



Back-of-the-house Storeroom / Maintenance Shop



make the effort, it will pay off in the long run and make you a valuable asset to management. As a department manager or supervisor it is important that you train the staff on what they need to know and show your support by making resources within reach so they can take care of things without hesitation. After it becomes exhausting with non-productive staff, it is time to set a time line for evaluation to prevent further damage and preserve the strength of the department. We all want to do our best and try our best, but only the best in all of us will help us succeed in every department. Wish you all the best in success and continue to go beyond expectations, we in management see it as well as our guests. Link in the team. All of us know as leaders of our own departments that the greatest tool for success is the guidance we provide to those that we supervise. When you are involved in creating a plan with the team let your expertise shine through. Whether it is a monthly action plan or a five year Rockefeller style plan, as those blank areas on the page are filled in with things that you have contributed, know that you are also involved in building the knowledge of all

those involved in the process as well.

There will be times you will be instructed to implement policies in your department that are contrary to local or industry standards. Once a Chief told me during better economic times when good maintenance personnel were very hard to recruit and his pay scale was average for his comp set, he was asked to eliminate all overtime. His overtime issue had occurred that week due to emergency guest room issues during a full house on the last day of the pay week. So to prevent all overtime, he was instructed to follow a new policy for every line employee in his department, the implementation of a 37-hour workweek (the same as the front desk). At that time all of the competing hotels in the area were running 40-hour schedules in their maintenance departments. His crew's reaction was, "Great we will be home a half hour early every day." However, the next day his shop was nearly a repeat of the scene in the original Frankenstein movie, when the villagers stormed the castle with torches and pitchforks. After speaking with their spouses the night before every member of the maintenance department knew to

the very penny how many thousands of dollars less they would earn each year on a 37-hour work week instead of 40. The potential to lose the entire crew to the surrounding properties abruptly brought this policy to an end. Dealing with situations such as this have a positive side, because someday you may be asked to step up to the next level and the mistakes that you have seen from newly promoted bosses that so frustrated you in the past have actually become part of your own experience and you will not be making those same mistakes.

So this leads us into how to hire good personnel in the hospitality industry. We should never let a flashy resume beguile us. Just remember a guy who has worked, as the steadfast Assistant Chief in Kalamazoo, MI or Normal, IL for seven years may be a better bet than someone who went here and there. Maybe spending three months in LA and ten minutes at a big casino in Vegas and then on and on to flashier and flashier locations doesn't always mean the person is a good candidate for employment or will perform well for you. Until next issue. ☺

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# Room Maintenance Program Cart

August H. Craanen

<http://www.craanen.com>



Use of the room maintenance program (RMP) will increase employee productivity since tools and materials required for re-pairs are often found in the R.M.P. cart. Time spent locating parts, waiting for elevators, chasing tools, is an area of expense, seldom considered, frequently overlooked, or just considered as a built-in factor. The 'go-get-it time' almost always involves wages for more than one person.

## THE WORKSHOP RMP CART

The R.M.P. workshop cart should have the following:

- Large wheels to roll easily over carpet and padding, with baby-buggy balance for walking in and out of elevators, over door sills, low steps, etc.
- Enough durability to withstand long, hard services.
- Ample storage space for easy transport to the job
- Various drawers to store a wide variety of tools
- Locking protection against theft
- Bin type compartments, divided into sections for small tools, parts and sundry articles
- Small combination grinder / buffer mounted on top of cab
- Small vise mounted on opposite side of cab
- Plumbing supplies
- Electrical extension cord
- 1/4" electric drill

- Plumbing tools
- Electrical test equipment and tools
- Air conditioning parts and filters
- Building maintenance tools
- Paint touch-up supplies and tools
- Hardware supplies – door lock parts, screws, etc.
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# Proper Mopping: Your Best Defense Against Slips & Falls

By Alan Mayr  
CEO, MARBLELIFE, Inc.

*Could the way your maintenance staff mops  
your floors be creating problems?*



As one of the largest stone, tile and grout restoration and maintenance companies in the country we find the most severely needed training throughout North American hotels is

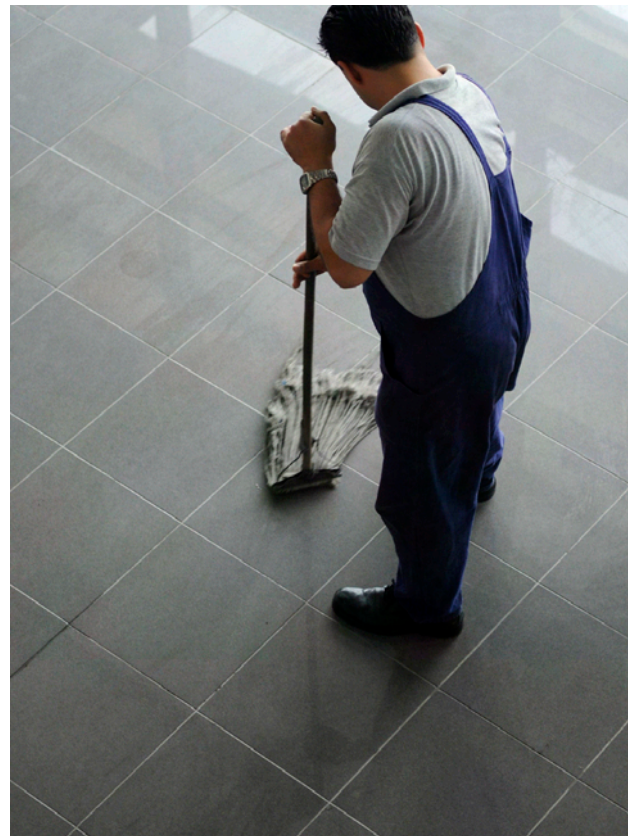
"How to Properly Mop a Hotel Floor." The vast majority of housekeeping and maintenance workers BELIEVE they know how to mop a floor, but in reality many are doing damage to their grout, and reducing their floor's static coefficient of friction (SCF).

Why? They THINK they understand how the "mop process" works, but in truth do NOT. As such, they not only leave dirt on the floor, they may create an unnecessary safety hazard and contribute to staining the floor's grout lines.

The Static Coefficient of Friction (SCF) is the unit of measure used to communicate slip resistance. The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs provides a guideline that has been adopted by the industry as the closest thing to a standard. It recommends a 0.5 Static Coefficient of Friction as presenting a safe condition. However, few property owners know what their floor's SCF is under best conditions, let alone how housekeeping might be impacting this. Worse yet, they have no means to demonstrate they are monitoring their systems. The good news is this can be quickly and cost-effectively addressed. For more information on SCF, go to the National Floor Safety Institute at <http://www.nfsi.org/>.

A qualified floor care company will have the equipment necessary to assess your floor's coefficient of friction and will understand how their restoration, maintenance and cleaning methods impact this coefficient. The first step is to measure your floor's coefficient of friction upon their arrival and then again after they have completed their service. While the focus is on maintaining the natural surface, restoration contractors often find they are educating management regarding the impact housekeeping practices have on SCFs and floor safety. Typically, poor floor safety is caused by improper mopping or dusting techniques. The good news is this is easily correctable with a little training, but left unaddressed can result in SCF values below what is deemed to be a safe despite your floor's clean appearance.

While legally you are responsible for maintaining the safety of the public in your hotel, there are no laws defining floor friction or anti-slip requirements. A frivolous lawsuit can run anywhere from \$15,000 to \$50,000 or more in today's litigious society. Developing your defense now before a claim is made is your best strategy and will discourage opposing counsel. Your



best defense against slip and fall claims is to first make sure you do not have a slip-and-fall condition; second, establish defined processes to manage dust and water intrusion and removal; and third, maintain complete records and SCF measurements that can be independently confirmed. The ability to demonstrate that you are aware of the factors that affect safety, you convey to your housekeeping teams the risks to be managed, and have a system of measuring and monitoring safety performance can go a long way toward discourage opposing counsel from pressing their claim.



Keep in mind that when you begin monitoring the SCF of your floors, you want to take two sets of measurements. First, measure the floor's SCF in an unclean state and then again after cleaning and drying the same test area. The difference of the two measurements measures the impact your housekeeping is having on maintaining the proper SCF of your floor and, most importantly, your guest's safety.

You want to see figures over 0.5 and little difference between the two readings. It is recommended that the same

person take both measurements and that the measurements be taken consistently from the same areas. Ideally, this should be done by an outside entity so that no claim can be leveled that the results were fixed or altered. There are several companies that can assist in setting up a monitoring program, but the least expensive should be your floor maintenance partners who should be monitoring their own results periodically.

One can reduce the coefficient of friction on virtually any surface by simply adding water, oil or a layer of talcum or dust as a non-adhered intermediary layer. In each case these materials serve as "lubricants" providing a means of allowing shoe soles to slide more freely across a floor. The presence of these materials can equally

and easily overcome the relatively minor impact a natural floor finish may have. While a marble surface with a dull 50 grit finish may have a higher SCF than a polished glossy 800 grit finish, both will meet the VA 0.5 SCF requirement and both will become slippery with the presence of a puddle of water or a lot of dust or talcum.

***"Okay – it sounds so easy – manage my dust and puddle water....?"***

Any smooth surface will become slippery (falling below 0.5) in the presence of dust, puddle water or oil. It is important to insure your floor's surface is clean, dry and free of dust. This is something you can impact immediately and inexpensively, but has several implications affecting your housekeeping functions and training. For one, reducing the frequency that you dust mop or damp mop your hotel's floor means that you will see a reduction in your coefficient of friction as average dust levels are allowed to increase. A small thing but, a real factor particularly on a dry dusty day with a local convention meeting going on that results in your doors repeatedly opening and closing.

Okay – it sounds so easy – manage my dust and puddle water. You are putting

down matts and your housekeeping is dusting and mopping. You have your team signing off that they have completed the task assigned at the assigned time. Sounds great. But in this market where financial reality has warranted and required sharp cuts in staffing, we now have to worry about whether the checked off tasks are being completed PROPERLY. If

not, we may be aggravating the problem that we are seeking to manage.

Too much water – puddling the floor – does not pick up the dirt

but, rather dissolves the dirt into smaller particles. When the dirty mop is dragged across the edge of the next tile, dirt laden water is stripped off and deposited into the recessed grout lines. The dirty water soaks into any open pores staining the grout. The dirt in the remaining dirty water now in the grout lines concentrates as the water evaporates. In effect, the excess water has served to move the dirt from the top of the tile and concentrate it in the grout lines. Eventually the tile grout lines will need to be cleaned with an extraction system, in order to remove this concentrated dirt, THEN you will need to seal the stained grout to restore the natural grout color and appearance, all of which costs money, and all of which are avoidable with proper mopping techniques and sealing maintenance.

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Damp mopping delivers better results and avoids future expenses; conversely, wet mopping reduces safety and increases long term maintenance costs.

So how does all this effect your floor safety? Wet mopping also leaves excess water on the surface of the tile. The water in and of itself is a slip hazard as long as it is present. As the water evaporates you begin to see mop streaks. Mop streaks are caused by residual dirt or soap that has settled out of the water as it evaporates. This material is not bound to the tile surface, but sits on top of it. When given enough pressure such as one walking, it can break free effectively creating a dust lubricant and a slippery floor. Failing to damp mop water is another contributor to streaks. As the dirt concentration in the water rises, the water becomes saturated with dirt and unable to rinse additional dirt without depositing old dirt back on the mop. With a trained eye one can actually read the marks on the floor to determine where poor mopping started and ended based on the severity of streaks and mop marks.

If your staff is dust mopping, but failing to sweep up the accumulated dust, you are one stiff breeze from it returning to the floor. Failing to periodically wash your dust

mop head will also contribute to problems. Lastly, never use a treated mop, a mop that has been used to wax or strip a floor or a mop that has been used to clean the kitchen floor and may be carrying grease or oils. Introducing oils can contribute to reductions in your floor's coefficient of friction and consequently, increase your liability to slips and falls. Label your mops designated for use in your lobby for dust or damp mopping only.

Now, back to those streaky floors. The streaks are caused by water saturated with dirt that has been allowed to dry on the floor. In effect each streak is a concentration of dust. Most "moppers" do not understand the purpose of mopping a floor. They work under the premise they must get the floor WET to get it clean when in reality they should be wringing their mop DAMP DRY before returning it to the floor. The damp mop is designed to lift the dust off the floor and rinse it off the mop in the bucket. This operates in much the same way you might lick a finger to lift the corner of a magazine page. Too wet and you cannot lift the paper, but lightly damp and the paper sticks to your finger. When water is applied to the floor we simply dissolve dirt, move it around, and deposit it in your grout lines where it will stain any

unsealed grout or be left as a streak mark upon drying.

A focus on floor safety in your hotel will likely result in a re-evaluation of some of your housekeeping procedures. The use of periodic slip test measurements can provide you an objective means of assessing the quality of your housekeeping's impact. Ask yourself does a floor need to be mopped or dust mopped wall-to-wall or are there areas around entrances that require more frequent focus? Capturing and removing dust and water as it is being walked into your building is cleaner and safer. And remember, adjusting for weather conditions is a must. You can also alert your insurance company that you are having your floors tested periodically and you may find you can secure a reduction in your insurance premiums — as they can use this data to defend you should you become subject to a claim. With a little focus and effort your property can have cleaner floors, become a safer hotel and operate more efficiently. ☺

About the Author: Alan Mayr is the Chief Operating Office of MARBLELIFE, Inc., is a Carnegie Mellon Chemical Engineer by degree, and holds a University of Michigan MBA.



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# When Talent Comes Knocking

By Tim Arwood, CEOE

Director of Engineering, Sonesta Hotel Downtown Orlando

Managed by Gemstone Resorts



We left off in our last issue (Fall 2009) with, "We should never let a flashy resume' beguile us when it comes to finding the right person for an opening in

your department, especially when looking for an assistant or a well seasoned mechanic. Just remember, a guy who has worked, as the steadfast Assistant Chief in Kalamazoo, MI, or a kitchen and laundry mechanic in Normal, IL, for several years may be a better bet than someone who went here and there. Maybe spending two years in LA and ten months at a big casino in Vegas and then on and on to flashier and flashier locations isn't always equivalent as to how well they will perform for you. Look for someone who is well trained, experienced and knowledgeable who also seems to have "the right personality to be the kind of team player to compliment your crew." Since I started my book when it comes to finding good people things have changed a bit.

Until recently it was seldom that an extraordinarily talented person would show up on your doorstep when you are searching for someone with good experience and the expertise needed to fill a recently vacant position, but in this "Great Recession" there seems to be a super abundance of good people with great resumes that are not the kind I cautioned about above. I know I am going a little off topic, but I feel I need to address why we have so many applicants out there who are looking. In the recent slow economic times, it is either because they have lost their job



*"Sometimes the right fit for the position is so very important; in fact it may outweigh other qualifications. That not only goes for the company, but the employee as well."*

or the workload on them has increased two or three fold in the wake of their departments being downsized. Whether it is from a reduction of staff or having hours in the department cut to the proverbial bone, we all know personally and through the grapevine that there are guys out there working 11-14 hours 5 days a week and often another 8 hours or more over the weekend. Even though there may be less work over all in a lower occupancy situation, the weekly and monthly meetings continue, monthly corporate reports are still due, and end of the month brings reviewing the P & L along with variance reports.

With hard cuts in personnel, many Chief Engineers have possibly lost their stock-room clerk, Assistant Chief, or maybe the

engine that keeps the office going while the manger is at those meetings or out in field, the department's admin person. When the chief is in meetings, out on the floor inspecting, or is doing the job of the assistant chief, he was forced to cut and there is no longer an admin person, so every time he/ she walks out the door the office stops functioning completely. The calls pile up, the payroll may be neglected, writing purchase orders along with keeping the checkbook updated lags behind, and ordering suffers. They cut these corners because they have to do whatever it takes to make the floor run because the first rule in Hospitality Engineering is above all else "the facility must be maintained!"

There are other properties that took an-

other route by having cut their Director/Chief's position and then called on the assistant to take the reins with a lot less resources than his predecessor originally had to work with. This all boils down to the reason that a lot of assistants have become "The Acting Chief." It was viewed as the best economic move for the sake of the property. Many strong leaders will rise out of this who didn't feel that were up to it and now have discovered they had what it takes to be the chief all along. In the long run as the economy recovers they will reap a financial reward when they are given the title and income to go with the responsibility they have shouldered during lean times. How does all this besides higher unemployment aid us in finding the right highly qualified person? Sometimes the right fit for the position is so very important; in fact it may outweigh other qualifications. This not only goes for the company, but for the employee as well. Someone, who is now standing in as chief, recently told me he didn't want to be the department head because, "He

was the best damn number two guy any chief could ever have or want." He was much more happy out in the facility being hands on, keeping the line employees working, making sure the parts needed were ordered, and seeing to it that quantity and quality of work in the department was maintained while his Director planned renovations, attended all of the meetings, and managed the department. His unhappiness is why when one of the few and far in between assistant chief positions opens, he is first in line to apply.

Many great mechanics, supervisors, and in this economic recovery, our lost admin assistants, plus stock persons are all out there for the taking (hiring). So, hang on to those great resumes and when the storm has passed start calling them to see if they are still looking. If you are on one of those properties that have already began to see the recovery for our industry in your region, then you need to take advantage of this opportunity now. We will probably never see so many good people out there looking at one time again in our lifetime.

Finally, for the next issue of Lodging Engineer, I want to talk about the "things" we have to have to make our departments run properly. And, for those of you who are the all rolled into one engineer; the chief, the assistant, admin, the stock clerk plus the night guy too when there is a call-off, you must take time to make sure your remaining staff has what they need to do their jobs. If you find yourself in this position, overwhelmed and working many hours, see if the receptionist in sales could fill out that P.O. from the quote your supplier sent you. Also, maybe you should ask your controller if the accounts payable or receivable person could help you with your ordering process. So, take the extra time to select the right people and foster cooperation among your team and across departments, this will help you get the job done right the first time and should provide you a few extra hours of R&R. ☺



## UPCOMING INDUSTRY EVENTS

### February 25, 2010

5:15 PM at the Sheraton-Seattle  
Puget Sound Hotel Engineering Association Meeting

### March 25, 2010

5:15 PM at the Restorx  
Puget Sound Hotel Engineering Association Meeting

### March 15 - 16, 2010

AH&LA Legislative Action Summit  
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### May 10-12, 2010

The Sustainable Building Series: Green Retrofits  
New York City, NY  
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### May 14 - 23, 2010

International Code Council  
2010 Final Action Code Hearing  
Sheraton Dallas Hotel

### May 18 & 19, 2010

US Green Building Council 2010 Federal Summit  
Ronald Reagan Building & International Trade Center 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC

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## GREEN TIPS for Room Filter Maintenance

Dennis M. Trost

VP Sales/Marketing, Kapa Technologies, Inc.



Over the past 5 years, the "GREEN" movement has affected many corporations nationwide including the hospitality industry. However, being truly GREEN

requires a comprehensive operating philosophy involving all areas of your property. Recycling, internal energy conservation methods, and bio-degradable products are just a few examples of what your company can do to be dedicated to the environment.

As a filtration representative based in Or-

lando, Florida, I have been working with many of my clients on "Green Solutions" developed to save money while also helping to reduce our global environmental footprint. In HVAC filtration, staying on a filter and pan treatment "Change-Out" schedule is a must for any property's green energy-saving initiatives. Your AC unit, when not properly maintained, can impact your engineering budget significantly.

### Proper Changing of Air Filters Can Impact Your Energy Usage

AC filters should be changed regularly as stated by manufactures specifications. Without properly scheduled maintenance/change-outs of your HVAC filters, you will see a major increase in your utility bill.



Proper Changing of Air Filters Can Impact Your Energy Usage

This is due to the over-loading of your filters that in-turn increases the pressure drop causing your HVAC units to work harder. Not changing a dirty or clogged filter increases your energy consumption and can cost a property thousands of dollars annually not to mention the effect it has on indoor air quality and your guest's comfort.

Filter standardization is a concept that converts custom filter sizes that can often vary from room to room (usually found in older properties with high volume room count) into a standard size filter.

### Custom Size Filters Are Easily Standardized

If your custom size allows, a standardized mechanical spacer can be used to convert your frame to accept a less costly standard size filter. This maintenance procedure can save your property on every change-out for the life of the property. These "GREEN" concepts are just a few ways to improve your company's focus on your annual budget. ☺



Custom Size Filters Are Easily Standardized

See KAPA's ad on page 22



# Death, Taxes, And Them OSHA Changes Are A Comin'

*The only things in life that are certain!*

By Art Attaway

*International business, globalization, International Standards (ISO), United Nations, free trade...it's a changing world, but the sky is not falling.*



There is a movement afoot by the Occupational Safety and Hazard Administration (OSHA) to change the Hazardous Communication Standard, the

safety standard for chemical product labeling, MSDS information, how the chemical industry manages hazardous material information, and employee training. This is being done in an effort to further "globalize" the management of these products and make the information more universal, as well as to provide greater protection to workers that are exposed to chemical products. Sort of like the international symbol for the lavatory!

This is old news to the hotel industry. While there are estimates of cost in the tens of millions to implement these changes, it will probably have very little effect on us as operators. We already have safety

meetings and post MSDS, have manuals, emphasize the proper use and protection of these products, and have to constantly update the same. So, how will it impact us and why should we be concerned?

The onus or burden will primarily rest on the shoulder of suppliers and chemical compounders. However, they may try to pass these costs on in the form of higher prices. I doubt it. The size of the chemical supply industry is in the tens of billions, so to absorb forty million or so is a minor consideration. As it will affect smaller properties more than larger hotels with greater employee populations, so will it affect the smaller chemical suppliers, but the cost is relative.

These suppliers already print labels and MSDS, and maintain a budget to do so. The turn over, if planned, should go into a normal annual cycle for reprinting and should be no big deal. The larger concern is probably "will products be pulled" from use by operators because of a greater awareness of safety concerns and an initial manufacturer's reclassifying requirement.

If so, then "bravo" and mission accomplished. There was a very popular fabric protector that was pulled "under the radar" and had to be reformulated to provide for greater safety. The company did it, reintroduced the product, and barely missed a beat. I have previously owned a chemical product, and have to tell you some of the profit margins are incredible. The packaging cost more than the product! Granted, there is always a lot of Research & Development that goes into products, and these costs should always be allowed for recovery. But, at the margins, these costs have been recovered on most products. My point is, they can afford it and should not go in "kicking and screaming." It is good for the environment, the planet and the people on it. The smart ones will make it good for their profit as well. And, hotels / motels...making it good for employees and guests... No brainer!

Regardless, this government project (OSHA's rule making) is a slow moving train, but I do foresee it reaching its destination. The process is this:

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1. OSHA has posted a notice of rulemaking and is taking comments, for the period of 1 year.

2. Then it will propose initiation of changes, probably a year later.

3. There will be a compliance period proposed at 3 months but yet to be determined, but this will be announced well in advance. Existing labeled and shelved products will have a 3 year transition.

This is my opinion only, based upon a brief review of 271 pages making up the proposed rule. If you want to have your say, contact OSHA at:

OSHA Docket Office  
Docket # OSHA-  
H022K-2006-0062  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Room N2625  
200 Constitution Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20210

To review the entire proposal, posted September 30, 2009 go to OSHA's website:

<http://www.osha.gov>

**Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS).**

In the NPRM, published on September 30, 2009, OSHA sought further input on a number of issues related to implementation of the GHS as part of the Hazard Communication Standard (HCS).

Ecolab, a familiar and trusted name in the hospitality industry, submitted public comments to the rule making. As a major chemical supplier to the industry, Ecolab's Manager of Product Safety and Compliance, Michelle Gardner, provided the following statement, "Ecolab supports adoption of the GHS and urges OSHA to move toward efficient and timely implementation

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*"Ecolab supports adoption of the GHS and urges OSHA to move toward efficient and timely implementation of the GHS for workplace chemicals and to continue to pursue true harmonization across products, industries, federal agencies, and international trading partners."*

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of the GHS for workplace chemicals and to continue to pursue true harmonization across products, industries, federal agencies, and international trading partners. Consistent implementation is vital in order to reap the benefits of a globally harmonized system."

So, why do I support the green movement? I am a product of the 60's, but what does that mean? It means I like Bob Dylan and "The Times They Are A Changin'." I was a volunteer in an unpopular army in an

unpopular wartime (sorry...police action) rather than a protestor, though. I am not a tree hugger. I believe in climate change and not global warming. I support our government but don't always agree with them. I am a capitalist! I love making and spending money. I have been self employed since 1984 and love it. I loved working for Hyatt and Ritz Carlton. I love quality and loath complacency. But ultimately, I am a realist. I care about people and our planet. I have five children and four grandchildren, and that is with only two married so far. There is an old Native Indian proverb that says: "We did not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we are borrowing it from our children." So, regardless how much we actually contribute to greenhouse gases and climate change, we should still be responsible and do everything we can to protect our children,

environment, and ourselves. And, I predict this movement will be like consumer electronics, beginning with the TV, radio, and telephone and ever changing, offering greater convenience, cost savings, and greater efficiency. So, ultimately, also good for profit. The green movement is here and most of it is a good thing. We all need to critically analyze the situation and make the moves that are best for all things, not just ourselves, but for 'The Greater Good.'

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Employee MAX On-line HR and Payroll Service (888) 376-7291 [www.employeeamax.com](http://www.employeeamax.com) (SEE DISPLAY AD ON PAGE 22)

G&R Plumbing Enterprises (407) 540-1650 [gr2@cfl.rr.com](mailto:gr2@cfl.rr.com) (SEE DISPLAY AD ON PAGE 12)

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Marblelife Inc. 866-653-9737 [www.marblelife.com](http://www.marblelife.com) (SEE DISPLAY AD ON PAGE 14)

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SunBrite Furniture (407) 294-9041 [www.sunbritefurniture.com](http://www.sunbritefurniture.com) (SEE DISPLAY AD ON PAGE 15)

Stone and Tile Pros (877) 715-5313 Ask the PROS your Questions. Locate Stone and Tile Contractors nationwide. [www.stoneandtilepros.com](http://www.stoneandtilepros.com)

SunBrite Furniture (407) 294-9041 [www.sunbritefurniture.com](http://www.sunbritefurniture.com) (SEE DISPLAY AD ON PAGE 15)

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Water Management, Inc. (800) 394-5325 [www.watermgt.com](http://www.watermgt.com) (SEE DISPLAY AD PAGE 22)

### A CLOSING NOTE FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION

As NAHLE is now well into our second year, I want to thank each and every one of you for your support and hard work. I must admit it has been both challenging and a lot of fun and we have made a lot of progress, but we still have a long way to go. However, I need your support, both financially and as contributors of ideas, leadership and articles for Lodging Engineer. So if you like what we are trying to do here, make a differ-

ence! Join NAHLE, refer a vendor to NAHLE, write an article on a maintenance procedure so that your peers can benefit from your experience, contact NAHLE if you would like to be interviewed as our next 1st Person, post a job, or send us a picture of your staff or your hotel's maintenance shop or whatever you want and we just might put it on our website's home page or in Lodging Engineer.

Robert Elliott  
Executive Director



*Dedicated to Engineering Excellence*

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# An Offer You Just Can't Refuse

**NAHLE is pulling out all the stops to drive our membership**

**FREE**

*Refer one vendor who joins NAHLE and we will provide you your first year's membership free and a check for \$100.00!*

**\$100**

*For each additional referral you provide who joins NAHLE we will write you a check for \$100.*

**FREE AD!**

*Each New Preferred Service Member receives one (1) free 1/4 page color ad in Lodging Engineer.*

*Every Engineer has vendors and suppliers that you work with everyday. Tell them about NAHLE and the benefits of membership. NAHLE is committed to building the most comprehensive "Network of Engineering and Maintenance Goods and Services" in the hospitality industry.*

**It's easy to refer a new member and start putting a little extra cash in your pocket!**

*Three (3) ways to refer joining members:*

1) Go to NAHLE's website and download our Preferred Membership Application Form. Fill out the form and fax it back to NAHLE at (703) 888-3731. Be sure to include your email or phone number at the bottom of the form's first page at "Engineer Member Code" so we can contact you. [http://nahle.org/Membership\\_Application\\_Form](http://nahle.org/Membership_Application_Form)

2) Sign them up electronically through our website. Fill out the website application and follow the instructions to submit application. Be sure to include your email or phone number under "Address 2" so we may contact you. <http://nahle.org/users/add/vendor>

3) Send us an email at [admin@nahle.org](mailto:admin@nahle.org) with your referral's contact information and yours. We will take care of everything. Be sure to include phone numbers and names of contacts. We will contact you by reply email.

If you want to learn more about this incredible opportunity contact us at: [admin@nahle.org](mailto:admin@nahle.org). Or, just go to our website and start signing them electronically. It's that easy! We'll send you \$100.00 for each referral that joins NAHLE.

***What are you waiting for? This offer won't last long.***

