

Best Practices in Hostels

It is essential for hostels to maintain a high standard of hygiene and sanitation because these places are a popular and affordable choice of housing, seeking educational or employment opportunities. In a communal living environment, any lapses in hygiene can easily result in rapid spread of infectious diseases.

In this respect, managements/operators hostels are encouraged to put in place systems to ensure a good standard of hygiene and sanitation at their premises.

By observing these standards, students and workers can enjoy a clean living environment and stay healthy while studying or working here.

Managements/operators are encouraged to put in the following measures at their premises:

- ❖ Have a cleaning programme, including for drains
- ❖ Have a proper refuse management system
- ❖ Put in place a system to ensure hygienic food preparation
- ❖ Have a maintenance schedule for sanitary piping and sewers
 - ❖ Have a pest control programme
 - ❖ Carry out regular checks to ensure no strays/crows
 - ❖ Ensure toilets are clean and in good working condition:
 - Check all sanitary pipes and fittings
 - Provide soap and toilet paper in toilets
 - Provide hand-dryer or paper towels
- ❖ Do spring-cleaning at least once every six months
 - ❖ Do daily disinfection of toilets, kitchens, dining/rest areas and public telephones
- ❖ Act on those who litter and spit on the premises

The salient operational processes to achieve high standards of cleanliness and hygiene are outlined below.

Cleaning and Maintenance of Premises and Facilities

Clean and disinfect the following daily :

- ❖ Common areas/rooms used frequently by students and staff
- ❖ Surfaces with frequent human contact such as door knobs/handles, staircase railings, lift buttons, counters and tabletops

Housekeeping Management

- ❖ Have an assigned team of workers to do cleaning and housekeeping daily.
- ❖ Designate a cooking area for students/workers, where necessary.
- ❖ Provide enough refuse bins lined with plastic bags and tight covers in the living quarters and canteen areas. The bins must be covered at all times.
- ❖ Dispose of all food waste and other refuse in refuse bins daily. Clean up any refuse spillage immediately.
- ❖ Clean/disinfect all refuse/litter bins within the premises/compound daily.
- ❖ Remove refuse from the bin centre daily.
- ❖ Wash and disinfect the bin centre daily. All bulk bins must be kept within the bin centre and be properly covered.
- ❖ Have a programme for cleaning drains and cutting overgrown vegetation.

Sanitary Pipes

- ❖ Ensure that all sanitary pipes and fittings are in good working condition. Attend to leakages immediately.

Pest Control Programme

- ❖ Engage a registered pest control operator to carry out regular pest control works.
- ❖ Look for signs of pest infestation such as rodent droppings/burrows and cockroach droppings.
- ❖ Check for stagnant water which can breed mosquitoes and destroy all potential breeding habitats.
- ❖ Ensure no stray animals/crows in the premises

Toilets

Have a proper schedule for maintenance of toilets and carry out the following:

- ❖ Check to ensure all toilet facilities are in good working order at all times
- ❖ Keep toilets clean and the floor dry at all times
- ❖ Clean and sanitize toilet bowls, urinals and wash hand basins. Clean mirrors, door-knobs and any other surfaces where there is contact with users
- ❖ Spot-clean walls, ledges, vents and partitions where dirty. Check for any leakage in the sanitary pipes, especially at the joints. Any leaks or defects should be rectified immediately

- ❖ Use an inspection card to monitor the daily maintenance of the toilet.
- ❖ Schedule more frequent cleaning during peak hours.

Personal Hygiene

Hostel management is also encouraged to educate their students, staff and workers :

- ❖ Not to feed strays/crows.
- ❖ To observe good personal hygiene and toilet practices (e.g. wash hands with soap and water before and after meals and after visiting toilet).
- ❖ Keep the living environment tidy and litter-free.
- ❖ Spit, cough or sneeze into tissue and throw the soiled tissue into litter bin.
- ❖ Do not share personal items (e.g. toothbrush, razors).
- ❖ Participate in clean up projects
- ❖ If ill, report to the hall masters/supervisors and stay away from fellow residents
- ❖ Give feedback to hall masters/supervisors about dirty places or unhygienic practices in hostels