



**MILITARY CLEAN**  
Veteran Owned & Operated

# **EMPLOYEE TRAINING MANUAL**



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## Welcome to Military Clean

Congratulations on becoming part of the Military Clean family! We are committed to providing the best cleaning service there is. Our work is in high demand because of the reputation military service members have for attention to detail. Imagine if the military had a cleaning service; that's us.

I was one the growing numbers of unemployed service veterans until I founded Military Clean in 2009. I set out to capitalize on the most ubiquitous of military operations: cleanliness. With just \$11.00 to buy supplies and my old Navy coveralls, I began offering Military-style deep cleanings to friends. I wanted to hire qualified veterans only because we insist on perfection.

Our community is thrilled to support those of us that have served our country and, in return, receive a famous level of cleanliness that they can tell their friends about. While cleaning is our primary function, we are not janitors. We give our clients the feeling of a new home, second only to remodeling. You will leave a show quality clean home and we leave a white glove to prove it. The only way we evaluate our work is perfect and not perfect. You should insist on perfection.

Clients hire us because we care about the quality of the job we do. We are nice people; nice people do nice things. When you are proud of your work, your client will be most impressed with the result.

This manual will give you a framework how to do your job. It's not meant to be a rigid, unmoveable text. But using the strategies and processes in this manual along with on-the-job training, you will be able to approach any cleaning job with confidence and produce impressive, show-quality homes.

I expect you to be honest. Our staff works as a team to support each other, and honesty is the quickest way to achieve that. If a mistake should arise or a problem should occur, taking accountability is the quickest way to solve that problem. I have confidence in your problem-solving skills, as should you. You were hired because we believe you have the ability to approach a problem intelligently and creatively to find the right solution.

Reliability is the defining characteristic of our staff; it is crucial to your success here. Punctuality is the easiest way to provide excellent customer service. Take pride in your work; own the job you're doing and enjoy the moment of perfection you create when you finish. I value open and timely communication and I expect feedback about problems with the job, co-workers, or your personal life that might affect your ability to do this job. Show respect for the clients and your co-workers; you are an ambassador for the company and the veteran community at large.

Thank you for joining Military Clean!

[SIGNATURE IMAGE]

### Real Military Job Breakdown



*After all, that's most of what we did.*

## **Our Policies**

### Terms of Employment

Washington is what's called an "at will" work state. That means neither you or your employer need to give notice or a reason to end employment.

We hope that this isn't the case here at Military Clean. We are all on the same team, so when you feel it's time to move on, we would appreciate at least two weeks notice. We respect the training and skill set you have, you are not easily replaceable. Please give us the time to replace that skill set and cover your accounts.

However, abandoning or failing to show up to a job site will be looked up harshly. Not only is it grounds for immediate termination, one of your co-workers or your supervisor will have to make time in their schedule to finish the cleaning job.

### Equal Opportunity Employment

Employment decisions here are based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. We do not discriminate in employment opportunities or practices because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or branch. So long as you can do the job to our standards, we won't discriminate. We do discriminate based on military service; if you haven't served, we won't hire you. We need the skills that only veterans have.

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their supervisor. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

### Non-Disclosure, Non-Compete, and Confidentiality

As a condition of your employment at Military Clean, we ask that you sign non-disclosure and non-compete forms. We ask that you keep vital business details secret, including but not limited to client information, cleaning processes, and company and payroll financial information. Respect the privacy of your clients, so don't disclose details of their home location, personal profile, and home characteristics to anyone outside the company.

Employees who improperly use or disclose trade secrets or confidential business information will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment and legal action, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

### Personnel Files

We keep all job-related information about you on file for future reference, including your initial application, payroll information, performance reviews, and all agreements signed. These documents are property of Military Clean and may be reviewed by the management at any time. If you want to take a look at the contents of your personal file, give your supervisor some reasonable advance notice. You and they can review this information together.

If you have any personal changes, like phone, address, or marital status, please notify your supervisor as soon as possible. We need this information to properly contact and pay you, so it is in your best interest to keep this information as current as possible.

## Training Period

All employees begin their time at Military Clean in a trial period. This period is designed to introduce you to our cleaning methodology and allow you to assess the requirements of the job. We closely monitor your training progress to ensure that you are able to perform any cleaning job we give you.

After this trial period, you have begin a formal training period, where you will learn to do the job autonomously. Once we are confident you are able to complete a job from beginning to end without direct supervision, this training period will end. At this point, you will be considered a full employee of the company and we will give you regularly scheduled accounts.

## Uniform Regs

We provide you with the central piece of the Military Clean uniform: the blue coveralls. To complete the uniform, you need to wear a white shirt underneath your coveralls and black, polishable shoes.

Present a clean, professional image to the client to assure them that their home or business will be professionally cleaned. That means:

- Trimmed beards or clean shaven facial hair. No neck beards.
- Tie back long hair.
- No hoop or other large earrings.
- No excessive jewelry.
- No perfume (deodorant is okay).
- Mild makeup is okay. Consider that if you get anything in your eyes, you will have to flush your eye with water for at least five minutes. Makeup will only get in the way here.
- Mild, unchipped nail polish. No garish colors.
- Set your cell phone to vibrate. Avoid texting or taking phone calls except from Military Clean or in emergencies. If you need to return a call, do so on your break outside of the job site. If you need to fix your hair wipe sweat away while on site, please do so.

## Logging Your Hours

Because most employees will be paid hourly, you will need to clock in for each job. While some jobs in commercial sites will have a punch clock available, most will not. For most jobs, you will need to clock in and clock out by phone when you start and when you end your cleaning job. Then, you will need to return to the Military Clean office and complete your time card.

## Breaks

Breaks are important to your success at job site. You should use breaks to catch your breath and clear your head, but do not lose momentum.

- Every two hours, take a five minute break.
- After four hours on a job, take a ten minute break.

When you take your breaks, move outside of the job site area. Do not sit on the client's furniture or front steps or in your car. You can bring a snack and a drink with you (in fact, we recommend it). Do not smoke on a job that lasts less than four hours. If you smoke, wash your hands before returning to

work. Do not enter a job site smelling like cigarettes. Do not leave cigarette butts or matches anywhere in the job site and do not bring them inside.

Take your breaks in between tasks. Complete a task, tidy the area, move your equipment to the next task area, and take your break. Do not leave your work area disordered, even if the client is not on site. You never know when the client will come home.

## Punctuality and Absences

We expect you to be absolutely punctual to all job sites. Because we negotiate the time allowed on a job with the client ahead of time, you will only have a limited time to complete everything. If you show up to a job late, then you may not have time to complete the job, and that is worse than merely being late. Arrive at a job site a few minutes early to gather yourself and focus before you enter into the client's home.

## **Key Terms**

Here are some important words and phrases that you'll see throughout this manual:

**Check** – Examine an area to see if it needs to be cleaned.

**Touch** – Perform some action on a surface, such as dusting or wiping.

**Do** – Clean a surface or room.

**Escalation of force** – A hierarchy of cleaning agents and tools that run from least powerful to most powerful. Helps you find the right tool for the job.

**Wainscoting** – Decorative ledges.

**Millwork** – Decorative trim on the ceiling.

**Bead** – The outer lip on wainscoting

**Ledging** – Any raised or indented area on a door.

**Backsplash** – Usually the wall or tile behind a sink or stove, but can refer to the area behind any object you are cleaning.

**Baseboard** – Protective areas on the bottom of walls.

**Foyer** – The entrance room of a home.

**Landing** – The area at the top and bottom of stairs.

**Fixtures** – The faucets and spigots that produce and control water on sinks and bathtubs.

**Debris** – Loose waste material on surfaces and floors, including crumbs, hair, dust, water, or trash.

**Shmutz** – A small bit of dirt or stain.

**Occasionals** – Tasks that are not done every time you clean a site.

**Show quality/presentation** – Tasks that serve to beautify a home without deep cleaning. These include fluffing pillows and setting toilet paper.

**Finishing** – Drying and buffing a surface to produce a high impact shine.

**High impact** – Any task that makes a large difference in the appearance of a room or area with a relatively small time investment.

**Pre-treat** – Applying a cleaning agent to an area and letting it sit as to clean the area chemically. Also known as “getting the party started.”

**Agitate** – Applying pressure and motion to an area with either a towel or friction pad as to remove a stain or shmutz.

**Toggle** – Moving between multiple tasks or rooms.

**Buffing** – Polishing a surface to produce a high impact shine.

**Opening** – The steps you perform when you arrive at a job site.

**Closing** – The steps you perform after you finish cleaning a job site, but before you leave that site.

**Wrap it up** – The last hour of a job.

**Finishing up** – The last half hour of a job. You are doing the last thing you need to do. Show quality, floors, resetting and leaving.

**Sequester** – Not entering an area after you have cleaned it.

**Back out** – Working a room from the inside out as to never walk over areas already cleaned.

**S-shaped and square motions** – These will be shown to you in training.

**Mist** – Lightly spraying a cleaning agent on an area.

**Look with your eyes** – Get close to a surface to use the light to examine it for stains and streaks.

**Cleaning agent** – Any chemical we use to clean a surface or object.

**Ears** – The raised piping on the sides of the toilet.

## Customer Service

The continued success of this company depends on you being courteous and respectful on a job site. We are nice people, so be nice to your client. If the client starts talking to you, feel free to respond, but keep the conversation clean and professional. Do not discuss company politics with the client or with other employees on the job site. If the client doesn't start a conversation, leave them alone unless you need to ask them a question. You are in their private space, so respect that.

Respect the client's privacy. Do not take photos, do not discuss details with non-employees, and do not take anything from the job site that you didn't bring with you. It doesn't matter if it's a penny or a dead battery or half of a ham sandwich, there is no mercy in theft. The client will sue, and Military Clean will sue. We get to work in great spaces with spectacular views because our clients trust us. Keeping that trust is as important as cleaning their homes.

You do not need to impress us or the client with how hard you're working. Shows of exhaustion, like heavy sighs and exclamations, are unnecessary and unprofessional. You do not need to demonstrate to them that you are working hard. The client pays for a clean home, not hard work.

While you are there to work, make sure you remain comfortable. You can listen to music through headphones. If you need to go to the bathroom, do not use the master bath. Always wash your hands after going to the bathroom. You do not want the client to think you are the enemy of their clean home. And if you need to remove a wedgie or scratch your nose, go ahead, but do it in a bathroom. Use decorum; act as if the client is in the room at all times.

Keep your phone on you while on the job site, but save all personal calls for your breaks. Your supervisor may need to call you, so answer Military Clean-related phone calls. It is very important that you answer Military Clean-related phone calls. Your supervisor will assume something is wrong if you do not and come out to the job site. Please let other calls go to voice mail and return them later.

Management is here to support you. If something unexpected happens, remain calm and respectful. If something drops, breaks, or cannot be moved while the client is at the job site, immediately tell the client. Apologize once and ask how you can avoid this situation in the future. Be honest and apologetic with the client about any mistakes. Let them be magnanimous about your mistake, and then you resolve the problem. Call your supervisor and let them know about it. If it's a bad situation, we won't send you back.

We do not tolerate any form of harassment; Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic may be considered harassment and will not be tolerated. If you feel you have been harassed, either by a coworker or a client, notify your supervisor.

### **SCENARIO: SOUNDING OFF**

When I first started this business, I was a little naïve about what clients expected of me. I was at my first big client's house. It's a two level home, and I was upstairs cleaning. The client arrived home from cleaning and called my name, both to check if I was there and to let me know that she was there. My first inclination was to yell down the stairs, "Yeah, I'm here." But she didn't respond.

I spoke again to her, "Yes?" Again, no answer. At that moment, I realized I was yelling down the stairs to her like I was one of her kids. It dawned on me that when a client calls on you, you should always walk to them, as you would expect in any customer service environment. In a grocery store, clerks will walk you to you item; they won't just point to it and tell you where to go. I was doing the client a service, so I needed to treat the client with that kind of respect.

The way that you speak to the client should reflect that respect. Don't respond with, "Yeah" or "Uh-huh." We are professionals; we should speak to them professionally. Say, "Yes" or "I understand" or another professional response that works for you. When you show that you respect them, then the client know that you will respect their home and their belongings.

## **Opening Procedures**

Before you go to a job site, pick up your job sheet, if there is one. This job sheet will have a description of all services that the client has requested and any additional requests. These requests are your mission imperatives. If the client finds that these tasks were not completed, the job as whole was not completed.

We will provide you with all of the necessary materials for the job. Please do not bring your own cleaning supplies.

When you arrive at the job site:

- ✓ If they are home, greet the client and verify your objective.
- ✓ Ask, “Are there any last minute instructions? At this point, the client may ask for something not on the job sheet. If this is a small task you can complete within the allotted job schedule, do as they ask. If this is a larger or more involved job, say an extra half hour or so, or if the job will require extra tools, make a note of the request and let them know that you will mention it to your superior.
- ✓ Tell your client what room you plan to start with, the order of the remaining rooms, and where you will finish. This gives them a sense of control and, if they will be on site while you are working, allows them to work around your cleaning process. For example, “I’ll be starting in the kitchen, moving to the master bathroom, the main bed room, the guest room, the hallway, the guest bedroom downstairs, and finally the foyer, in that order, if that’s okay with you.”
- ✓ If you are required to use the client’s vacuum cleaner, find out where it’s located.
- ✓ Take a quick walk through the home and look for potential trouble spots – stove, floors, bathrooms, cabinets. This walk through will help to plan your tasks. On this walk through, empty trash cans around the home.



If the client has any special requests, either on the job sheet or in person, do the task exactly as the client asks. Even if you know better, do not stray from the client’s wishes.



If the client is home, announce yourself when entering a new area. Avoid startling your client.

### **SCENARIO: TALKING TO CLIENTS**

I arrived at a client’s home and asked if there were any last minute instructions. They handed me a sheet that included most of what we had agreed on previously. However, there were five or six things on this list that we hadn’t discussed, including the tracks of the sliding glass door and a bench outside. I looked these over and realized that I wouldn’t be able to accomplish all of these new items in the time allotted for the price already agreed upon.

Each of the additional things was pretty small tasks and wouldn’t take a long time to complete, but all of them together would exceed the time allotted for the job and I wasn’t in a position to renegotiate the price once I was there. I talked to the client and gave her two options: we could add the new items to the ongoing cleaning services and get them next time, or we could add an additional hour today and get these new items done.

While my natural inclination was to just do the extra things for the client, we can’t do that if it is going to change the size of the job. It doesn’t matter if the client is trying to pull one over on you or is acting in good faith; we still have to follow protocol. Clients often don’t think about the planning we put into estimating their job.

The client seemed a little surprised as she hadn’t even considered it. She asked that I take care of two of the things today, and, the next time I went, I was able to get the remainder as it was a maintenance clean and much less time sensitive. In the end, she was happy about it. We were both clear and honest in our expectations, so we could find a solution that met both of our needs.

## Cleaning the Military Clean Way

While each cleaning job has its own unique aspects and pitfalls, the basic process for each job site is the same. Your cleaning process begins with planning. In fact, planning is crucial to your success. Planning helps you conceptualize the work ahead of you and makes any job, no matter how large, manageable. Having a plan helps you keep momentum and avoid frustration.

### Planning a Job

Your plan should include everything within the scope of the job sheet. That means, if a room is listed on the job sheet, you should at least dust everything visible in that room. If you do not clean something, know why. You should end the job with a short list of all of the things you did not clean.

Good planning should divide any home into a series of smaller, discreet tasks and put your tasks in order. Break each home into rooms, break each room into thirds, each third into surfaces and appliances, and break each surface into a series of distinct actions.

To clean efficiently, plan to clean a room from top to bottom. Clean areas that are higher up in a room before you clean surfaces below it. Otherwise, you'll be dropping dust and debris on areas that you've already cleaned. Do not try to outsmart gravity, work with it. Wipe debris onto the floor – you'll be cleaning the floor soon enough and will get that debris. Top-to-bottom cleaning means that the floor will be the last thing you clean in any room.

When cleaning, you should consider the general cleaning process and your **escalation of force** in cleaning products as two different hierarchies that work together. You'll need to use both in tandem to finish a cleaning job efficiently. Each of these hierarchies is explained below. You should also create your own hierarchy of tasks that you are working on. You'll have multiple tasks in progress at a time, so prioritize them into three categories: those that create the highest impact like removing visible debris, cleaning and sanitizing, and show quality tasks.

#### **SCENARIO: BEING IN CONTROL**

One home was so cluttered, that I felt overwhelmed instantly. I had seen the home before, so I had a rough plan of how to approach the job, but that plan changed the moment I saw the clutter. My plan became less about clean each room than dealing with the clutter.

Much of the clutter was trash – empty Gatorade bottles, water bottles, and other recyclables. Once I got rid of the trash, the room opened up. I did a lot of the presentation tasks first – organizing remotes, fluffing pillows, generally squaring away loose items – which gave me a sense of control and order over the space. A lot of cleaning is about creating order in a space. Once I had some order established, I was able to tackle the cleaning tasks comfortably.

### Executing a Plan

Once you have a plan ready, all you need to do is execute it. The actual cleaning should go like this: Start in the area that will take the most time, usually the kitchen, but this could also be a master bathroom. You start with the thing that takes the most time in the kitchen, usually the oven. Top-to-bottom cleaning indicates that we should start with the stove top; however, there are cupboards above the stove top that we should do first. At the same time, we want to pre-treat the oven with oven cleaner. While you should have segmented your room into discreet tasks, you should toggle between these tasks in a seamless process. You should also toggle between cleaning rooms, especially if you pass through one room to get to another. No movement should be wasted, it should be an opportunity to clean something on your way.

You clean the kitchen, cupboards, stove top, oven, counters, sinks, and so on. As you finish with a product in that room, begin moving it to your bag and begin moving your bag to the next room. When everything else in that room is clean, do the floors. By the time you finish that area, your bag and your cleaning materials should be waiting for you in the next workstation. Let the floors dry before replacing furniture and throw rugs and move on to the next room.

Let's say the next room to do is the master bathroom. Your goal is to sequester rooms as you finish them so you do not have to pass through them again. Begin by pre-treating anything that needs it. Spray bleach solution into the toilet, the tub, and the sink if needed. Work top to bottom, starting with light fixtures and cabinets and moving down to the sink, toilet, and tub. You can often work these last three simultaneously, letting one air dry while you work the next item before you finish it. Finally, you clean the floors and back out.

Your next rooms will be those rooms you can clean and sequester and not have to walk through again. But on your way to those rooms, dust the hallways and other rooms in between. This removes the majority of the dust and lets it settle. Clean as to back out through the home to the entrance door. Save the rooms you have to repeatedly walk through until the end. By the time you finish cleaning the floors of the foyer or entrance hallway, your bag, your vacuum, the garbage, and your personal belongings should be waiting by the door and now all you have to do is inspect. Group like items together and inspect them that way.

At some point in the cleaning job, you'll feel overwhelmed. You'll feel like you have too much to do and not enough time to do it. Do not panic and do not rush. Do not get complacent, either, just keep working on tasks. You'll be done before you know it.

Your final task is to finish with the client. Tell them what you did, offer to show them, give them a white glove, collect the payment, schedule the next cleaning, and thank them. Wrap up the job with your client.

#### **SCENARIO: TIMING A JOB**

I was at a regular client's home, so I felt comfortable there, but I was having a bad day. I got into a tough spot in the bathroom. Before I knew it, I had wasted 45 minutes here and only had about an hour and 15 minutes for quite a bit of work. I started to panic and rushed to complete everything in time. But I found that I was just running around and not really getting anything done.

I stopped, had some water, and thought about the remaining things I had to do. I made a plan for those remaining tasks, a mental checklist that put them in the most efficient order, so I wouldn't have to go back and forth to get new chemicals and dig through my bag. Even if I did go over time, the most important thing was to get the job done and to do it right.

I focused more on doing the job right. While I was thinking about the time and how to work efficiently, I tried to just get the job done. I told myself, I'm just going to finish this bathroom, vacuum the home, and take care of anything else I needed to. It turned out I only ran over time by 15 minutes. If I had let myself worry any more, or let my stress get the better of me, I would have gone over time by a lot more. Stressing about a task wastes more time than just pausing, planning, and then doing the task.

### The Four Stages of Cleaning

The general process for any room or task is as follows:

## Remove debris

Depending on the surface, this could include brushing crumbs from a stove top, wiping dust from the top of the toilet, or rinsing hair out of a bathtub. Dusting surfaces is considered removing debris. Wipe debris onto the floor where you can vacuum or dry mop it off the floor later. If the debris might cause a problem if walked on, catch the debris in your hand as you sweep it off the surface and dispose of it.

Be thoughtful. If you see a dirty dish, pick it up and place it in the dishwasher, if the dishwasher contains dirty dishes. If not, place the items to the right of the sink after you have cleaned the counter.

## Clean and sanitize

This step requires a towel and a cleaning agent. We do not clean with water. Check the oven, bathtub, toilet, and sinks to see if they need to be pre-treated. Clean using S-shaped strokes. This keeps any remaining debris under control. Use your thumb to clean stubborn areas. The microfiber towels clean most surfaces very well without much cleaning product, so do not overuse product unless the surface requires it. See **Handling Special Materials** for more information.

Before you move on to finishing, take a look at the area from all sides using the light to make sure you have cleaned everything.

## Dry and Finish

After you have cleaned a surface, get a clean and dry or slightly sweaty towel to dry and finish the area. Anything you clean, you should dry. This process will give most surfaces a high-impact shine. If the surface doesn't shine up properly, your towel may be too damp. You should not need chemicals to buff and produce this shine. Finish a surface using crescent strokes. Your towel should drag over the surface instead of glide. Do not leave any surfaces wet, including sinks.

## Inspect

When you have finished a surface and made it shine, check the area to ensure it is complete. Make sure you look over your job for spots you may have missed. If an area looks perfect, then it probably is. Inspect areas in the light using the high-impact shine you created to highlight dirty areas and inspect it from multiple areas.



**NOTE:** You do not need to complete these steps for a single task before moving to the next surface. You may have multiple stages occurring at once. For example, you pre-treat the tub and toilet with bleach while you clean the sink, then let the sink air dry while you clean the toilet.

### **SCENARIO: INSPECTING YOUR WORK**

I was recently at a new 5,000 square foot home. Even though I've been doing this for a long time, I was daunted by the size of the place. I gave myself a pep talk, planned tasks out, and started cleaning. I had been cleaning for a while and went to inspect my dusting work in the living room. Using the light to inspect one of the tables, I found that I had missed a perfectly-shaped three inch by four inch spot of dust.

Even though I had been following all of the proper dusting methods and using the towel properly, I still missed a good size spot. Everybody makes mistakes, and proper inspection is crucial to correcting them before they get to the client. You can't solely rely on the method and good technique, you have to double-check and make sure the task is complete.

## Escalation of Force

Almost every surface that doesn't involve special materials will use the same cleaning products and methods. These fall into a distinct hierarchy, with each cleaning product being more powerful than the last. Your **escalation of force** should look like this:

1. Dry dust
2. Ammonia solution (use glass cleaner if ammonia is too harsh for the surface)
3. Bleach solution (especially if the surface is white)
4. Friction pad
5. Razor (use with discretion)
6. Oven cleaner

Regardless of which product works best, you should take the same amount of time as if you used a single method. Get to the failure point with a product as soon as you can, then escalate. If the level of force you use works, great! Keep using that method until the surface is clean or that method stops working. That's the failure point. Do not scrub with a low-level product, that's usually a waste of time.

Sometimes, you may need to go back down a level to complete cleaning a surface. If you reach the top of the escalation of force and come back down – the friction pad often being the breaking point of a surface – without 100% completing an area, then the area is as clean as it is going to get. Proceed to finishing. This situation is pretty rare. If you escalate properly to the right tool, you should take about the same time no matter how dirty a surface is.

Oven cleaner is your nuclear option. It'll clean most anything, but use it very sparingly. Oven cleaner is our most expensive cleaning product, so use it only when all else fails. And oven cleaner cleans well because it is very abrasive. Do not use a lot of it or leave it on a surface for too long. It will burn skin and burn through most surfaces if left unattended.

### **SCENARIO: ESCALATION OF FORCE**

Our staff-member, Jeremy, had a cleaning job where the bathtub had non-slip bath mats that had left raised marks the client was unable to remove. We insist on perfection, so these marks had to go. I pre-treated the bath with bleach, took care of some other tasks in the bathroom while the bleach worked, and when I returned, a lot of the stains in the tub were gone. But not the marks from the bath mats. He rinsed out all of the bleach and used the shower to rinse out all the debris – the hair, the dust, and other loose materials.

The marks were still there, as was the usual shower film. He knew he could skip the ammonia stage and escalate right to the friction pad. With the friction pad, He got most of the soap scum off and made some progress with the marks, but there was still a grayish-brown mark from those bath mats. He dropped a level and added some bleach, thinking that maybe the remaining stains just needed some agitation. He used a microfiber towel with the bleach and a friction pad and he was able to get the soap scum off. He had a dust-free, debris-free, and now film-free tub. But he still had that stubborn bath mat mark.

He escalated to the final step, oven cleaner. He sprayed a light film on the marks only and waited about three or four minutes. He dried and finished the tile, a task he'd been working on in tandem with the tub bottom. After the oven cleaner had time to set in, he agitated it with a brush and rinsed it off. He'd made some progress, but he was pretty shocked to see that the marks were still there.

He had reached the top of the escalation of force and needed to drop down again. He chose the friction pad and, lo and behold, the friction pad was able to remove the marks. The oven cleaner had loosened up the marks to the point where a little pressure with the friction pad was able to remove

the marks completely. This whole process didn't take any more time than it would have taken with a single product. he escalated to oven cleaner in about five minutes and was finished with the task in about fifteen.

When the client returned home, she was baffled and thrilled. She previously tried to remove the stain to no avail. But with proper **escalation of force**, Jeremy was able to remove the marks. She thanked me profusely. It was special for her that he could beautify her tub as well as clean it. She had hired a company that had done something that she could not do herself. By removing this stain, Jeremy increased the client's trust in our ability to clean the rest of the home.

## Cleaning Supplies

We will provide all cleaning materials for your job. This can include any of the following:

### Towels

We use reusable microfiber towels for most of our work. The microfiber does a very good job cleaning most surfaces, with or without cleaning product.

Each towel has eight usable sides. Fold your towel into quarters. Each of those quarters on both the front of the towel is a usable side. The more organized and square your towel is, the more use you can get out of it.

When working with towels, keep the following in mind:

- Do most of your work with your thumb. You have greater control and can apply more pressure.
- Shimmy the towel between tight spaces.
- When a towel gets sweaty from water or chemicals, you can use it on other compatible surfaces without reapplying the chemical. Never mix chemicals on a single towel.
- Use a clean and dry towel to dust until the towel is too dusty. You will know it is too dusty when it begins to leave material on the surface you are dusting.
- Try to keep dusting towels separate from other towels. Put wet and dirty towels in a bag away from unused towels.

### Friction pads

Friction pads are made of a material that does not have much space between molecules. When moistened with cold water, the friction pad will create a seal between it and any surface that you press it against. They use friction, not chemicals, to clean and will therefore wear out over time. They excel at removing cup stains, scuff marks, and fingerprints, but they must be used with caution as they can remove the finish on some surfaces. Never use friction pads on:

- High-gloss paint
- Metal-finished oven knobs
- Brushed stainless steel
- Stained wood furniture
- Hand-painted items

You will probably need friction pads on:

- Sinks
- Bathtubs
- Toilets
- Linoleum
- Stains that remain after using ammonia
- Scuff marks

Friction pads are the natural escalation of force after bleach on grout. If the grout does not whiten up after you spray bleach on it, run a friction pad down the grout.

## Gloves

Always use gloves when working with abrasive cleaning products. This includes bleach solution, oven cleaner, or metal polish. Use gloves when working in the bathroom or in any other area where you feel you may need them. Always err on the side of caution.

## Bleach solution

You can use it to clean and sanitize areas at the same time. Consider bleach your special teams player. It'll whiten anything you spray it on, so it works best on areas that are either already white or close to it. When working with bleach:

- Always use gloves.
- Avoid getting it in your mouth or eyes.
- When you are working closely with bleach, spray the towel as to avoid getting splashed.
- If you do get bleach in your eyes, flush your eye with water immediately.
- Only use bleach on linoleum when absolutely necessary. Bleach will dry out linoleum and prevent the linoleum from finishing to a high-impact shine.

## Ammonia solution

Ammonia works well with organic stains, like grease. Test surfaces with ammonia before you begin, as it can remove the finish.

Never mix ammonia and bleach, or you may create chlorine gas, which is poisonous.

## Oven cleaner

This is your nuclear option for grease and oily films. It'll remove almost any stain. You can use it in places other than the oven, but be spare with it. Oven cleaner is our most expensive cleaning product. Always wear gloves as it is a caustic substance and will burn you before you realize it. Do not leave it on any surface for long as it could scar the surface.

## Metal polish

Metal polish works best with chrome and stainless steel. Always wear gloves when using metal polish. Do not leave metal polish on chrome or steel for more than a few seconds or you could damage

the metals. Never use it on brushed stainless steel. You will probably never need to use it on new chrome, but let experience be your guide.

When cleaning with metal polish, use two towels: One to apply the polish and one to buff it out. Keep these towels with the polish and reuse them on other chrome and stainless steel tasks.

### Hard brushes

These include toothbrushes and scrub brushes. Use these to agitate and loosen clean in tight spaces or on specific areas.

### Scraper/edger

The scraper can remove stuck on debris. Wrap a towel around a scraper and use it to remove crumbs stuck in cracks and edges.

### Razor

The razor is precision tool. Use it mostly to remove baked-in food debris from inside ovens. Always put your razor away clean and dry.



**NOTE:** Always close your mouth when you clean. These chemicals are harmful if swallowed.

### **SCENARIO: PROBLEM SOLVING**

I was at a house I had worked several times before on regular cleans. I was comfortable on this job and I knew the place pretty well. Still, everybody will get blindsided by a new problem once in a while. I noticed a sticky, gum-like material on their wax-finished floor. With wax-finished floors, you can rub them too hard or you will rub the finish right off. Friction pads, brushes, and scrapers were all out of the picture on this task.

I tried to pick off the gum and that didn't work. I tried a little glass cleaner and a towel, but quickly realized that if I kept this up, I would either be there a long time fussing over the gum, or I would fail to completely clean the area. I thought about the problem: what is going to have the highest impact on this gum with the least amount of agitation? Gum is oil based, so I got out the oven cleaner. I looked to the most powerful solution we have, because I needed this to work with the least amount of scrubbing.

Going directly to something like oven cleaner in a sensitive spot is an expert move. Be very careful in a situation like this. If you are not comfortable, make a note of the spot and contact your supervisor as to how to correctly handle a situation like this. Don't try to oven cleaner in unfamiliar places, like hardwood floors, unless you are certain that this will work without damaging the area.

In this case, I was certain. I sprayed oven cleaner not on the surface, but on the towel. I saturated one corner and dabbed the oven cleaner onto the gum itself, not the floor. I sat there for about 30 seconds, staring at the gum to see if this worked. This was a trial run for this solution, so I needed to make sure I knew how long the oven cleaner was applied. After that time, I took my towel and, with slow, circular motions, tried to remove the gum.

If this hadn't worked at all, then it would have been time to tell the client that I was having trouble with a spot and would need to figure out an alternate solution. Fortunately, some of the gum came off of the floor. I repeated the same process, sprayed the towel, dabbed the gum, and gently wiped after 30 seconds. After three iterations of this, I removed most of the gum. As I approached the floor surface, I switched to ammonia. To finish, used water to remove the oven cleaner, because it will continue to work even after you have cleaned the surface.

## Handling Special Materials

### Glass

Use glass cleaner on all glass surfaces. For windows, use a squeegee. You will be shown how to professionally clean windows. For nearly perfect glass surfaces, use a dry towel and try to remove spots this way.

### Chrome

To clean chrome, use metal polish and two towels. Make sure you wear gloves, as the polish can irritate your skin.

1. Soak one corner of your first towel with chrome polish.
2. Apply the polish to the chrome, using only as much pressure as you need to transfer the polish. Do not let the polish touch your skin or anything other than the metal surface.
3. Use the second towel to polish and finish the surface. Do not leave chrome polish on the surface for more than a few seconds before finishing. Remove all of the polish before moving on.
4. Inspect the surface to ensure there is no polish or other liquid on the surface.

For chrome that is brand new, just do and finish the surface as normal.

### Stainless steel

Clean stainless steel with a new, dry towel and spray a fine mist of glass cleaner on the surface. Use as little glass cleaner as possible. If it is brushed stainless steel, clean with the grain.



NOTE: Stainless steel is one of the most difficult surfaces to work on. You need to move your towel quickly to avoid creating streaks. If you need to get rid of a streak, add some water or glass cleaner to the surface and polish it until it is dry and continue to polish a little after. If you still have streaks, use a small amount of mineral oil and a towel.

### Brushed copper

Brushed copper is very delicate. Do not use any cleaning agents. Lightly dust the surface with a draped towel; do not put any pressure on the surface.

### Marble/Granite

We use a special marble and granite cleaner for these surfaces. Use the following process:

1. Move any objects out of the way.
2. Remove debris with a dry or lightly damp cloth.
3. Wet a towel with the cleaning agent and clean the area thoroughly.
4. With a finishing towel, polish the area to remove the cleaning agent and produce a high-impact shine.
5. Inspect your work before resetting the area. Use the light. Stains and spots hide on marble and granite.

## Wood

You do not need to sanitize wood. Dust and either clean with a damp cloth or wash.

Spray the towel when you are cleaning wood. Never spray the wood directly.

### **SCENARIO: FLOORING**

We deal with hardwood floors a lot in this job, and there are a few different types of hardwood available. I was training a staff member and showing him how to clean floors. They had laminated hardwood floors, which have a waxy finish, which makes it water resistant. It looks glossy even when it's dirty.

We were using the wood cleaner and everything was going fine until it dried. When you use vinegar or wood cleaner on the laminate, it creates a subtle but very persistent film on the surface. When you add water to this film, you get a very visible and annoying smear.

We had to clean the floor again using ammonia. You can't use vinegar or wood cleaner on laminate, because you aren't actually cleaning the wood itself; you are cleaning a plasticized surface over the wood. Not everything that looks like wood behaves like wood.

## How to Clean

This section walks through the general methods to complete most common cleaning tasks.

### The Three Types of Cleaning Tasks

There are three types of cleaning tasks: high-impact, cleaning, and show quality/presentation. High-impact tasks are those things that make the biggest difference in a room, those things that immediately make a space look cleaner. Always do these things first. Exactly what makes the highest impact will change from job to job, so use your judgment.

Cleaning tasks include most everything you do at a job. For each of the rooms listed below, we'll list common cleaning tasks you will be expected to complete in that room. Plan to start with the cleaning tasks that will make the highest impact, then move from there. As you work on high impact tasks, you may need to let them sit during pre-treating, such as oven cleaner. In these cases, do easy nearby tasks, like cleaning window sills and the tops of door frames.

Show quality/presentation items are those final tasks we do that will make the house more beautiful and tidy.

### All Rooms

In any given room, you should consistently check, touch, or do.

- Baseboards
- Top ledge of door frames (not the top of the door itself)
- Ledges on front and back of door
- Smudges near door knob, other spots on door and fingerprints or marks on door jamb, front and back
- All surfaces and objects

- Wood furniture
- Chrome or brass fixtures
- Floors
- Carpets and area rugs
- Window frames and sills, sometimes tracks
- Entryway, doorstep or porch
- Empty wastebaskets throughout home, consolidate into one bag (provided)
- To finish, apply the leave behind scent to trashcans, select carpets, and drains. The best locations for the leave behind scent will vary from home to home.

**SHOW QUALITY/PRESENTATION:**

- Square away items that move around the room, such as remote controls and magazines
- Fold blankets
- Nicely hang all hand towels, kitchen towels, and bath towels
- Wipe coasters, remote controls, and other small objects
- Fluff pillows

**Dusting**

Dusting, after the kitchen and bathroom, is going to be the third biggest task in most homes. Make it easier on yourself by always having a towel on hand and dusting as you pass through a room. Dust using S-shaped or square motions. Keep the following in mind when dusting:

- Most towels are fine for dusting, except those that have been used with oven cleaner, chrome polish, or ammonia, or towels that are excessively dirty.
- In really dusty rooms, like those around remodeling or other construction, dry dust to remove the dust, then wet dust to finish.
- If you are unsure if an area needs dusting, test it. Just because dust is not visible, it doesn't mean it doesn't need to be dusted.
- Dust high in a room before dusting low.
- Dust under movable objects; do not just dust around the object in the visible portion of the surface.

**Cleaning windows/glass**

If windows are specified in a job sheet, clean them as follows:

1. Spray window cleaner over the window surface.
2. Use a friction pad like a sponge to clean the window and spread the window cleaner over the window surface. The window needs to be very wet before squeegeeing, so if the window is not wet all over, mist more window cleaner and spread it.
3. Squeegee the window with a deliberate downward stroke, holding the squeegee at a 45° angle to the window.
4. With a towel in the other hand, wipe excess window cleaner from the squeegee blade, window trim, and the floor.

## Cleaning floors

Before you begin cleaning the floors in any room, make sure you have wiped, cleaned, and moved everything else in a room. Floors are the last thing to clean in any room, unless the floor has heavy debris. In that case, vacuum up the debris first so you aren't tracking and grinding dirt while you work.

When mopping, use your lower hand to apply pressure and guide the mop. Use your top hand to turn and push the mop. Your top hand is the propeller, your lower hand is the rudder. Keep the same side of the mop head forward at all times.

Depending on how dirty a floor is, you may be able to skip one of the steps below. If there is a question of whether you should do the step, then you should probably do the step.

Step 0: Make sure a future task will not add more debris. Check to see if you've dusted chairs and tables. You should not enter or pass through a room after you have cleaned the floor.

1. Vacuum carpets and floors to remove debris and pet hair. You may have to ball up pet hair with a brush. Hand pick up lint and debris if necessary.
2. Remove throw rugs or other floor covering, including movable furniture. Roll up any carpet runners, especially if they have a mat.
3. If you can't move a rug, vacuum under it at least a foot in.
4. Dry mop to remove dust and smaller dust. We do not use brooms. When putting a towel on for dry mopping, shorten it on one side. Use quick strokes along the grain of the wood. Make sure you get underneath cords, tables, chairs and other small furniture. You will need to move items out of the way to get all of the dust on the floor. This is not a finesse job.
5. Wet mop with a damp towel. Get the surface wet first to make your job easier. Use S-shaped motions to maintain control of dust and debris. Watch for mop dust bunnies and hairballs. For laminate and waxy floors, use ammonia to mop. For non-laminate floors, use wood cleaner. NOTE: Never leave a wet mop on the ground.
6. Get on your hands and knees and wet mop trouble areas by hand using a damp towel. This is a required step. Focus on seams and edges – the places that wet mopping will miss. Start in the corner of the room farthest away from the exit point. When you get halfway through a room, mop the area behind the door.
7. Start a process in the next room to let the floors dry before you reset the furniture.
8. When you finish, make sure any carpet fringe faces the same way.

You're not done until you:

- Clean the edges and corners. A clean floor with dirty corners is still a dirty floor.
- Go over the carpet and hand pick any shmutz left on the carpets.
- Mop under furniture and floor coverings.
- Make sure the carpet fringe faces the same way.

## Cleaning chairs and other seating

1. Check for debris on seating areas.
2. Dust all visible wood surfaces, including the legs and rungs.
3. If the client requests it or if they have a pet, dust roll the cushions.

## **SHOW QUALITY:**

Fluff throw pillows and dent the tops with your hand.

### Cleaning doors

When you clean doors, clean all six sides, the knob, the jamb, the frame, and any surrounding mill-work. Look for fingerprints on the door where the client grabs it. When you clean a door with a cleaning agent, it needs to be dried. Doors will show wipe marks.

### Cleaning televisions and computer screens

1. Dust the top of the TV and any shelving/entertainment center surfaces above the TV.
2. Use an absolutely dry towel to sweep the screen using a side-to-side motion. Never use anything other than a dry towel on televisions. No water, no cleaning agents, nothing.
3. Clean the surfaces below the TV and inside glass cabinets.

## Kitchen

In the kitchen, check, touch, or do all of the following:

- Stove top, backsplash, drip pans, and knobs.
- Oven, inside, out, and sides
- Counters and counter faces (marble and granite must be buffed dry. Inspect with the light, stains hide on marble and granite)
- Appliances, inside and out
- Outside of the refrigerator, top and sides
- Outside of all cabinets and ledging
- Clean and sanitize the sink, sponge holder, backsplash, fixtures, and drain stopper
- Empty waste basket and recycling
- Outside of the trash can.

Start with the job that takes the longest. Generally, this is the stove.

### Cleaning the top of the stove

1. Remove any of the removable parts on the top of the stove.
2. Pre-treat the drip pans with your ammonia cleaning solution.
3. Use a damp towel to remove any debris on the stove top. Do not use a polishing towel.
4. Gently use your scraper to remove debris stuck to the stove. Scrape at a 45° angle. To avoid damaging the stove, limit your stroke length to ¼ inch.
5. If you are having trouble removing some debris, use the razor. Be very careful with this tool, use ¼ inch strokes at most.
6. Spray the stove with ammonia. Get close to the stove with the spray bottle. Do not spray the stove elements.

7. Clean the stove with a towel or a friction pad.
8. Buff the stove to remove streaks. Make sure you haven't missed anything on the stove.
9. Clean the drip pans. Do not waste a towel on drying these when you can air dry them in the sink.
10. High-impact items: wipe the salt and pepper shakers and other objects that you moved from underneath the backsplash and replace them.
11. Clean the front and sides of the stove as well, including the oven door handle, knobs, and glass on the oven door.

#### Cleaning the inside of the stove

1. Clean the top of the oven door.
2. Remove oven racks and Pre-treat the oven, if necessary. Unless the job sheet specifies it, do not clean the oven racks. Cleaning the oven racks falls under detailing, which is an extra service.
3. Wipe the inner walls with a damp cloth. This will remove loose debris.
4. Gently use your scraper to remove debris stuck to the walls. Scrape at a 45° angle. To avoid damaging the stove, limit your stroke length to four inches.
5. If you are having trouble removing some debris, use the razor. Be very careful with this tool, use ½ inch strokes at most.
6. Spray the inside with a bleach solution or other oil solvent cleaner and wipe with a friction pad. If you still find debris inside, repeat steps 2 – 5.

#### Cleaning the stove backsplash/wall area

1. Remove all of the objects under the backsplash. Remember their location, as you will have to replace them in their previous positions.
2. Spray a small amount of cleaner on the area and wipe the area clean with a towel.
3. With a finishing towel, buff the area until dry. This will produce a high impact shine.

#### Cleaning the sink

1. Clear any objects or debris out of the sink. If you have not already cleaned the drip pans from the stove, do that first.
2. Clean and polish the faucet and spigots. If these are chrome or stainless steel, follow the instructions for those materials as shown earlier in this manual.
3. Clean all sink accessories, like sponge holders and wire racks.
4. Pre-treat and clean sinks with bleach, then friction pad. If you feel like the sink can be cleaner, use oven cleaner for two minutes. Rinse it with water to remove the ammonia residue.
5. Clean and polish the drain stopper, if there is one.
6. Dry the sink. If you have time, air dry; otherwise, use a dry or damp towel.

## Cleaning cabinets and drawers

1. Dust the top of the cabinet door.
2. Clean fingerprints the inside of the cabinet door and the area covered by the cabinet door.
3. Clean the outside of the cabinet. Be careful not to leave wipe marks.

## Cleaning counters

1. Dust and wipe any appliances, containers, or light switches on or above the counters.
2. Remove the debris from the counters with a wet towel. Make sure to also get the transitions between the counters and the appliances next to it.

If a door to a pantry or cabinet is open, clean the inside of that area.

Take out the garbage. Put all of the garbage bags outside until you are done, when you can then take all the garbage bags out at once.

You're not done until you:

- Wipe oven knobs
- Dust salt and pepper shakers
- Clean drain stoppers
- Wipe the tops of cabinet doors.

### **SCENARIO: CHEMICAL SAFETY**

At one heavily soiled kitchen, I was in the zone, doing multiple tasks at once. I had oven cleaner going in the oven, I had bleach in the sink, and I was using ammonia to clean the cabinets because they were full of grease. I was using glass cleaner on the windows and the friction pad almost everywhere. I was using almost all of my cleaning products in one room.

Suddenly, I felt like I was going to pass out, so I left the room and took a break. When I returned, the feeling persisted and I felt awful. The client came home in the middle of this while I was trying to hold it together and do everything at once. The first thing they said was, "Did you put the gas on? It smells of gas in here, did you put a burner on?"

I said no. The client came over to check and found that the burner was on the "light" setting, where the gas comes out, but the flame hasn't caught. I had done this accidentally in removing the knobs to clean them. I had several burners putting out gas, along with lots of fumes from cleaning products. I'm lucky I didn't pass out.

Pay close attention when you work in a kitchen. With all of the chemicals that you use, it can be easy to miss the smell of gas. Ventilate and be careful with the oven knobs. Sometimes doing everything at once can be distracting. Focus on the details and stay safe.

## Bathroom

For all bathrooms, check, touch, or do the following:

- Light fixtures
- Toilet, inside and out
- Flooring, whiten the grout

- Counters, shelving, toothbrush holder, and decorative objects
- Sinks, fixtures, and soap dispenser including the drain
- Medicine cabinet, inside and out, including the top (for move out cleans)
- Mirrors, including the top
- Shower and bathtub, shampoo ledges, backsplash, fixtures, soap dispensers, and tile
- Shower curtain, sometimes
- Shower door and track, both sides
- Wall hangings and window sillss
- Towel holder, toilet paper dispenser, and trash cans
- Area rugs
- Door frame and jamb
- Light switch plates, baseboards, and towels
- Appliances and loose bottles
- Straighten towels
- Leave all white surfaces brilliantly white

#### **SHOW QUALITY**

- Set the toilet paper

For rarely used bathrooms, your task will mostly consist of removing debris, sanitizing the toilet, and finishing all surfaces.

Use cold water in the bathroom. Hot or warm water will fog up mirrors and chrome.

#### Cleaning the toilet

1. Spray bleach solution into the toilet bowl before you begin anything else in the bathroom. You can leave it there while you complete other tasks.
2. Use a dry towel to remove debris and hair from the seat and bowl areas.
3. Clean and sanitize the bowl and seat areas with a towel and bleach solution. Bleach will sanitize the area better than most other tools in your arsenal. Use a friction pad and bleach if necessary to whiten stubborn stains.
4. Use a finishing towel to wipe the outside of the toilet, including the tank. These areas are not dirty and do not need bleach.
5. Clean the base and the ears of the toilet.
6. Finish and dry the areas that you cleaned.

Do not use this bleach towel on other surfaces in the bathroom. You can use it for other toilets in the home, however.

## Cleaning the shower/tub

1. Remove any debris from the area.
2. If the bathroom has a glass enclosed shower, clean it like a window using a squeegee. Don't do this unless you won't have to turn on the shower again.
3. Clean the tub area. Soap scum can be removed in three main ways:
  - a. Damp towel
  - b. Friction pad
  - c. Bleach solution – If the soap scum is thick, spray the area with bleach solution and let it sit for a few minutes.
4. Clean the tile with bleach.
5. Finish the tile. The shower should shine when you finish. If a bath/shower does not get used very often, you can just finish them.

Showers should not have any hair in them whatsoever when completed.

## Cleaning the sink

1. Clear any objects or debris out of the sink.
2. Clean and polish the fixtures. If these are chrome or stainless steel, follow the instructions for those materials as shown earlier in this manual.
3. Clean and rinse the sink to remove any cleaning agent residue.
4. Clean and polish the drain stopper, if there is one.
5. Dry the sink. If you have time, air dry; otherwise, use a dry or damp towel.

## Cleaning mirrors

Clean mirrors in the same way as you would clean windows. Refer the **Cleaning windows** instructions above in the **All Rooms** section. When you have completed all other bathroom tasks, re-check the mirror for smudges. Fog the mirror with your breath to remove any smudges. Do all high impact items in and around the sink first, so you don't dirty the mirror again.

## Cleaning grout

1. Spray the grout with bleach and leave it for a few minutes.
2. Rinse and wipe the bleach away.
3. If the grout isn't whitened, spray more bleach and wipe a friction pad down the length of the grout.
4. You may have to bleach and wipe/rinse several times to completely whiten the grout.

You're not done until you:

- Double-checked your work, sat on the toilet lid and make sure everything you see from that angle looks clean.
- Set the toilet paper; fold one square of toilet paper under itself and one corner in to form a point.

### **SCENARIO: GET A LOAD OF THIS**

On a long cleaning job, sometime you'll have to poop. It happens. Go in the guest bedroom before you clean it, and go as early in the job as you can. Ventilate and move on.

On one job, I had to go after I had already cleaned the bathroom. This is certainly not ideal, but nature called. I sat on the toilet and looked around casually. I noticed big fingerprints and smudges right in front of me by the toilet paper dispenser. The client was going to come home to a beautifully clean bathroom that had obvious smudges that you missed. Chances are pretty good that at some point, your client is going to poop. Get a look at your work from their perspective, even if you don't have to poop.

When you are doing your final inspection, sit on the toilet and look around. In fact, in all rooms, try to see it how the client will see it when they use it naturally. Crouch low, walk in from other rooms, and try to view in from common vantage points. Like sitting on the toilet.

## Bedrooms

For all bedrooms, check, touch, or do the following:

- Behind and under bed; make sure that you dry dust, wet dust, or vacuum all visible areas under the bed
- Picture frames and window sills
- Wash the walls for marks
- Door, frame, jamb
- Flooring
- Decorative objects, night stands, alarm clocks, entertainment stands, seating

Unless the client requests it, you do not need to make the bed. However, if you need to work on or around the bed, make sure the top blanket covers it. If you need to get on the bed to clean something, only allow your knees to touch the bed.

## **Awareness on the Job**

### Handling Objects on the Job Site

When moving objects on the job site:

- Be deliberate. The object should be completely in your control.
- Always use two hands.
- Hold the middle of the object, not the appendages.
- Lift objects if possible. Avoid dragging.
- When you hold an object to clean it, hold it over a counter or table in case the object slips from your grasp.
- When cleaning under objects, lift the object only as high as needed to get your hand beneath it.
- Always place things back down, even if the object is not breakable. Never throw or drop anything.
- Always leave things as you found them.

### **SCENARIO: BACK THAT THING UP**

While you will be working in very nice homes with beautiful, delicate objects. But just like in your own home, sometimes clients have improvised solutions – holding a table together with a paperclip or supporting a piano stool with a lamp. In one home, I was outside on their porch working near this old, apparently valuable Aztec figurine with wings that slid into place in the sides.

I was sweeping the porch and had moved the chairs and other furniture, but I didn't want to deal with this figurine for fear that I might break it. As I was backing up, one of the wings fell off. It didn't break, so I slid it back in gently. It was balanced precariously, but it stayed in place.

I continued sweeping. About a minute later, backing up the other way, I knocked the other wing off. While that wing didn't break either, I realized I had wasted about five minutes fixing the wings where I should have just moved the figurine out of the way in the first place.

### Moving Around the Job Site

- Maintain situational awareness. Do not back into furniture and walls. Look above you. Don't hit your head on light fixtures and door frames.
- Make every pass across a room count. If you find yourself moving across a room many times, you may need to reconsider your plan or organize your working materials so they are closer to you.
- If you are entering a room where the client might be, announce yourself.
- Back out of any space you work in. When you finish a room, you do not want to enter that space again.
- When you work in between two spaces, leave a column so you can back out.
- If you do have to walk over an area you have already cleaned, inspect it and mop over again if necessary.

### Avoiding Injury

- When cleaning low, kneel; do not sit on your bottom. Either place one knee on the ground or sit on your feet with your knees under you. Always try to distribute your weight evenly when on your hands and knees to avoid causing unnecessary strain and injury.
- If you need to use a step ladder, make sure you have three points of contact on the ladder, both feet and one hand. If you need to carry anything while on a step ladder, make sure there is something underneath that object in case it falls.
- Ventilate rooms that you are working in. Using cleaning agents in an unventilated room can make you light-headed or dizzy. If you get dizzy, turn on fans and open windows.
- If you start getting clumsy or lightheaded, take an extra moment to yourself to recover. It doesn't serve you or the client to push yourself when you are feeling poor.
- Breathe. Seriously, when focusing, you may find yourself holding your breath. That can be dangerous and exhausting.
- Do not put your hand in your eye. You will probably have cleaning agents on your hand and could cause injury.

## Connecting the Dots

- When considering what to clean, if something can be cleaned, it should be cleaned.
- Don't fuss, fluff, or primp surfaces. You're either cleaning or not cleaning. You're not hosting a cleaning show.
- Be courteous and take initiative. Do things that fit into your time schedule, like replacing the toilet paper roll or putting toys away. We are nice people, these extra things come standard with our service.
- Clean from the top down, so that you do not get previously cleaned surfaces dirty. Look for things to clean overhead before you clean other surfaces.
- When coming to the finish of a room, begin moving your supplies towards the next task area.
- Do prep work and dusting in any room you pass through to let the dust settle. Leave the broadest strokes for last.
- When you remove throw rugs and other small ground cover, shake them out low to the ground. Do not spread dust and debris to other areas.
- Follow through on a task. If you clean the door, clean the door frame. If you clean a window, clean the window sill.
- Inspect an area from all angles. Look up, crouch down, and use the light to ensure that you have completed a task.
- Be aware of time on a job. Some things may take longer than you expected, so keep in mind tasks where you can make up time, like dusting or cleaning door knobs.
- Keep your workspace compact and organized. Put away chemicals that you are not using or move them to your next area as to avoid mixing or spilling them accidentally. Keep your extra equipment in the basket when you not using it.
- Avoid touching wet surfaces and leaving handprints, footprints, and wipe marks. Leave no trace of yourself.
- Be aware where you put dirty things, such as towels. Do not place them on clean surfaces or you will have to clean that area again. Especially be conscious of where you put towels with cleaning products on them. Chemicals left on a surface can cause damage.
- Never stand your mop up on the floor. Always lay it on its side out of your way.
- Finish what you can with the tool you have or the position you are in. If you bend down, do not waste movement by getting up and bending down in the same area later.
- When you are working effectively, you should be almost sweating, but not completely sweating. Don't rush. If you are pouring sweat, you are not working efficiently or you weren't given enough time to complete the job.
- Think of each area as a separate compartment. Sequester them as you finish them and do not touch them again.
- Things being clean is important. Things looking clean is more important. A stray hair or patch of dust can ruin the image of a clean room.
- To save time, you can pre-treat things that would benefit from it, such as the drip pans on the stove.
- When you spray near anything sensitive, buffer the spray with the towel so that the excess spray falls on the towel and not the sensitive object.
- Always open things – ovens, refrigerators, cabinets, closets – and clean the tops, lip, and sides of the doors.

- You may hit a panic point where you feel like you have too much to do and not enough time to do it. When this happens, it usually means you are almost done. Relax, stay focused, and finish the job.
- As you come to the end of a job, do not rush and do not get complacent. Finish strong.

### **SCENARIO: TIME IN A BOTTLE**

When I first began cleaning, I was focused on cleaning so thoroughly. On one client's dresser, she had about 15 bottles of perfume on the dresser. I removed every single bottle from the dresser, cleaned it, then placed each item back on the dresser. The problem remained: where do I put all of those perfume bottles? I didn't want to put them on the floor for fear of spilling or stepping on them. I didn't want to put them on the bed in case they leaked. Instead, I walked the bottles seven or eight feet away.

It seems logical to do that, but I found over time, when a dresser has a large number of items on it, I just needed to lift the item and clean under it. It was much quicker and took less time just to lift one or two bottles up at a time and clean under them while I held the bottle. Later still, I realized that I didn't need to lift the bottles a foot and a half in the air, I just needed to lift them high enough to get my hand and a towel underneath the bottle.

## **Closing Procedures**

As you wrap up your job, begin packing up materials that you are finished using. Begin moving the supplies to the bag and move the bag towards the exit.

When you finish your job, perform your inspection and make sure that you have completed everything required and listed on the job sheet. You should feel good about the job you did on those tasks.

When you have finished all of the cleaning tasks, your closing procedure is:

- ✓ Make sure you either have keys in your custody or a plan to lock up.
- ✓ Go to the client and say, "I believe I've finished. Would you like me to walk you through what I've done?" If they accept, walk through the home and tell them the tasks you've completed.
- ✓ Next, ask, "Is there anything else I can do today?"
- ✓ If needed for this job, leave a white glove in a conspicuous area so they can inspect your job.
- ✓ Make sure you have payment for today's job. If you need to ask for payment for today's job, say, "I'm all finished. Your total is." The customer may tip you, but do not expect it. If they do, be gracious and thank them.
- ✓ If there is nothing else, say, "Thank you for choosing Military Clean. Have a good day."

