**CUSTODIAL CARE OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

**GENERAL**

Precautions

Use only approved materials and products. Unless an alternative method has been approved for a particular material or condition, do not use products which contain acids, abrasive cleaners, ammonia, or solvents. Use products only as directed.

Avoid saturating wood with water, which can dissolve finish coatings, raise the grain on the wood and damage veneers.

Lift furniture to move it for cleaning. Avoid sliding or dragging furniture across floors.

Protect woodwork at lower levels, so that is not marred by vacuums, mops, buffers, carts

Use soft pads under ladder feet and around upper contact surfaces to protect paneled walls, woodwork and other historic materials.

When polishing metal switch plates or grilles, protect surrounding surfaces by using a cardboard mask, template or by other means. Use a non-metallic pail for water or liquids and always set a pail on a clean towel to avoid producing rings on wood floors, or spilling contents of bucket.

**MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES**

ROUTINE MAINTENANCE OF WALLS AND CEILINGS

The routine dry methods of dusting should be done with a vacuum cleaner and a round, soft, long haired, dusting tool or a treated dust cloth. All ledge type horizontal surfaces, tops of baseboards, window sills, door panel moldings, tops of mantels, tops of door and window trim, and tops of doors should be dusted routinely. (Ledges above eye level should not be left for periodic cleaning because the dirt accumulation rate is much faster than on walls and vertical surfaces.) Care must be taken when dusting not to rub adjacent horizontal surfaces, leaving abrasive marks on walls or smears on glass.

Use cardboard corners and templates to protect wall finishes while polishing or cleaning metal grilles, switch plates and lighting.

PERIODIC DUSTING OF WALLS & CEILINGS

Move furniture away from walls to allow ample work space. Always lift furniture-never drag furniture across unprotected floors. A vacuum cleaner with a clean wide

dusting brush is used for both wall and ceiling dusting. Prior to dusting, cobwebs should be lifted outward and upward so that they do not smear. The dusting should start

in a corner and move upward to the cornice. A light, even touch with overlapping strokes provides the best cleaning. Keep the brush clean to avoid streaks. Ceiling cleaning should follow the same procedure.

ROUTINE WET CLEANING

Spot cleaning removes the smudges and mars left by hands and bumps from furniture and other objects. The areas requiring the most frequent spot cleaning are materials subject to frequent handling such as light switches, thermostats, doors and the wall side of stair. Dust may also collect around air grilles. Rub the spot gently with a clean damp sponge to wipe away the dirt, then dry with a clean wiping cloth. If water alone does not remove the spot, it may be necessary to use a non-ionic detergent solution followed by damp rinsing and drying.

PERIODIC WASHING

Complete room preparation is required prior to washing of walls and ceilings. Materials required include ladders, drop cloths, non-ionic detergent, two buckets (solution and rinse), soft water, two sponges (solution and rinse), and a supply of dry wiping cloths. Walls should first be dusted as previously described.

The sponge used for cleaning should be wet but not dripping to prevent water from streaking the wall. The cleaning should begin at the lower corner of the room and should include the baseboard. First a wall section of 5 to 10 square feet is moistened without rubbing. The moistened section is rubbed with sufficient pressure to take off thedirt. Thorough rinsing must follow immediately; two rinsings may be necessary to remove all the cleaning solution and dirt from the wall. The cleaned section is then wiped dry. The rinse water should be changed frequently.

The process of wetting, rubbing, rinsing and drying is continued around the lower portion of the room with each section overlapping the preceding section slightly. The upper portions of the room and the ceiling are washed in the same manner, working from a step ladder. Painted woodwork should be washed with the walls.

Washing of walls is best accomplished by working from the bottom upwards, because solution streaks running down on a dirty wall cannot be removed. The important thing is to work dry enough to avoid drips.

WOOD FLOORS

It is best not to use a broom on wood flooring. Floors should be swept with a treated dust mop or vacuumed. Dry mopping requires a dust mop, radiator brush, hearth broom (to remove dust from hard to reach places), and dust pan. In most cases, the dust mop should be furnished with a treated pad to hold the dust rather than scattering it. The mop should be lifted from the floor only to transfer the accumulated dust to a dust pile. Treated mops can be used on wood floors, but should not be used on terrazzo, marble or tile floors.

WET MOPPING

Wet mopping is used only on marble and other stones, ceramic tile, or terrazzo; it must not be used on wood. Water on wood stains it dark. Materials required are two string mops, three buckets (one with wringer attached), and appropriate detergents. Acidic cleaners must never be used on marble floors. Wet mopping procedures involve wetting the floor, agitating the cleanser, and rinsing. Begin by lifting the solution mop above the bucket and letting the excess material drain back into the bucket. A space about 91 x 12 is outlined with the solution mop. The mop is then wet again, and the outline space is mopped with swinging strokes, proceeding slowly to avoid spattering the baseboard or furnishings.

The area should be mopped twice to agitate the cleanser. Corners should be scrubbed with a tapered end brush or hand held mop strands. Wring the mop dry in the empty bucket and go over the area for the third time to pick up the solution. The cleaning solution should not lie on the floor longer than ten minutes. The second mop is used to rinse the floor with clear water. The floor should be rinsed before dry spots start to show. Each area should be rinsed two times. Wring the rinse mop dry in the empty bucket and pick up the rinse solution. The mops should not be mixed during the mopping procedure. Wringing into the third bucket prevents the cleaning solution and the rinse from getting too dirty.

FLOOR SCRUBBING

When even wet mopping does not do an adequate job, some floors can be scrubbed with an electric polisher fitted with scrubbing brushes. Scrub the floor while the cleaning solution is on the floor. Do not let the cleaning solution remain on the floor more than ten minutes. Places 'the polisher cannot reach must be scrubbed with a tapered end hand brush. Pick up the solutions and rinse in the same manner as described for wet mopping. Floor scrubbing is a drastic treatment and should be performed sparingly.

WINDOWS

Dry Methods: As part of routine dusting, vacuum sash, trim and sill and wipe glass with clean, untreated cloth. When windows are washed, all items which can become soiled or damaged must be removed from the work area. Floors and windows sills should be protected from scuffs and water damage. Surfaces adjacent to glass should be rinsed to remove cleaning solutions, then dried.

Use a sharpened orangewood stick to remove residue of dried metal polish at interstices of metal elements.

METALS

Cardboard templates should be made for rim locks, switch plates, thermostats, registers, grilles, hinges, door knobs, mail slots, etc. to protect adjacent surfaces from the polish, or other cleaning products.

**MAINTENANCE TOOLS**

LADDERS

All ladders should have permanent built-in protection against damaging walls and floors.

VACUUM CLEANERS

Use proper attachments to remove dust from different surfaces. Use soft brush attachment for horizontal surfaces such as window sills, and soft flexible plastic or rubber attachments for corners, etc. Ensure that dragging cords or wheels of vacuum cleaner do not scratch or mar furnishings or historic materials. Empty bags often so that they maintain filtering abilities. Keep brush attachments clean.

WET. MOPS

Commercial quality string mops with long staple cotton yarn should be used. Two mops are required--one for cleaning, and one for rinsing.

SPONGES

Generally cellulose.

CHAMOIS

100% oil tanned sheepskin chamois is useful for wiping excess water from windows.

PAILS

One-piece molded polyethylene, 8- or la-quart sizes with bail handles. Wet mopping requires 16-quart pails with wringers and attached casters. Most jobs require two pails. Do not use metal pails to clean marble because of iron contaminants. Buckets, molded rubber or plastic, such as the *Fortex* molded rubber pail- 12 or 14 quart size, or Rubbermaid.

GLOVES

There are two types, one to worn to protect the material from the natural oils of the hands, the other to protect the hands from the cleaning material. Cotton gloves are worn when touching uncleaned metal to prevent etching fingerprints into the metal. Rubber gloves are needed for the use of materials beyond the pH of normal skin. Thin disposable plastic gloves are available and are very handy for doing delicate work.

BROOMS

Straight or push brooms have no place in historic interiors for general cleaning, as they raise and scatter dust. Short handled hearth brooms are best for sweeping dirt into a dust pan, and a whisk broom is best for removing dirt from crevices.

DUST MOPS & DUST CLOTHS

Both treated and untreated mops and cloths should be available to the maintenance staff. Removable mop heads of one and two foot lengths are best for general use. Dust cloths should be about a yard square and should have nonraveling edges. Treated mops and cloths should not be used on porous materials, such as untreated wood, glass, or on terrazzo, marble, or tile.

BRUSHES

Various brushes will be required:

• I-inch camel's hair brush for items too delicate for a cloth

• 3-inch soft white furniture brush (a vacuum cleaner attachment)

• radiator brush for hard-to-reach places

• tapered-end scrub brush for corners and stairs

• Tampico fiber set in a hardwood block

*• Whitewash brush is* ideal for most purposes

• "Parts washing" brush-useful for small areas and crevices

DUST PANS

An upright dust pan and hearth broom are good to pick up sweepings in open spaces without stooping. When working around furniture, use a small flexible plastic or rubber dust pan to avoid scratching the furnishings.

HOUSEKEEPING SUPPLIES

In 'selecting supplies, equipment, and cleaning materials, it should be remembered that the preservation of the historic surface is more important than convenience in cleaning.

Any cleaner, must therefore, be used with caution. If regularly scheduled maintenance is practiced, harsh chemicals are unnecessary.

SOAPS

Water is the best solvent for dirt; soaps help it to penetrate so that the water can reach the oily soil, surround it, release it, keeping it in suspension (emulsification) and float it

away. Water alone lacks the ability to maintain soils in suspension. Soaps are good cleaners in warm soft water but even a slight degree of hardness detracts from their performance. Soaps should be relatively neutral and free from additives.

DETERGENTS

Detergents are oils or fats which are treated with acids. There are many types of detergents with various qualities some are alkaline, some acidic, and some neutral. The best type for historic interiors is non-ionic because it is the safest, being neutral (pH 7.0).

Strongly alkaline or acidic cleaners are potentially destructive and have no place in the cleaning of historic materials. Non-ionic detergents may not be readily obtained from standard janitorial supply house, but may be obtained from a chemical supply house or conservator.

ABRASIVES

Some soaps and cleaners contain abrasives such as volcanic ash, sand, talc, or borax to increase mechanical action. These are potentially dangerous to historic materials and should not be used without prior authorization.

**CUSTODIAL CARE FREQUENCY**

Routine care of furnishings, windows and blinds, emptying of waste receptacles, and maintenance of restrooms shall be done in accordance with building-specific Historic Structure Report or Building Preservation Plan, applicable environmental laws and the latest edition of the GSA Custodial Management Desk Guide.

Policing of all areas and surfaces must occur every day. The following are recommendations for minimum frequency routine maintenance procedures. Policing will indicate when routine treatments need to be made more frequently due to sudden surges in the number of visitors or due to wet weather conditions which would increase the usual amount of dirt tracked into the building.

FLOORS, CERAMIC TILE

Daily: Dry mop with untreated mop, or vacuum with soft brush.

Every two days: Damp mop with diluted neutral Rinseless Cleaner.

Every six months: Damp mop with diluted Heavy Duty cleaner.

Annually: Clean, strip existing coatings, and reapply acrylic sealer by a Tile Floor Specialist.

BASE, MARBLE

Same treatments and frequencies as for floor.

WALLS, WAINSCOT, MARBLE

Daily: Vacuum horizontal ledges and surfaces.

Weekly: Wipe down with damp cloth moistened with neutral Rinseless Cleaner. Dry and buff by hand with clean dry cloth.

VAULTED CEILINGS, MARBLE MOSAIC

Every ten years: Contact Marble Mosaic Conservator to evaluate condition of material. Clean or treat in accordance with recommendations from Conservator.

DOORS, TRIM, WOOD

Weekly: Vacuum dust from horizontal ledges, then wipe down' gently with clean cloth very slightly dampened with clean water. DO NOT use Pledge, oils, waxes or other wood polishing products.

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