

The Cleaning Order Is a Method — and Resources Don't Change It

When resources run short, never cut the method short.

In five lines

The order in which a room is cleaned isn't an executive housekeeper's quirk: it is hygiene (from clean to dirty, from top to bottom), it is time (not undoing what has been done) and it is safety. And it has a virtue worth gold when resources are tight: method is the only thing that never runs out. Product, linen or amenities may run short; if the mental order stays intact, the standard can be defended. This lesson separates precisely what can be adapted from what is never touched.

The script, step by step

- 1. The why behind the order.** You air the room first (the air works for free while you work), you collect and remove what is dirty, you clean from top to bottom (dust falls) and from the cleanest to the dirtiest (the bathroom last, or with its own materials). Break the order and you pay twice for the same work.
- 2. What can be adapted.** Product brands, cloths, amenity quantities, the presentation detail: all of that allows for substitution and creativity. A single principle governs it: substitution can never compromise hygiene or safety.
- 3. What is non-negotiable.** Bathroom disinfection, a complete change of linen and towels between guests, everything that touches mouth or skin (glasses, cups), and the elementary chemical rule: cleaning products are never mixed with each other or decanted into unlabeled containers. Here, no shortage is an excuse.
- 4. Limited resources are managed, not improvised.** When something is missing, the decision isn't yours alone: you tell the executive housekeeper what there is and what is missing, you set priorities together (checkouts before stayovers, today's arrivals before everything) and it gets recorded — because what is missing today is tomorrow's order.

With limited resources: how to hold the standard

If you don't have...	How to hold the standard
The specific product	A substitution scale agreed by the executive housekeeper (what replaces what, in what dose) — never individual improvisations with chemicals. And whatever touches critical hygiene isn't "stretched": you prioritize where to use it.
Enough linen or towels	Absolute priority: checkouts with an arrival today > arrivals > stayovers who ask for it > routine change. The Front Office is told what isn't covered BEFORE the guest discovers it, with a solution and a time.
Amenities	They are distributed with judgment (arrivals first) and the gap is made up for with impeccable presentation and a short message from the Front Office to the guest if appropriate. The amenity is a detail; the bed and the bathroom are the contract.

In front of the guest

DO	DON'T	NEVER
If a guest asks you for something in the corridor, write it down in front of them and confirm when they will have it — and make sure they do.	Pass on the stress of the shift (“we can’t keep up,” “there’s nothing left”): your shortage isn’t their problem; managing it is your job.	Skip a hygiene non-negotiable to make the day’s credits add up. That shortcut isn’t seen today — and it is always paid for.

Common mistakes

- ◆ Confusing speed with method: whoever is fast without order repeats work; whoever is orderly is fast without trying.
- ◆ Keeping quiet about what is missing “so as not to cause problems”: the executive housekeeper can’t order what they don’t know is missing.
- ◆ Adapting in secret: any substitution that isn’t communicated turns your solution today into your colleague’s chaos tomorrow.
- ◆ Treating the method as a punishment: the method is what lets you leave on time with your floor done right.

THE GOLDEN RULE

**“When resources run short,
never cut the method short.”**

This lesson’s exercise

You are short of amenities and towels to finish the floor, with three checkouts that become arrivals this afternoon. Write your complete decision: what you prioritize and in what order, what you tell the executive housekeeper and what the Front Office should know before the arrivals. In the answer that follows, I share my version.