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OPL 101

Protecting a hotel's luxury-linen investment

Poor rinsing, overdrying, roping
enemies of fine bedding and napery
everywhere

BY BILL BROOKS

RIPON, Wis. — The hospitality industry continually strives to improve the customer's sleep experience, because it directly impacts customer satisfaction.

Some hotels have chosen to upgrade to superior mattresses, while others have moved in the direction of expanding their luxury linen collection. Many do both. In fact, the industry is trending toward using bedding packages that contain 30% more linens.

This is due, in part, to hotels adopting triple sheeting, a new way of using multiple sheets to preserve the cleanliness of the comforter by putting a sheet above and below it. In addition to using more linens, the industry increasingly is using sheets with higher thread counts.

In order to properly care for a hotel's large linen investment,

laundry operators must adapt to improve laundry efficiency and eliminate common errors.

PROPER RINSING

When caring for luxury linens, effective rinsing is a must. If chemicals remain on linens during the drying process, the heat will cause them to yellow over time. Additionally, the residue can cause linens to become stiff and rough, which negates the purpose of the original investment.

Laundry managers should evaluate the quality of the equipment they currently use and consider upgrading to take full advantage of new technologies available that can protect their investment in luxury linens.

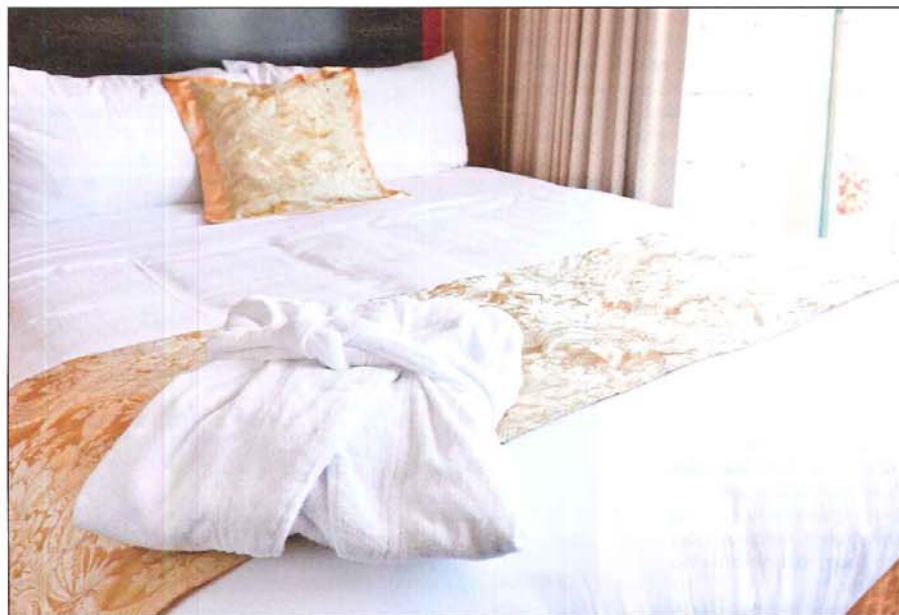
One new feature that increases effective rinsing is spray rinse technology, which leaves up to 22% less residual wash chemistry in

the load. Unlike bath rinses alone, which only dilute wash chemistry, spray rinse technology pulls chemicals through the load and

down the drain.

The benefits of spray rinse technology are best explained by comparing a shower to a bath. A show-

er effectively rinses dirt off the body and sends it down the drain. Because there is no spray action to remove residue when someone



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takes a bath, the water will leave some dirt on the body when the person steps out of the tub. The same holds true for linens that are only given a bath rinse.

Spray rinse technology not only decreases the presence of residual wash chemistry, it also decreases the cycle rinse time by up to 12%, increasing throughput and decreasing water consumption.

After the wash cycle is complete, when linens move to the dryer, the most common and, perhaps, most damaging error occurs: overdrying.

PROPER DRYING

In a recent survey of commercial laundry distributors and commercial laundry managers, 79% of respondents said they believe on-premise laundries overdry by more than 8 minutes per cycle.

To help decrease the possibility of overdrying, start by examining the washer-extractor. A washer-extractor with high G-force will remove the maximum amount of water from the load, which helps to further decrease times.

According to the results of a recent study completed by an OPL equipment manufacturer, linens experience 31% less fiber loss when overdrying is eliminated.

Once linens enter the dryer, there are multiple approaches laundry operators can take to prevent overdrying: overdry prevention technology, step drying, and utilizing a reversing tumbler. All of these tactics will help operators avoid fiber loss caused by overdrying.

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The most recent advance in preserving a luxury-linen investment is overdry prevention technology. This innovation features sensors that run the entire length of the tumble dryer lifter and connect to a rotary transfer switch. The dryer will automatically shut off once it has reached the precise level of dryness, accurately reducing drying time per load.

To achieve the longest linen life possible and the best drying results, dryers should leave a little bit of moisture in linens; they should only be 95-97% dry. The remaining 3-5% moisture helps to reduce wrinkles, whereas overdrying creates them.

To accurately hit the targeted level of dryness, some tumble dryer control systems will allow operators to step-dry their linens.

As the term suggests, step-drying linens involves a two-step process.

First, linens are dried in high heat (180-190 F) until a 50% dryness level is reached. The cycle is then completed on low heat. This technique allows operators to hit high temperatures to meet industry sanitation standards, and it significantly speeds up the dryer cycle, increasing throughput and saving linens from potentially overdrying.

Finally, a common problem when drying bedding or tablecloths is the balling or roping of linens. When linens ball up, the outside of the ball dries—often

overdries—but the center remains damp. Typically, this error is not caught until after linens are removed, which decreases productivity and increases labor expenses.

By utilizing a dryer with reversing technology, operators can prevent linens from balling up, ensuring an even dry. By using reversing technology, laundry managers can decrease both utility and labor costs as well as preserve their linen investment.

FINAL STEPS

It is recommended that hotels use the three-par bedding method, meaning they have three sets of

linens per bed. This allows for one set of linens on the bed, one set of linens to be processing, and the last set of linens to be “resting.” After the linens come out of the dryer, they can rest for at least 24 hours to let the fibers relax and return to normal.

The most important consideration when choosing to upgrade to luxury linens is understanding how to fully extend linen life to preserve the guest’s sleep quality and the hotel’s investment. If operators avoid the common errors

cited here, luxury linens can have a significant impact on hotel guest satisfaction.

The ultimate goal is to make guests feel like they are sleeping in an environment more luxurious than their home; upgrading and retaining luxury linens is the first step to a good night’s sleep. ALN



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