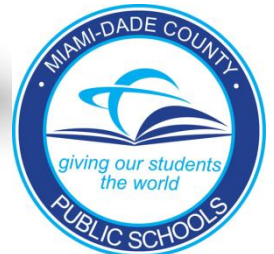


# Introduction to Custodial Services



Miami-Dade County Public Schools in Conjunction with  
Florida School Plant Management Association, Inc.

Present  
Safety in Schools  
Manual I



# What is FSPMA?



- FSPMA is a professional organization made up of school district and college staff in the areas of custodial, maintenance, grounds, safety and environmental.

# FSPMA Mission Statement



- F.S.P.M.A., Florida School Plant Management Association, was organized and established in 1960 with three (3) main objectives.
- **FIRST**, to determine the nature, extent and quality of non-instructional services required for the educational program, and to promote the development of these services by establishing the acceptable policies, standards, and practices.
- **SECOND**, to develop a working relationship with school administrators, managers, non-instructional, and instructional personnel, to foster programs through adequate facilities and environment.
- **THIRD**, to promote the professional advancement of school plant maintenance, operation, safety, energy management and environment.

# What is FSPMA dedicated to?



- The exchange of information and ideas among school districts, community colleges and universities for the purpose of improving school plant management, maintenance and care through the promotion of acceptable policies, standards and practices; and to promote the professional advancement of school plant management personnel.

# Custodial Training Program History



- The custodial training program was established in 1959, by the State of Florida, Department of Education as an in-service training program for public school custodians. It was an effort to upgrade and update the quality and quantity of custodial services throughout the state. In 1987, the program was re-structured and updated. Then in 1994, with cutbacks in the Department of Education, the Florida School Plant Management Association was asked by D.O.E. to take over this responsibility.

# FSPMA Custodial Certifications



- “Certified Custodian”
  - Manual I: The Professional School Custodian- The People and the Job
  - Manual II: Safety in School Operations
  - Manual III: Sanitation and School Housekeeping
  - Manual IV: Floor and Carpet Care for Schools
  - Manual V: Certified Custodian Certification (Overview 1-4)
- “Master Custodian”
  - Manual VI: Minor Maintenance and Climate Control Support: Structure & Energy Conservation for the School Custodian
  - Manual VII: Grounds Care for Schools
  - Manual VIII: Master Custodial Certification (Overview of 6-7)
- “Transition to Supervisor”
  - Manual IX: Leadership Skills
- “Certified Custodial Instructor”
- Must complete the Master Custodian Course, Transition to Supervisor Course and the Train the Trainer Program offered at the FSPMA Annual



# How This Program Can be Used



- These manuals were originally written by the Florida Department of Education and have been updated by a committee of school district and college custodial staff. The procedures and methods in this manual are suggestions only. Each school district and college may have policies of their own which are different than these manuals and can be adapted to specific situations

# Manual I



- The Professional School Custodian: The People and the Job



# Introduction



- What is school custodianship?
  - Physical care of school property, such as buildings and grounds.
  - Emotional and mental actions, such as being safety conscious and taking pride in the job.
  - Personal relationships between the custodian and others concerned with the school.
  - Prepare the school for the next day, provide a clean, safe, sanitary learning environment.
  - The needs of each site, the physical environment and the district policy can all affect the role of the custodian.



# Why is the Custodian so Important?



- Good custodial care is a necessary part of achieving the main school mission – that of educating students. Custodians support this mission by:
  - Caring for a large taxpayer investment, in the school plant and equipment.
  - Keeping cost of building care down by increasing economy and effectiveness of care.
  - Maintaining a safe, healthy learning environment, especially in supporting the regulations contained in SREF.
  - Promoting pride in the school, in people of the school and the community.
  - Increasing the professional reputation of all custodians by showing responsibility and competence.



# The Custodial Job



- Topics we will discuss:
  - Defining the Job
  - Job Analysis
  - Job Description
  - Getting the Job: Hiring
  - Physical Examination

# Defining the Job



- Floors:
  - Sweeping
  - Stripping
  - Mopping
  - Finishing
  - Scrubbing
  - Sanitizing
  
- Buildings:
  - Dusting
  - Restroom care
  - Cleaning walls, windows, ceilings, furniture
  - Disease prevention and control
  - Food area care

# Defining the Job continued



- Grounds:
  - Mowing
  - Planting
  - Walkway cleaning
  - Raking
  - Shrubbery trimming
  - Parking lot cleaning
  - Fertilizing
  
- Minor maintenance:
  - Painting
  - Plumbing
  - Masonry repair
  - Furniture mending
  - Flooring repair
  - Electrical repair

# Defining the Job continued



- Miscellaneous:
  - Lifting and moving
  - Equipment storage
  - Security
  - Trash management
  - Coping with major and minor site emergencies, such as flooding, storm damage, spills and much more.



# Job Analysis



- What things should be considered during the job analysis process?
- Where is a good place to start when analyzing a job?
- Go into as much detail as possible regarding such factors as:
  - School facilities, such as buildings and furnishings
  - Standards, regulations, and policies (Local and State)
  - Occupant load
  - Tasks currently performed
  - Supplies and equipment available
  - Current staff
- A good job analysis lays the groundwork for long term planning as well as fulfilling immediate needs.



# Job Description



- What should be included in a job description?
- Those responsible for the custodial care of a school are faced with the never-ending responsibility of determining:
  - What job needs to be done
  - How it should be done
  - What resources are required for the job
  - Who will do it



One of the main methods of fulfilling this responsibility is the development and revision (as necessary) of job descriptions.

- A job description is based on a thorough analysis of the types of tasks to be done and the details of each task.
- Job descriptions should be very specific in job duties and in physical qualifications for the desired employee.

# Job Descriptions



- Custodian (Job Code 5615)
- Lead Custodian (Job Code 5607)
- Head Custodian (Job Code 5608)
- Master Custodian (Job Code 5609)

<http://jobdescriptions.dadeschools.net/jobsearch.asp>

# Getting the Job



- What can an applicant do to impress the interviewer?
- For the applicant:
  - Understand the qualifications necessary for the job and be sure they are covered in the application.
  - Fill out application forms neatly and completely.
  - Dress appropriately, neat and clean. Communicate with the interviewer.
  - Show friendliness, cooperation and confidence.

# Body Language





# Getting the Job



- For the interviewer:
  - Know the job description, work situation and necessary qualifications.
  - Review each applicant's resume' and contacting any references.
  - Develop a plan for each interview.
- Questions should be simple and easy to answer, not "tricky." The same questions should be asked of all applicants. The object of the questions is to help determine whether the applicant is physically and mentally capable of handling the job and to make comparisons among the applicants.
- Allow enough time for the interview and do it in a comfortable room without distractions.



# Getting the Job



For the interviewer (continued):

- Let the applicant do most of the talking.
- Do not make snap judgments or allow characteristics unrelated to desired qualifications to influence your attitude toward the applicant.
- As the interviewer, leave the applicant with a good impression of the school environment and the employees. Be positive!
- Follow up all interviews by noting important facts or related impressions about the applicant.
- Do all of the appropriate paperwork as required by the specific district or school. Follow any procedures defined for notification of successful and unsuccessful applicants.

# Interviewing



- You cannot ask questions about the following:

- Sex (gender)
- Age
- Race
- Religion
- National or ethnic origin
- Marital or parental status
- Disabilities
- Discriminatory behavior is improper, even when it is not intended. The appearance can be as important as the reality.



# Physical Examination



- The physical exam can be used as a screening tool after interview selection if the job description included minimum physical qualifications.

# Custodial Qualities & Characteristics



- What qualities and characteristics are important for an applicant?
  - Appearance
  - Physical Ability
  - Communication Skills
  - Education - In addition to reading and writing, other basic skills such as mathematics and problem solving are usually necessary.
  - Responsibility
  - Previous Job Experience - For many custodial positions, previous knowledge or experience of the job is not necessary.
- Among other things federal law prohibits the use of age, sex, and marital status as a means of hiring.

# The Custodial Job: More Topics



- Learning the Job
- Doing the Job: Tasks & Responsibilities
- Keeping the Job

# Learning the Job



- Tell us about the first day of your job.
- Even if a new employee has all of the desired qualifications, and has years of custodial experience, every new job has new information and procedures that need to be learned.
- Getting new employee started “on the right foot” may determine whether that person becomes a dependable, long-term member of the staff.
- Learning a new job can roughly be divided into two parts, orientation and training.





# Orientation



- What should the supervisor do with the custodian the first day on the job?
- Orientation is basically being sure a new employee understands:
  - How his/her individual job fits into the overall “picture” of the school.
  - The general rules and regulations covering all school employees include items such as benefits, time cards or clocks, breaks, meal hours, and so on.
  - Locations of things important to the job, such as equipment, work area, supervisor’s office, personnel department, etc.
  - Supervisor’s expectations and methods of supervising.
- Orientation is very important. Orientation may seem like “wasting time” to some supervisors that are overworked and understaffed, but in the long run it will enable employees to be more productive, feel secure, and stay on the job longer.

# AFSCME Contract



- [http://www.dadeschools.net/employees/labor\\_union/all\\_list.htm](http://www.dadeschools.net/employees/labor_union/all_list.htm)

# Training



- Training primarily involves the actual tasks that are performed on the job. It can include learning the facts and information that will be necessary for the job, such as what chemical to use for a particular task. It also includes learning procedures (which necessary steps to take in which sequences) for every task.
- Training is an important part of a custodian's job. It should not be considered something that happens once and never again. As new techniques are discovered, new products are purchased, new policies set, or new areas assigned, training must happen.
- Just as in orientation, proper training makes a productive employee. Training can reduce expense due to mistakes or inefficient procedures. It also increases a custodian's professional level of functioning and enables job advancement.

# Training



# Discussion



- What kind of training does your facility provide?
- How much time do you spend with each new custodian?
- Does your facility have Standard Operating Procedures or Manuals for Custodians?
- Do you conduct yearly refresher training for your custodians?

# Doing the Job: Tasks & Responsibilities



- Is good communication important?
- How do employees find out about things that are happening in your school district or college?
- Communication: The importance of good communications cannot be overemphasized. Communication should not be left up to gossip.



# Doing the Job: Tasks & Responsibilities



- Is it important to keep accurate records?
  - Record keeping: The custodial supervisor or head custodian often has record keeping duties, such as keeping track of hours spent on tasks, supplies required and used, number of times tasks are performed and so forth.
- What types of records do you or your supervisor keep?
- A regular system of keeping records, with a clear understanding of the forms and who is responsible for them helps enormously.



# Doing the Job: Tasks & Responsibilities



- Scheduling and Staffing:
  - Deciding when a task will be done, how many persons or how much of a person's time it will take, and how doing the task fits into regular school functions, is a fairly complicated process.
- Who makes the decisions in your school or college about how many custodians are needed in a building and what the priorities are?
- Is this a simple process?

# Doing the Job: Tasks & Responsibilities



- What things should you consider when trying to make decisions about staffing?
- These are some of the general steps to follow when establishing the staffing for custodial service.
- Analyze the site requirements, including the condition of buildings and furnishings. A measurement of appropriate units requiring work, such as square footage of carpet or restroom stalls, should be made.
- Determine the different tasks to be performed, and calculate the time required for each (using a formula based on appropriate local time studies, published standards, or some combination.)
- From total time required, use standard man hour per work period (week, month, year) figures to determine the number of staff needed.

# Doing the Job: Tasks & Responsibilities



- Flexibility:
  - Regular schedules and plans are vital. Both custodians and supervisors should also be flexible enough to cope with unexpected events or emergencies and do whatever is necessary, then modify or return to the regularly scheduled tasks.
- Do you need to be flexible with your work schedule?

# Doing the Job: Tasks & Responsibilities



- Cost Effectiveness:
  - No school or district has an unlimited budget. There will always be tradeoffs necessary between what is the best task or method to perform, and what is possible to do within the allocated budget. Balancing effective performance with budget restrictions are part of a supervisor's responsibilities.
- What level of cleaning can you do with the staff you have?

# Doing the Job: Tasks & Responsibilities



- Equipment and Supplies:
  - Except for manpower, this area is where much of the custodial budget is spent. A regular program of equipment servicing, and updated knowledge of effective products that deliver value for the money, can both save money and increase efficiency of custodial care.
- Can purchasing tools and equipment save you money?
- Is it cost effective to buy the cheapest chemicals?

# Doing the Job: Tasks & Responsibilities



- Safety: Is Safety important?
- Good custodial programs emphasize safety, both for employees and others in the school. A high level of safety awareness and knowledge of proper safety precautions; can save much time, money and suffering. All custodial staff members are responsible for developing safe work habits and promoting safety awareness.



# Doing the Job: Tasks & Responsibilities



- Standards: What is a Standard?
- Some standards define how often and what tasks are to be done, and set by federal and state agencies; for example, the State Requirements for Education Facilities (SREF); specify how often locker rooms are to be cleaned and with what type of cleaners.
- Other standards are set by the district superintendent or site administrator.
- It is the supervisor's duty to be aware of, and train employees in, the standards set for custodial work. It is the employee's duty to meet these standards during task performance.
- A regular program of inspections is an important part of tasks and responsibilities. The main point to remember is that Inspection is not intended to catch employees doing a bad job; it is to identify potential or actual problems, ensure the school complies with requirements, and improve the level of custodial service.

# End of Part 1



- Pride is a personal commitment; it is an attitude which separates excellence from mediocrity.



# Keeping the Job: Evaluations



- Employee evaluations are a vital part of any profession. They serve many purposes. Among these are:
  - helping employees and supervisors identify and correct problems
  - pointing out superior performance
  - documenting experience and training levels acquired by the custodian
  - protecting the custodial staff from being burdened by an employee who is not supporting the team effort
- Most schools have a regular program of employee evaluation, with printed forms to complete and established time for review.

# Keeping the Job: Evaluations-Continued



- Major factors that enter into evaluation:
  - Task performance...how it is done (frequency and efficiency), plus the quality (overall end result).
  - Employee characteristics...as described earlier, job-related qualities that the employee demonstrates on the job (skills, attitudes, level of knowledge, etc.)

# Keeping the Job



- Turnover:
- A certain amount of turnover among employees is to be expected, as personal goals and levels of expertise change.
- Excess turnover may be avoided or reduced by considering the following factors:
- Employee relations - Custodial staff should be treated as the professionals they are:
  - Hiring procedures
  - Orientation and training
  - Supervisor support - The employee should feel like a part of the team and should be assisted in doing the best job possible.
  - Advancement and recognition



# Custodial Qualities & Characteristics



- Evaluation & Promotion
- Many of the characteristics that are used when hiring a custodian are also used during evaluation of employees and when making decisions about promotion.
- What are important qualities to consider when evaluating an employee?
  - Appearance
  - Communication skills
  - Responsibility
  - Productivity
  - Attitude
  - Flexibility
  - Skill



# Evaluation & Promotion - Continued



- Appearance continues to be important. Although different types of clothing may be worn for work than for an interview, being neat and clean is most important.



- Communication skills are even more necessary on the job. How a custodian speaks and listens to others affects both how the job is done and how others view the custodial staff.

# Evaluation & Promotion - Continued



- Responsibility is difficult to judge during an interview, but easy to see in most work situations. The custodian must be responsible for doing a good job, following district policies, and being honest and fair in all job actions.
- Productivity: Many custodial tasks have a visible result, such as a shining floor or tidy playground.
- The custodian that does a task well, in a reasonable amount of time, is considered more productive than a custodian who takes longer to do the same task.



# Evaluation & Promotion - Continued



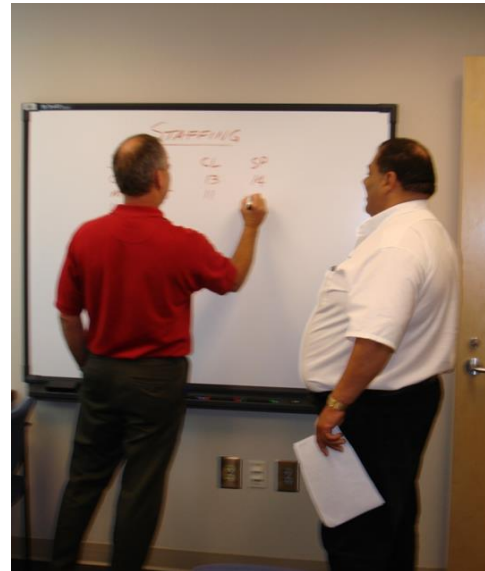
- Attitude:
  - The old saying goes, “It’s not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game.” On the job, it’s more than getting the right tasks done properly. Showing an positive attitude, cooperation, willingness, teamwork and flexibility is also part of doing a good job as a custodian.



# Evaluation & Promotion - Continued



- Flexibility: Very few jobs can always be done in the same way or on the same time schedule. In the custodial profession, being able to make necessary changes in the way a task is done and being able to cope with and respond to unexpected events is the mark of a good custodian.
- Skill: Even if a custodian has had previous experience, there is always room for improving job skills.





- Custodians Working with the:
  - public
  - other school personnel
  - administrators
  - teachers
  - other support staff
  - professional colleagues
  - students



# The Custodian and the Public



- The custodian has a responsibility to act as a public relations agent and a worthy representative of the school.
- All visitors should be there for a specific purpose.
- Each site should have a set policy for handling non-school persons, whatever their purpose, on the school grounds. This includes parents, trespassers, law officers, members of the press, and other special groups.
- The custodial staff should know this policy and what role they are to play in dealing with such visitors.
- Policy will never take the place of good judgment and flexibility, but it should provide some basis for judgment.



# The Custodian and Administrators



- Final responsibility for the care of the school building rests with the school administrators.
- Other school personnel, such as teachers, teacher aides, and food service workers, do not have supervisory authority over custodians.
- The school administrators responsible for school custodians must support the custodial staff in all work activities, which includes providing proper training, adequate supplies and necessary equipment for assigned custodial duties.

# The Custodian and Administrators



- What responsibilities does the custodian have to the administrator?
- In turn, the custodian is responsible to the administrator for:
  - Performing tasks well, without wasting time or supplies (doing “an honest day’s work”)
  - Following all policies and regulations relating to school employees
  - Demonstrating proper attitudes in relationships with others in the school
  - Informing the administrators of difficulties and needs involved in custodial work

# Working with Teachers



- What should custodians do for teachers?
  - Custodians interact with the instructional staff in the school frequently. The teachers often call upon the custodian for unexpected or emergency tasks. They use perhaps the greatest amount of the school’s facilities during the day. The custodian strives to enhance the learning process, by providing a safe and healthy environment. This makes custodial activities very important to the instructional staff.
  - A teacher should be able to find the classroom always clean and properly supplied for the beginning of the day. Teachers should be able to call upon a custodian in case of accidental spills that need professional attention. Custodians should respond to emergency needs as promptly as possible.

# The Custodial Staff – Professional Colleagues



- How should custodians treat each other?
  - In most school situations, the custodian is part of a group who share the custodial responsibilities. In most cases, this means there are administrators, supervisors, co-workers, and sometimes subordinates.
- Each member of this team is equally as important as every other member. (This is true for supervisors and subordinates as well.)



# Professional Colleagues continued



- What should the supervisor do for the custodians?
- Each custodian should be oriented, trained and supported during daily work in such a way as to enable personal fulfillment as well as achieving proper care of the site.
- Personality clashes may exist between any employee at any level and must not be allowed to affect the work situation. A professional attitude and approach to such a problem can allow all employees to work together effectively.
- Most workers want more out of the job than just a paycheck. Once basic survival needs are met, all humans are motivated more by such things as feeling they belong to a group and that they are growing as individuals
- A good custodial supervisor will realize there is much more to supervision than making sure the tasks get done. If subordinates are treated well and helped to understand all of the factors that go into both the worker's and supervisor's job, a team effort will be more effective and pleasant.



# The Custodian and Students



- How should the custodian treat students?
- The students are the reason for any school's existence.
- The relationship between the custodian and the students can be difficult as well as very rewarding. In worst cases, the students can be viewed as “messy” and creating trouble. In best cases, the custodian can be a role model by being a caring accomplished professional.
- Students of all ages should be treated with patience, understanding, concern, and respect. The custodian can expect the same in return. By setting a good example and making sure the school facilities are clean and in good repair, the custodian can do a lot to create good student attitudes and avoid vandalism.





# Questions for you to Think About



- What might happen and/or should be done when a custodian releases information to a newspaper reporter without the knowledge of the administration? For example, in the case of vandalism, student accident or fraud.
- What types of health and physical qualifications are appropriate for custodial employees? What about personal or ethical standards?
- Who bears the responsibility for keys that are lost, stolen or duplicated?
- What is the custodian's role when trespassers come onto school grounds? What about in the case of stray animals?
- How far should a custodian go in reporting accidents or giving first aid treatment?
- Should the custodian intervene when students fight? What about when the custodian observes illegal activities, such as drug purchases?
- Should the custodian be considered on call 24 hours a day? How much over time or extra duties are acceptable?

# More Questions for you to Think About



- How can the custodian handle socially awkward assignments, such as a female working in the males locker room or a male cleaning the woman's restroom?
- How should the custodian react when harassed or verbally abused by a teacher or other employee? By a student?
- What should the custodian do if petty theft of supplies or borrowing of equipment is noticed?
- What is the custodian's role during emergency preparedness measures, such as bomb evacuations or fire drills?
- How do the custodial and maintenance staff share responsibilities?
- Is the custodian responsible for traffic control on the school grounds, such as parking or speeding?
- Should teachers and students be encouraged to help care for their areas by wiping desks or picking up trash or whatever?
- What liability does the custodial staff hold in case of accident or overlooked safety precautions?

# Veterans Preference



- Always check with your HR Department first before doing anything. These rules do change and you may need to be updated.
- Veterans' preference requires two key actions on your part:
  - That “special consideration” be provided (and documented) at each step of the selection process.
  - That in the final selection decision, that if an eligible applicant is “equally qualified”, he/she must be selected.

# Pre-employment Questions Related to Disabilities



- Employers may not ask applicants disability-related questions such as:
  - Whether they have a particular disability?
  - If they will need reasonable accommodations to perform job functions?
  - How many days they have been sick?
  - If they can perform major life activities?
  - Whether they lawfully use drugs?
  - How much alcohol they drink or whether they have participated in an alcohol rehabilitation program?
  - If they used to be addicted to illegal drugs?

# Pre-employment Questions Related to Disabilities



- 3 exceptions - Check with your HR Department First!
- An employer may ask an applicant what kind of accommodation is needed under three specific conditions:
  - The employer reasonably believes the applicant will need an accommodation because of an obvious disability (e.g., the person is blind, in a wheel chair, or the like);
  - The employer reasonably believes the applicant will need an accommodation because the applicant has voluntarily disclosed a hidden disability (e.g., the person reveals a back problem and job entails some lifting requirements); or
  - An applicant has voluntarily disclosed to the employer that he or she needs an accommodation to perform the job (e.g., the person indicates that they can do computer work if a larger computer screen can be provided).
- In the three situations described above, other disability related questions, such as inquiries about the applicant's underlying conditions (e.g., "How did you lose your sight?"), are still prohibited. And if the applicant responds that no accommodation would be needed for the job, employers can't pursue the issue.



- Some questions about job function are lawful:
  - Always check with your H.R. Department first for current policy or changes in the law.
  - Applicant's ability to perform specific job functions
  - Non-medical qualifications and skills (education, work history, certifications)
  - How they would perform job tasks
  - Attendance requirements
  - Current illegal use of drugs
  - Prior casual illegal drug use
  - Arrested or convicted of DUI



# Post-Offer Medical Examinations



- Once a real conditional job offer is made, the employer may ask disability-related questions. It is at this point that applicants are required to complete a medical examination. Pre-offer medical examinations are prohibited.
- Disability-related questions and medical examinations at the post-offer stage do not have to be related to the job. Questions may be asked concerning workers compensation history, prior sick leave assuagement, whether an individual needs reasonable accommodation to perform the job, documentation of his or her disability if the need for the accommodation is not obvious, illness, diseases, impairments and general physical and mental health.
- However, should the employer reject the applicant after disability-related questions or medical exam, EEOC cautions that its investigators will closely scrutinize whether the rejection was based on the results of that question or exam. If an employer screens out an individual because of a disability, it must show the rejection was motivated by a reason that is job-related and consistent with business necessity, the EEOC notes.



- Pride is a personal commitment; it is an attitude which separates excellence from mediocrity.



# Cleaning Protocol



[http://plantoperations.dadeschools.net/clean\\_protocol.asp](http://plantoperations.dadeschools.net/clean_protocol.asp)