

**The Maids Home Services**  
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## **THE MAIDS NEWSLETTER: OCTOBER 2009**

What do we have to do to make you happy? Here at the Maids, we continue to focus on quality and efficiency: two keys to keeping all our clients as enthusiastic fans.

After eleven years of service, we have pretty much experienced the whole gamut of the world of cleaning. I hope you can appreciate that we want you to be our biggest fans and we are always looking for your feedback on how to keep you smiling ... and on our schedule. So please, HELP US HELP YOU! We want to keep you for a very long time.

### **I'd like to review some of the typical questions we field to give you a clear view of how we operate.**

Why do we make feedback calls? We don't want you disappointed / frustrated / worrying about getting people in trouble. If the teams are not doing what we say they're supposed to do we need to correct them. We drill into them constantly that you are their paycheck. And they are being held up to a very high standard. We don't want you to go away, and certainly not to go away mad!!!! We are asking for your honest feedback. **We know some of you try other companies and we know many of you return because the other companies can't compare with the thoroughness of both our teams and our office staff. I am very proud of my employees but need to keep the bar high so your feedback is critical to me.** Recently, our headquarters (in Omaha) started a survey campaign where the teams leave a card with instructions for you to go online or call to complete a quick survey. As I feel the person to person contact is critical we will continue to ask for your feedback directly and trust you will give us good advise! I do not know how long the corporate campaign will last with the survey cards.

Why do we ask for your home phone/ cell phone / work # / and email? It does not help us leaving messages. We need to be able to contact you directly to get prompt answers. Questions rise before, during and/or after the clean that need to be addressed.

What about referrals? Indeed we reward referrals; they are golden to us! Call us for details on our referral program.

How do we take out the garbage? Yes, we do collect garbage but we do not supply new garbage bags. We strongly suggest you leave several garbage bags in the bottom of each can so we can set up the clean bag when needed. We need clear instructions of your recycling routines. Remember the teams are told NOT to open up cabinets so if you have hidden garbage cans we need to know your intentions.

How do we determine start times? Every day at 8:00 sharp we have a quick employee meeting to get the day started. Figure the teams have their instructions, their cars loaded and generally are on the road ( leaving Red Bank or our satellite Freehold office) by 8:15 heading to their first clean. (One exception to this is Beatriz's "Teal Team" who typically leave the Freehold office at 8:45.) So those in the first time slot have a pretty good idea of arrival time. On your confirmation call (made two days in advance) you will get an estimated RANGE OF ARRIVAL TIME and we typically contact clients with one hour notice on the day of the clean. All cars have GPS units for tracking purposes.

Why do we make confirmation calls two days in advance? We realize even people with set schedules need to juggle their routines to get everything done, but this at times, creates a nightmare for us. So we need two days to balance out all the juggling and ideally get everybody in the best time range and ensure that the teams are efficient. This is no easy task!

What is the "in house" clean time? Time is money. Your price is based on how long the team needs to do an exemplary job from the time they pull into your driveway till they get back in their car. They need one minute to get their equipment, and get into the house. They need to walk to their assigned rooms and begin working. If you like to do an inspection, please do so 10-15 minutes before they finish. This is when the supervisor normally begins his/her inspection as well. Also if you are paying by check, please **have the check prepared in advance. If the team needs to wait, this would affect the price** of the clean. The payroll for a four person team adds up very quickly. We can not afford even five minutes of lost time.

What do we clean each time? Every client has different priorities. We are happy to do a solid full house clean every time we enter your home. Many clients like the flexibility of an alternating schedule (i.e. full clean; partial clean; full clean; partial clean etc. We are very open to what works best for you.

How do we wash floors? All floors are vacuumed. kitchen and bathroom floors are always done hands and knees. For all other hard surface floors, the teams do carry shmops and will use whatever product you leave out for them to use. We don't carry products for wood floors or marble floors because there are too many options and everyone has a different opinion on what they like. We do carry vinegar which is typically used on the kitchen and bathroom floors.

Do we vacuum under pillows? Yes, you should expect all pillows and cushions to be picked up so that furniture is always vacuumed under the cushions, the fronts, sides and as is reasonably possible underneath the furniture as well. Afterwards, the cushions and pillows should be replaced properly.

How do we handle animals? We need clear instructions on what pets are "inside pets" only; what pets can go in or out; what pets must stay in cages or confined to a particular room; and.. If a pet is confined during the clean, do we let the pet out of that room when we are leaving? Do we clean up cat / dog poop? No. I consider that above and beyond the call of duty for my teams. And we will not touch blood (human or animal).

What is the procedure for making beds? This is a rather delicate area since it is such a personal thing. If you do want the teams to make up your bed(s), the bed(s) need to be stripped with the clean sheets laid out on the appropriate bed. We need to avoid any guess work for what sheets belong on what bed and we do not expect the teams to be handling used sheets.

Who gets set prices and who gets hourly rates? Everyone is hourly the first time we clean your home / office /facility. After that most clients are given set prices for weekly, every two weeks, and every four weeks service. Empty move in cleans would remain hourly for the next clean as well as that would then be the first time we are cleaning the home with their furniture so could then give an intelligent time estimate. Clients who prefer monthly, or every two months or simply want occasional project cleans stay with the hourly rate as it is usually difficult to estimate the time needed when there is a large gap since the last clean.

What's the procedure for house keys? By far this is the most preferred scenario, since no one is losing time and the team is not interfering with your schedule. The keys are assigned random numbers – there is no identifying information on them. They are kept under lock and we have an alarm system here at the office. Some clients hide a key, preferably in the back of the home. I don't like the image of my employees looking for the key under the front door mat or mail box where any neighbors could see this. Many homes have decks or patios and the key could be left inside the gas grill, planter or such.

**When are extra charges assessed?** When a team is forced to lose time due to a lock out there is an automatic \$40.00 fee; for a same day cancellation (despite our best efforts as described earlier) there is a \$25.00 fee; bounced checks have a \$30.00 fee. If you would like the team to wash the inside of your refrigerator and/or your oven there is an additional \$25.00 charge for either; if you would like to purchase a shmop set, the team will bring it to your next clean and add \$20.00 to the cost of that clean. **Carpet cleaning and window washing (some limitations apply to window washing projects) are additional services that we offer. Call for details and pricing for these projects.**

Are tips expected? I don't ever want anyone to feel obligated to do so. In very general terms: some clients tell us to add an amount to their check or their service fee if they are paying by credit card; some clients may leave (CLEARLY IDENTIFIED!) drinks or snacks for the teams. Around the holidays, most clients are inclined to think of the teams. **The most judicious way we have found for the holidays** is for clients to direct any tips to the office where we determine the breakdown by team and by seniority and distribute the tips in two or three payments during the month of December. My husband Kevin (a CPA for thirty years) handles the distribution of tips as we found this ensures fairness to all involved. Please direct any instructions to his attention.

Enjoy the upcoming holiday season and as always, thank you for the opportunity of cleaning your home.

Sincerely,

Gerry and Kevin Elwood, Franchise Owners [gme@TheMaidsNJ.com](mailto:gme@TheMaidsNJ.com) [k.elwood@TheMaidsNJ.com](mailto:k.elwood@TheMaidsNJ.com)  
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And..... all our teams !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Ps: note new email addresses!