

Facilities Management from A to Z

Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard
published monthly in Facilities by Lexis Nexis between 2008 and 2016

Handyman

The Handyman (or woman) service is often poorly defined and frequently undervalued by end users but a good Handyman is of enormous help to a busy facility manager.

A Handyman is usually a person capable of carrying out a wide range of repairs including fabric maintenance, both interior and exterior, minor plumbing and electrical tasks, floor box moves, portage and general support to other facilities team members.

Other typical tasks might include painting and minor decoration, shelf and picture hanging; running repairs such as door closer adjustments, lock repairs and replacements or door hanging; repairs to toilet seats or sanitary fittings; and assistance with small-scale furniture movement.

Having a multi-skilled and knowledgeable resource available for deployment is extremely useful in facilities management where the unexpected happens every day. Routine but time independent tasks like touching up paintwork can be dropped in an instant to respond to anything from a blocked toilet to a flickering light.

Generally the job of a handyman is a low status, semi-skilled labour job. It is a less prestigious occupation than a specialist trade such as a plumber, electrician, or carpenter but can be deployed to assist these more expensive resources when another pair of hands would be helpful or to reduce risk.

The Handyman role can also be useful as a first response service to investigate help-desk calls. Often additional information can be helpful to a responding engineer allowing them to bring any necessary tools or spares. Frequently the multi-skilled Handyman can provide a first-fix service, either resolving the problem or carrying out a temporary repair thus reducing the urgency for an expensive reactive visit from a more highly skilled engineer.

The Handyman response process normally follows a standard prioritised model such as:

1. Attempt an immediate fix or repair of the problem or fault
2. Carry out a temporary fix or remedial action to enhance the current operational status or to reduce or eliminate any risk posed
3. Identify any necessary remedial or corrective work to restore full operational status
4. Submit a detailed fault report with informed opinion on urgency of required response, action to be taken and likely tools and parts needed
5. Instigate and report on follow-up activity to monitor the problem and to provide end-user assurance.

A Handyman (or woman) is often one of the most familiar faces in a building and can become an ambassador for the facilities team so it is important that they are well trained not only in a wide range of technical skills but also in customer care and communication.

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