

Introduction

This guide is an introduction to professional house cleaning and how professionals clean a home. Learning to clean like a professional is not hard when you start with the basics. This 12-page guide includes basic step-by-step instructions on cleaning the primary rooms in a home and how to work your way through a home, including sharing tasks on a team.

Some cleaning companies will have you start cleaning homes just with this core introduction, and then in a few days, start your certification program. Practical training from a certified professional trainer can be a great starting point for those with limited or no professional house cleaning experience.

Professional Cleaner Certification

Maid Training Academy is the world leader in training professional house cleaners. Hundreds of maid companies and thousands of cleaners around the world clean homes using our methods. It is the industry standard for professional home cleaners around the world.

Getting certified is not hard, and it only takes 8 hours. Most people complete everything in one day, but you can break it up over time since all the classes are online. Certification classes include 165 pages of reading, Unlimited Practice Tests, and two attempts to pass the Final Exams. 98% of all students pass the course and receive their certificate.

Certification is not just for beginners. Cleaners with years of experience will still learn things that will improve their skills and efficiency. Certification validates your knowledge from a world leader in cleaning education. People put it on their resume, and you can refer people to contact Maid Training Academy for confirmation. Certification has value, and it gives you a competitive edge. For more information or to enroll, visit www.MaidTrainingAcademy.com

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Safety & Security

The safety of cleaners is always the most important thing, so we will start with that.

House Cleaning is a safe job when you practice safety as a priority.

You will learn about safety in every section of your certification classes. Most of it is common sense, but there are some unique safety issues with cleaning. The bottom line is that you should never do anything that feels unsafe.

- Don't walk on wet floors after mopping. The last thing you do in a room is mopping yourself out of a room so you never have to walk on wet floors.
- Don't stand on countertops, chairs, or reach over railings.
- Don't carry too much equipment when you unload and load the car.
- Don't put your weight on anything attached to a wall like a shower soap dish. They will come off the wall with just a little weight.
- Don't leave equipment spread all over the floor. That can lead to tripping.
- Don't use just one hand to clean. Learn to use both hands. It's easier and safer.

COVID-19

As a certified professional cleaner, your training includes a 30 minute class on COVID-19. Here are the highlights:

- Wear masks the entire time, including in the car, and the office
- Wear gloves starting before you enter the home and remove gloves after you load the car when the job is complete.
- Before you start cleaning, disinfect all hard surfaces
- Customers are notified about strict Social Distancing and other rules prior to your arrival
- Customers are told that if anyone is sick at home that their cleaning will be rescheduled
- If needed, tell the customer to keep a 6 ft distance at all times
 - *“Thanks for letting us clean today. We are practicing social-distancing of 6 feet or more during the entire cleaning.”*

The good news is that customers have been very good about complying with these rules. The biggest challenge to COVID-19 safety is what you do outside of work. Every professional cleaner has a great responsibility for keeping safe all the time. You are more inclined to catch COVID outside of work than while working. Everyone needs to do their part to protect themselves, coworkers, and everyone in their community.

GOLDEN RULES OF CLEANING

1. Always work safely

Your safety, the safety of your cleaning partners and the safety of your customers are critically important. Every section of your training contains safety instructions. Safety is not just how you work safely; it's about not doing certain things because they have a risk of injury or damage. You don't have to take risks to clean at a high quality and professional pace.

2. Always work Top to Bottom and Left to Right

This is the oldest and most common instruction in cleaning. It applies to everything.

Dirt, dust, and even cleaning solutions will fall as you clean. Cleaning top to bottom ensures that you don't have to clean the same place twice, and it will prevent complaints.

This rule applies to everything. You clean a room top to bottom, starting with high dusting and finishing with the floors. You dust a lamp sitting on a counter from the top of the lamp down to the bottom. This rule applies to everything you clean; Blinds, Showers, Mirrors, everything.

After you clean top to bottom, move to the right, and clean the next section of the room, top to bottom. This is important to prevent skipping or missing an area and not cleaning the same place twice. Left-handed cleaners may find it better to move to the left because they are leading with their dominant left hand. It doesn't make a difference, as long as you stay on track, in the same direction, so you don't miss anything as you travel around the room.

3. Clean with attention to details

You will learn in your certification classes that little things are big things. Customers notice the details. They expect you to clean better than they clean. That means the details.

4. Concentrate when cleaning

Cleaning a home requires you to pay attention to your work. This is detailed work. You must concentrate on everything you do. Being a good cleaner requires endurance and concentration. When you gain experience, this job gets easier but never lose your concentration.

5. Check your work

We are humans, so we make mistakes. That is why it is critically important to check your work. Every complaint from a customer is preventable if you do your checks.

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6. Move with speed and purpose. You cannot be a slow cleaner.

This is typically the biggest challenge for new professional cleaners. Within 30 days or less, your speed should be at acceptable levels. If you are not making good time, then you have to work faster. Watch the videos on the Maid Training Academy website to see acceptable speeds. They don't look like they are going fast, but they are fast because they are transitioning from one task to the next without interruption. They don't look rushed, and customers do not want people cleaning their home recklessly.

After 30 days or less, it gets easier because you have formed habits and it's less stressful because your confidence is high. Some new cleaners get appropriate speed in 2 weeks.

Here are the time goals you need to reach for the primary tasks of a professional cleaner for a **RECURRING CUSTOMER**. Initial Cleanings, Spring Cleanings, or Move-In/Out Cleanings are longer times. You will learn those times tables in your certification classes.

3,500 sq. ft. home. Recurring Service (Weekly, Bi-weekly, or Monthly)

	Minimum Time	Average Time	Maximum Time
Kitchen	25	35	45
Master Bathroom	25	35	45
Spare Bath (Used)	20	25	30
Spare Bath (not used)	10	12	15
Master Bedroom	10	13	15
Family Room	10	15	20
Dining Room	7	12	15
Kids Bedroom	5	7	10
Bedroom unused	4	5	7
Collecting Trash (all)	7	10	13
Toilet	4	5	6
Bed (Stripping & Making)	4	5	6

7. Don't sacrifice high-quality cleaning for speed.

A fast cleaner with sloppy work will not be employed very long or keep a customer.

8. Dust, clean, and touch everything in the home, you can reach

Many new cleaners will wonder or ask, "What do I clean?" and the typical answer is...EVERYTHING you can reach with both hands. (Including using a stepladder)

9. Always use your sponge to clean countertops and finish with a rag

To ensure the highest quality cleaning AND save time, use your sponge. The sponge is used to loosen and lift messes, so you can wipe it clean and streak-free, with a rag.

10. Use both hands

Using both hands is faster and safer. Many damage claims, even slips, and falls can be avoided by using both hands. It also helps with fatigue and stress. When you get better with your opposite hand, you can switch on the fly. That will improve your ability to maneuver around furniture. Same with using a rag. Using both hands benefits all your cleaning tasks.

11. Put things back as you found them when you are dusting and cleaning.

You move items the entire time you are cleaning. Pay attention to where items were sitting, so you place them back where they were. Don't re-arrange a customer's home. Homeowners get aggravated when they have to take time to put things back where they belong. This includes window blinds. Customers can be ultra-sensitive to binds and is a reason for customers terminating service. Window blinds affect privacy, plants, heating, and cooling.

12. Put items back in an orderly fashion, with labels facing out.

Put things back where you found them and organize them, so everything looks beautiful. This has to do with spacing and making sure all the labels on bottles are facing out. You will encounter areas that are unorganized and need to be put back in an orderly fashion. Toiletries in a shower are often all over the shower; bathroom counters will have items all over the place, kitchens will have items moved out of order. Reassemble these items in some orderly fashion, labels facing out. Customers LOVE this type of attention to detail. It's a mess when they leave, they come back, and it looks beautiful. This occurs in every room: Kitchen, Bathroom, Family Room, everywhere.

13. Be careful what you say in the customer's home because it can get you fired.

Most homeowners are sensitive to ANY comment made about their home. Never say, "This house is really dirty" or "This is nasty." Customers can be home when you least expect it.

14. Keep your voice low when the customer is at home

Many of your customers are at home when you clean, and many are working from home. Yelling or being loud is annoying, unprofessional, and disruptive to customers.

CLEANING SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT

There are many tools and supplies used to clean a house. Every cleaning company is different, and you need to respect the decision of your employer on what they use or don't use. Never bring your own equipment or supplies without written permission from your employer. There are many serious problems with using non-approved supplies, and it is usually grounds for immediate termination.

If you are assigned a caddy, take care of it and clean it out periodically, usually weekly or even daily.

Tools and Supplies for a 2 Person Team

Caddy (2)	Common Bag & Company Vehicle
All-Purpose spray bottle	Webster dusting head
Glass cleaner spray bottle	Chenille (flat) dusting head
Degreaser spray bottle	Spare duster refills if you use Swiffers
Disinfectant spray bottle	Buckets (2)
Bleach-based spray bottle	Stepladder (2)
Furniture dusting spray	Stand up vacuum
Powdered cleanser	Canister vacuum
Plastic Cup for rinsing	Attachments for the (canister vacuum)
Sponges Kitchen & Bathroom(s)	Poles (2) One extension and one 4 ft. pole (wood)
Scrub Brush	Broom & dustpan
Toothbrushes (2) Toilet & One for all others	Shoe covers
Tile Brush	Latex-free Gloves
Plastic scraper (putty knife style)	Whisk Broom
Toilet Brush and storage cup	Disposable Air Masks
SOS pads, in a Ziploc bag	Hand Sanitizer & Hand Lotion
Miscellaneous	Rag Bag
Aprons (2)	Green Rags (or some color) for Normal Cleaning
Floor cleaner dispensing bottle	Red Rags (or some different color) Oil Dusting Spray
Screwdriver for basic vacuum repairs	Mop heads
Spare vacuum cleaner belts	Dirty ragbag

“Rags” are much more than their name implies

Professional maids use microfiber cloths. They work better than anything else, and they are the standard in the industry. Most professionals still refer to them as “rags” because it is easier to say, and you use the word all the time when you talk to your partner, the office, and in training, including these classes.

CLEANING PACKAGES

Most maid companies offer at least three types of cleaning packages.

1. Recurring Service
2. Spring Cleaning or Deep Cleaning
3. Move-In/Out

Recurring Service

Cleaning companies offer Weekly, Bi-Weekly, and Monthly recurring service. What you clean is typically the same. The difference between the 3 types of recurring service is how much time is needed to complete the job. General logic is that the longer in between cleanings, the longer it may take to get the home cleaned.

Recurring Service is the most important customer. All customers are important, but recurring service is 80% or more of your business. Having predictable work is important in any job. Never take your recurring customer for granted or perform less than 100% every time.

Spring/Deep Cleanings

In Recurring Service, you typically **dust** and **spot clean** the baseboards, blinds, window sills, ceiling fans, spindles on staircases, handrails, doors, door frames, chair rails, and bathroom cabinets.

In a Spring/Deep Cleaning, you **hand wash ALL those areas with a rag and a cleaning solution.** Hand washing those areas takes a much longer time compared to dusting.

Two maids can typically Spring Clean a 3,500 square foot home in 4 – 5 hours if the home is well maintained.

Move-In / Move-Out

The cleaning tasks are similar to Spring Cleanings, except the home is empty. Because the home is empty, there are additional items included in this cleaning that are not in any other cleaning.

1. Cleaning the **INSIDE** of cabinets and drawers in the Kitchen and all Bathrooms
2. Cleaning the **INSIDE** of the refrigerator
3. Cleaning the **INSIDE** of the dishwasher
4. Cleaning the **INSIDE** window only of the oven.
5. Cleaning the **shelves and racks INSIDE** all closets and the kitchen pantry

How to work your way through a home as a Team

2 Person Team Average Size home (3,500 square feet), with the Master Bathroom upstairs

The most common team size is two cleaners. You will learn common ways to divide cleaning tasks based on 3 and 4 person cleaning teams in your certification classes.

The Kitchen and Master Bathroom requires the most time, and that’s why each cleaner starts in these rooms first. You typically alternate cleaning the Kitchen or Master Bathroom from home to home. In the following example, the Cleaning Partner is cleaning the Kitchen.

- Master Bathroom Cleaner completes the tasks in that column (blue)
- Kitchen Cleaner completes all the tasks in that column (yellow)
- Together tasks (green)
- Team Leader tasks (red)
- Cleaning Partner tasks (orange)

Team Leader	Cleaning Partner
Team Leader drives the car to the job location.	Reads the customer work-order out loud
Take all the equipment to the front door – Together	
Team Leader rings doorbell, introduces team. Everyone brings the equipment in the home - Together	
Master Bathroom Cleaner	Kitchen Cleaner
High Dust the entire upstairs, because this cleaner is cleaning the Master Bathroom/Bedroom	Collect Trash throughout the entire home
Make the Beds – Together Starting upstairs, during the time the Kitchen cleaner is upstairs collecting trash. Then together make the rest of the beds throughout the home.	
Clean the Master Bathroom (typically upstairs)	High Dust the entire main floor (because it's on the floor as the Kitchen)
Clean the Master Bedroom	Clean the Kitchen
Clean the rest of the upstairs including floors	Clean the rest of the main floor
Clean Basement – Together – Work at opposite ends, and work toward the middle	
Prepare to exit the home	
Inspect the home	Mop out of the home through the front door
Take the equipment and supplies to the car and load the car – Together	

In some ways, you can say one person cleans the upstairs, and the other person cleans the main floor. In this example, there is some truth in that. Your certification classes include more details on how to split up the job, but the bottom line is that cleaners share the responsibilities evenly.

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The Order of Cleaning Tasks – Full Bathrooms (toilet & shower/tub)

These are the primary step by step flow of cleaning tasks for each primary room in the home.

Step	General Instructions and Tasks
High Dust	Task is completed for the entire floor prior to coming back to Bathroom to clean
Remove floor mats & rugs	Shake rugs/mats and set them on floor outside of bathroom
Fold all towels	Place neatly folded towels back on to the towel racks, hook, or peg
Pretreat areas as needed	Spray the appropriate solution onto shower, tub, sink, toilet, mirrors as needed to help loosen up grime, soap scum, etc.
Start Cleaning at Bathroom Door	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dust & Spot Clean Door, Clean Door Handle – (Recurring Service) ○ Clean entire Door with rag and cleaning solution. – (Spring/Deep/Move-In/Out)
<p>Work your way around the room, cleaning top to bottom.</p> <p>Move in one direction around the entire room, either right or left.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Light Switches and Electrical Outlets (damp rag) ○ Dust items hung on wall ○ Window blinds, Sills, & Flat surface of window lock <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dust & Spot Clean (Recurring), Clean with rag – (Spring/Deep/Move-In/Out) ○ Lights over the countertop (dust with dry rag or duster) ○ Mirrors / Vanity Mirror (glass cleaner & rag) ○ Countertops, Sinks, Faucets, Items on Countertop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All-Purpose cleaner, sponge on counters and sink, then wipe clean with cloth ▪ Powdered cleanser in the sink if needed (most sinks need it) ▪ Move all items on counter out of your way to clean the entire counter ▪ Hand wipe clean every item on the counter from top to bottom ▪ Return items back they were or in some orderly fashion, labels facing out ○ Cabinet Doors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dust and Spot clean – (Recurring Service) ▪ Clean cabinets with rag and solution. – (Spring/Deep/Move-In/Out) ▪ Inside cabinets and drawers – (Move-In/Out) ○ End up back at the bathroom door, fully working your way around the bathroom
Showers & Tubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Soap Scum Levels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No Soap Scum or stains. (Rag, All-Purpose Cleaner (wipe out clean)) ▪ Light to Moderate Scum (Sponge, All-Purpose Cleaner, Powdered Cleanser) ▪ Heavy Soap Scum (Degreaser, Powdered cleanser, Scrub brush)
Toilet	Clean inside and outside of toilet, PLUS behind toilet, baseboards around toilet, dust/clean toilet paper holder, fold toilet paper to a point
Check your work	Stand at the bathroom door and look over the room, moving your eyes top to bottom, left to right. Correct or improve as needed
Floors	Leave the floors until you finish cleaning the rest of the floor.

The Order of Cleaning Tasks – Kitchen

Step	General Instructions and Tasks
High Dust	Task is completed for the entire floor prior to coming back to Kitchen to clean
Remove floor mats & rugs	Shake rugs/mats and set them on floor outside of kitchen area, out of your way
Pretreat areas as needed	Stovetop grates and burner caps are removed and placed in the sink that is pre-lined with rags to prevent scratching the sink. Spray the appropriate solution onto grates, burner caps and on the stovetop as needed, to help loosen up grime, grease, etc.
Start Cleaning at edge of countertop, closest to the entrance to kitchen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Depending on the kitchen size, you may take two trips around the kitchen. ○ First trip you are cleaning the top cabinets and the top of the refrigerator. ○ Second trip around the kitchen you will clean the countertops and lower cabinets
<p>Work your way around the kitchen, cleaning top to bottom.</p> <p>Move in one direction around the entire room, either right or left.</p> <p>If there is an island, clean the island after you complete your trip around the room</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Light Switches / Electrical Outlets (damp rag) ○ Dust items hung on wall ○ Window blinds, Sills, & Flat surface of window lock <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dust & Spot Clean (Recurring), Clean with rag – (Spring/Deep/Move-In/Out) ○ Countertops, and Items on the countertop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ All-Purpose cleaner, sponge on counters, then wipe clean with cloth ▪ Move all items on counter out of your way, to clean the entire counter ▪ Hand wipe clean every item on counter from top to bottom ▪ Return items back they were or in some orderly fashion, labels facing out ○ Cabinet Doors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clean cabinets with rag and solution. ▪ Inside cabinets and drawers – (Move-In/Out) ○ Backsplashes (Clean countertops back to backsplash, and on top of backsplash) ○ Appliances (rag and solution, stainless steel use mild soap or special spray) ○ Microwave (Inside and Outside) ○ Stove Top (and front) After cleaning this area, clean grates and burner caps in the sink, return them to the stove, make sure control knobs are completely off. ○ Range Hood (Clean outside of hood) ○ Clean freestanding trashcan, top to bottom ○ End up back where you started, edge of the countertop closest to kitchen entrance
Kitchen Table & Chairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Move all chairs away from table ○ Clean table, top to bottom. Move table to hand clean any stains where it sits ○ Clean chairs top to bottom. Leave them away from table until floors are mopped ○ If any bar chairs, clean them top to bottom, leave them out until floors
Sink	Clean with powdered cleanser, sponge, rinse well, and wipe clean with rag.
Check your work	Stand at the entrance to the kitchen and look over the room, moving your eyes top to bottom, left to right. Correct or improve as needed
Floors	Leave the floors until you finish cleaning the rest of the floor.

The Order of Cleaning Tasks – Family Room/Bedroom/Common Areas

Step	General Instructions and Tasks
High Dust	Task is completed for the entire floor prior to coming back to Kitchen to clean
Start Cleaning at entrance to room.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If no entrance then pick a place to start, place caddy there to remind yourself where you started
<p>Work your way around the room, cleaning top to bottom.</p> <p>Move in one direction around the entire room, either right or left.</p> <p>Clean items in the middle of the room after you clean the perimeter of room</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Light Switches / Electrical Outlets (damp rag) ○ Dust items hung on wall ○ Window blinds, Sills, & Flat surface of window lock <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dust & Spot Clean (Recurring), Clean with rag – (Spring/Deep/Move-In/Out) ○ Dust/stripe sofas and couches ○ Fold blankets and place neatly on couch, chair, etc., fluff and stage pillows ○ Dust/Clean items sitting on tables from top to bottom, and the area where the item is sitting to clean entire table top ○ Dust furniture and chairs top to bottom ○ End up back at the place you started, where your caddy is on the floor ○ Clean items in the middle of the room, top to bottom, moving items to clean surfaces where items were sitting. Return items to where they were or stage items in a neat and orderly fashion
Check your work	Stand at the entrance to the room and look over the room, moving your eyes top to bottom, left to right. Correct or improve as needed
Floors	Leave the floors until you finish cleaning the rest of the floor.

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The Order of Cleaning Tasks – Floors

Step	General Instructions and Tasks
Start vacuuming floors at the farthest point from where you will exit the room.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start with the room at the end of the floor or rooms to prevent walking you're your finished work. ○ Work toward an exit, be it the stairs going up or down the floor or the front door when finishing the job/home
Carpeted Floors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Make sure the vacuum height setting is correct for type of carpet ○ Use a long stroke pattern, overlapping your work as you vacuum left to right, or right to left. ○ Move items out of your way in order to vacuum the entire floor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Move anything you can move with one hand
Non-Carpeted Floors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Canister Vacuum all Non-Carpeted Floors before mopping <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Canister vacuum the entire floor. Use a broom if it's a small room ● Never skip vacuuming. Mopping floors without vacuuming first will not lift hair, dust, crumbs off the floor. Skipping the vacuuming task before mopping will result in complaints. ○ Mop floors after vacuuming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start again at the farthest point and mop your way out of the room ● Use an S pattern to mop your way out of the room starting at the farthest point and mop your way out of the room ● Check your mop head periodically to make sure it's not too dirty, or replace it with clean, slightly damp, mop head ● Do not walk across wet floors for safety reasons and to avoid footprints
Area Rugs and Mats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Small Area Rugs/Mats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Vacuum the rugs that were removed from the bathrooms and kitchen. Do this outside of the room, standing on one end of the rug to hold it in place. Leave these rugs and mats outside of the mopped rooms until floors dry, which is usually just a few minutes. ● In large rooms that are not bathrooms or a kitchen, pick up small rugs and mats, and shake them or vacuum them before moving them out of the way so you can vacuum and mop the floor under the rugs ○ Large Area Rugs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If the area rug is too large to move or if it has furniture on it, then lift up the corners of the rug and use your canister vacuum or broom to get dirt/dust out from under the rug. ● Vacuum rugs with an upright or canister vacuum, depending on the rug