

# Keeping Up Appearances



First and foremost we want the residents to feel like they are at home, not in a nursing home with hospital furnishings, med carts in the hall, and whiteboards on the wall. We don't want a place so formally decorated that it looks like you are checking into a nice hotel. However, we want The Cottages to be distinctive and a "step above"—even from other assisted living centers.

## **It is important to recognize that:**

1. These buildings represent a financial investment that requires constant vigilance to maintain.
2. The floor plan and the decorating are all planned to make the buildings appealing and welcoming to the residents and to their families. Some residents are no longer interested or aware enough to care about their surroundings; others care a lot and enjoy being in a lovely new home. Their families, who are sometimes the ones making the final decision as to where Mom and Dad will live out the rest of their lives, are often the ones who care the most. If the family likes the ambience that they feel when they come into the building, that is a strong selling point.

## **Outside and Entrance**

- An empty planter is better than one with dead brown plants in it. Please be aware and remove dead and dying plants.
- Bird feeders are fun. Just try not to overdo and get too many feeders in one spot. Be tidy with the seeds and the bird food.
- Snow and ice need to be removed and the outside rug needs to be vacuumed.
- Ice melt, bird seed, and shovels should be put away—not placed by front door. If you need a bin for ice melt or bird seeds, let your administrator know.

## **Cleaning and presentation of empty rooms**

- As the manager you should have a procedure in place for checking out residents and their belongings and then have that room ready for presentation within 24 hours.
- The bathroom needs to be cleaned immediately. Hang some nice towels.
- Remove all personal items from the previous resident.
- Clean floors along wall with broom or damp cloth.
- It is critical that any empty rooms be spotless and fresh.
- Do not wash the valances. Just shake them or put in dryer for a few minutes to freshen.
- Do not let the families take the valances and the rods.
- Develop and teach your staff a Check-Out Procedure.

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## Residents' space

- Each resident can make his/her room their own unique space.
- They can do whatever they like to decorate and furnish their room on the bedroom side of the door.
- The niche outside of the door is theirs to personalize the entrance to their room. Please use them.
- Use the niches to identify whose room it is, to personalize their entry, and to decorate for holidays.
- Doors and tables on public side are not to be decorated by the resident. Alcoves are public space.

## Public Areas

- We are not in the homes on a daily basis to see how well the furniture arrangements work. If you have a safety issue that concerns you or some special consideration that needs to be addressed, please communicate your concerns to us and we will help you find a solution. It is not your responsibility or prerogative to rearrange the furniture.
- Furniture from the public areas can not be moved to the residents' rooms. The residents' furniture should not be placed in the public living areas, without approval.
- Please, please put the med cart away when it is not in use! The dining room should not look like a nurses' station. Remember how hard we are trying to not have The Cottages look like an institution. It is a home. We want it to look like that as much as possible.
- Most accessories are not breakable or very valuable; you generally do not need to move them to protect them from breakage. Please don't move the accessories.
- Keep the artwork hanging straight.
- Don't let the living room become cluttered with magazines and crazy-colored blankets. (Put away when not using.)
- Put away creamers, sugar bowls, napkin holders between meals—they are not centerpieces.
- If you don't have centerpieces for your dining room tables and you want them, let us know.
- Keep the chairs and tables straightened so that they look orderly and nice.
- Keep the clutter off the raised bar in the kitchen. Flowers, candy dish, possibly the computer, and holiday decorations are acceptable.
- The multipurpose room is a great place for family parties, activities, doing puzzles, playing games. If you need to move the furniture around to accommodate an event or activity, please put it back when you are done.
- There are lots of cupboards in the laundry room and a linen closet for things that are better off hidden behind doors. Keep open shelves tidy. Toss or donate excess vases.

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## Decorating for Holidays and Activity Guidelines

The Cottages holiday decorations need to reflect the character and beauty of the homes. Everything should be of good taste and in good condition. It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that the decorating is tasteful and appropriate.

Here are some guidelines to help you know what is and isn't appropriate.

### DO:

- Do use seasonal decorations that can stay up longer than just holiday decorations. For instance, snowmen can stay up until the end of January, but Santas need to be put away right after New Year's; Fall garlands, cornucopias, and mums can stay up until Thanksgiving, but jack-o-lanterns, witches, and skeletons would need to come down on Nov. 1; Easter Bunnies would need to be taken down the day after Easter, but tulips can stay up all spring. Limit the use of Santas, Easter Bunnies, and Skeletons.
- Do feel free to remove accessories from the Entertainment Center to make room for Nativity or classy Christmas decorations. Put them back in the same place after the holiday. Christmas is the only time to add holiday decorations to the entertainment center.
- Do use holiday decorations for centerpieces on the dining room tables if you would like.
- Do decorate the raised counter in the kitchen with a few nice holiday decorations. This is a good place to hang garlands. Tasteful Christmas garlands may also be hung from the plant shelf.
- Do let the residents display their craft creations. They can go in the dining room on the tables, hutches, on the kitchen bar, and in the MPR. Leave them up for a week or so then take them down.
- Do use the bulletin boards. Display residents photos, thank yous, interesting news. Mounting a photo on a pretty colored paper that is cut to make a little border around the photo is a good way to brighten a bulletin board.. Use words printed on paper. Colored paper around the photos could be seasonal or match the décor of the room.
- Do have fun with the niches—personalize them and even decorate them for the holidays.
- Do leave some surfaces undecorated. Too much "stuff" is suffocating and tacky.

### DON'T

- Don't decorate with gaudy, dated, worn decorations.
- Don't pin anything to the window treatments.
- Don't tape cardboard decorations to the walls in the living room. Some could be used sparingly in the Dining Room, Kitchen, MPR
- Don't use Scotch tape on walls. Use only masking tape.
- Don't cover a bulletin board with paint, plastic, or really busy wrapping paper. It is too distracting.
- Don't do too much. More is not always better.

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We know that it is no small task to manage a home wherein the residents have many special needs. It is especially difficult when we ask you to hide most of the evidence that the residents who live here are elderly, have mobility issues, and require meds that need monitoring. The care of the residents is your primary concern, but the presentation of the building is also your responsibility. We are convinced that one of the reasons The Cottages have been so well received is that you do not feel like you are in a nursing facility when you come in the front door. You are in a lovely, well-cared-for place, a cozy Cottage, if you will, where good people who can no longer live in their own homes come to make a new home. Thank you for all you do to care for each of the residents and for all you do to care for The Cottages themselves.