LAUNDRY ROOM BEST PRACTICES:
A TOTAL SOLUTION TO IMPROVE YOUR LAUNDRY OPERATION
The number one priority for any hospitality property – no matter the size, location or target market – is guest satisfaction. While a guest may never see your property’s laundry operation, it can significantly impact their stay. From the bedding and towels in their room and the exercise facility to the napkins and tablecloths in the restaurant and banquet facilities, linens surround the guest throughout every part of their visit.

UniMac® total solutions are designed to ensure that every aspect of your laundry operation is consistently running at peak efficiency to reduce operating costs and ensure that you are providing your guests with the best stay possible. Whether your property’s equipment is brand new or you’ve had it for many years, our global network of laundry experts and distributors is one call away to provide complete support for your unique laundry needs.

With more than 60 years at the forefront of the hospitality industry, we want to share best practices for how to create and maintain a leading laundry operation that provides the absolute lowest cost of ownership. In this eBook we will examine best practices for maintaining equipment and training staff, how working with a knowledgeable distributor can improve your operation and how upgrading to new equipment can quickly pay for itself through reduced utilities expenses and labor efficiencies.

If it is time for your property to take its laundry operation to the next level, we are here to help. Find a knowledgeable distributor online or give us a call at 1-800-587-5458. We are ready and waiting.

Bill Brooks
UniMac North American Sales Manager
MAINTAINING A BEST IN CLASS LAUNDRY OPERATION
CHAPTER 1: Maintaining a Best in Class Laundry Operation

HOW TO PROPERLY MAINTAIN EQUIPMENT FOR OPTIMAL THROUGHPUT AND PEAK EFFICIENCY.

The two most important factors that impact the day-to-day laundry operation are equipment and labor. In this chapter, we will examine how equipment maintenance and staff best practices are the foundation to building a laundry room that maximizes throughput.

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE

Even the latest equipment with the most advanced technologies will not operate at peak efficiency if it is not properly maintained. Simple preventative maintenance practices on washer-extractors and tumble dyers produce the best wash and dry for guest linens and also help extend the life of the equipment. Most manufacturers, including UniMac, provide preventative maintenance lists that detail which tasks should be performed on a regular basis. Let’s review a few of these.

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE PRACTICES FOR WASHER-EXTRACTORS:

• Door Seals: Staff should wipe down the door seals at least once a day to make sure they are dry and clean. This will prevent dirt and grime from accumulating on the door gasket, which can cause leaking.

• Visible Hose Checks: Each day staff should check all visible hoses, paying close attention to the water inlet valve hose connection on the machine’s backside as well as any chemical connections.

PREVENTATIVE MAINTENANCE PRACTICES FOR TUMBLE DRYERS:

• Lint Removal: The lint compartment and screen should be cleaned on a daily basis. Doing so will allow electrical components to breathe, maintaining proper airflow and avoiding overheating.

• Debris Check: In the hospitality industry, it is not uncommon for foreign objects such as silverware, toiletries and remote controls to get mixed in with linens. Because of this, it is important for staff to check the cylinder daily for such debris to avoid damage to the linens and the equipment.

It is also important to wipe down the outside surfaces of both washer-extractors and tumble dryers each day. This will significantly reduce the need for additional maintenance and deep cleaning caused by a buildup of lint, debris and chemical remnants.

TRAINING

According to a recent Bureau of Labor Statistics report, the turnover rate for the hospitality industry was 72.1 percent in 2015, up from 66.7 percent in 2014. This was the fifth consecutive year the turnover rate increased and it is likely this trend will continue, which makes it critical to have the proper training processes and procedures in place to quickly onboard and train new team members to ensure that laundry equipment is used correctly.
TMI Hospitality operates more than 180 hotels across the United States under brands such as Marriott, Hilton Worldwide and InterContinental Hotels Group. To help manage the laundry operation and training across all properties, each hotel receives operational standards and checklists developed by TMI’s director of operational performance standards.

When the time comes to train new staff, all TMI property management teams take a hands-on approach, explained Andrew Wallin, TMI’s Director of Purchasing, “A property’s general manager or executive housekeeper will train new laundry staff on the standards our team has developed to ensure consistent operation across our properties.”

If a property does not have a formal training program put together, a laundry equipment distributor can often help. Many distributors have been in the industry for decades and have successfully worked with hospitality properties of all sizes and service levels.

Let’s review some basic processes and procedures that should be included in any training program.

**CONTROL PLATFORM TRAINING**

No matter what controls the washer-extractors and tumble dryers may have – manual or advanced – it is important for all staff to consistently follow the guidelines set forth to produce appropriate benchmarks.

For older equipment with manual controls, laundry staff need to pay close attention when selecting settings and cycles to ensure the best wash and dry quality. Take tumble dryers, for example. Operators will need to select the temperature setting, heat time and cool-down time for each cycle. Laundering different types of linens throughout the day, such as towels, bed linens and table coverings, will require staff to switch the settings for each load. Constantly changing these settings increases the chances of a wrong cycle being selected, which can have negative effects on throughput and linen life.

The latest control systems feature user-friendly graphic displays, several languages for multilingual operation and one-touch operation, helping to simplify training.

While much of the cycle guesswork is taken out of the staff’s hands when operating equipment with advanced controls, it is still important for staff to be trained so they can understand all the benefits of the equipment and how it can ultimately improve the operation.

The latest control systems feature user-friendly graphic displays, several languages for multilingual operation and one-touch operation, helping to simplify training. Additionally, having the same control on both washer-extractors and tumble dryers streamlines operator use and training.
PROCESSING TECHNIQUES

Just how darks and lights are sorted at home, hospitality on-premises laundries should sort like items before starting a load. With different fabric composition and weights, towels and sheets dry at different rates. Processing these items in the same load can cause over-drying of the sheets, thus reducing the linen life and quality.

It is important to weigh the linens before adding them to the washer-extractor. While it may look like a full load, adding a few more towels to reach the machine’s maximum capacity will improve efficiency throughout the day.

The procedures and time requirements for moving linens into the drying stage will depend on the technology and features of the washer-extractor and tumble dryer. Washer-extractors with a high G-Force will remove more water during the spin cycle compared to washer-extractors with G-Forces between 100 and 300. Removing more water during the spin cycle will help reduce the required dry time, and in exchange reduce utility and labor expenses.

High G-Force will remove more water during the spin cycle, helping to reduce dry times and in exchange reduce utility and labor expenses.

Additionally, to process a full load of wet sheets in one tumble dryer, the machine will need to feature reversing technology, which allows the machine to stop, pause and then switch directions. This helps reduce the balling or roping of linens, which causes the center of the material to be less dry than the outside.

Now that we know the first steps to running an effective hospitality on-premises laundry operation through preventative maintenance and staff training, it’s time to look at how a distributor can help with maintenance and repair support as equipment ages and undergoes normal wear-and-tear.
WHEN TO CALL A DISTRIBUTOR FOR MAINTENANCE AND SUPPORT.

When a machine stops working or experiences an issue in a hospitality laundry room, the impact is felt immediately. Proper identification of the problem and repair is key to ensure the equipment can begin processing laundry as soon as possible. The solution to getting equipment back up and running is one call away: an authorized UniMac distributor.

UniMac distributors provide customers with a knowledgeable sales staff, as well as factory-trained and certified service technicians. In order to be factory certified, a technician will go through an extensive training program from the original equipment manufacturer (OEM). For example, in order to reach the highest level of certification with UniMac, a technician will need to complete at least 70 courses.

By working with authorized UniMac distributors and certified technicians, hospitality accounts can have peace of mind knowing their equipment will be serviced quickly, professionally and to all required specifications put forth by the OEM.

WHEN TO CALL
Depending on the size and ownership, a property may have on-site maintenance and engineering support capable of making small repairs and installing replacement parts. If these resources are not available, it’s best to always contact a distributor.

If a property does have engineers on staff capable of diagnosing issues and completing standard maintenance practices, there are still certain repairs that should always be handled by a factory-trained technician, such as:

- **Electric Issues:** Maintenance and repairs surrounding electrical components such as main bearings, cylinders, motors and suspension systems typically require specialized tools.

- **Catastrophic Problems:** Balance issues or inverter drive issues are occurrences which can be catastrophic to the equipment’s functioning.

- **Uncommon Noises:** Any loud thumping sounds or uncommon noises such as a high-pitched whistle or grinding should be addressed immediately. These could indicate a variety of issues such as leaking bearings, trunnion bearing housing or wheel support.

- **Error Codes:** If an error code is displayed on the equipment’s control panel and the staff is not equipped to diagnose and repair, a distributor should be called.

Even with hotels in more than 25 states across the U.S., TMI’s corporate team has no issues finding and working with authorized UniMac distributors for any of its properties. “If our regional maintenance team cannot repair an issue for a property, we will help them identify the right resource through UniMac’s website,” Wallin shared. “It is as simple as
typing in the property’s zip code. We know we can trust our UniMac distributors to get the equipment back up and running quickly, no matter where the property is located.”

**REPAIRS WITH GENUINE REPLACEMENT PARTS**

If equipment needs a replacement part, staff should work with their distributor to secure parts identical to those installed on the machine during production.

The main reason a property will pursue an aftermarket part option is cost. However, it is important to look beyond the price of the part itself. While aftermarket parts may be less expensive up front, the costs associated with having to replace the part over and over and the additional repairs that result from use of a sub-standard part will quickly add up. Factory parts ordered through a distributor are specifically engineered for the machines and are put through rigorous testing to ensure proper operation.

“When facilities turn to the internet or other sources to purchase a replacement part, the buyer must be aware that a lot of parts may look the same but they are not,” explained Tony Berton, UniMac Field Service Manager. “To avoid confusion and possible further damage to the equipment, it is important the facility turns to a UniMac distributor for the correct replacement part. They will also offer a warranty and support.”

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Unlike aftermarket parts that typically only come with a 30- or 90-day warranty, manufacturers such as Alliance Laundry Systems offer 1-year warranties on its factory replacement parts.

Operators that have equipment still covered by the manufacturer’s warranty should stay away from aftermarket parts at all costs. If a manufacturer finds that the use of an aftermarket part damaged the machine, they can void the warranty, as the issue would not have occurred had a high-quality replacement part been installed.
MOST COMMON REPAIRS FOR MID-TO-END OF LIFE EQUIPMENT

Just as people age and experience more health-related issues, commercial laundry equipment also experiences more maintenance issues as it ages. Even with proper preventative maintenance of the equipment, it is unavoidable given the high demands of operating an on-premises laundry facility in the hospitality industry.

There are a few tell-tale signs it is time for a property to work with their distributor to develop a plan to proactively replace equipment before it negatively impacts their operation.

- **Physical Condition of Equipment**: While a few dents and scratches may not be detrimental, rust and chemical stains can be. If you see areas where chemicals have eaten through panels or large areas where rust has amassed on the outside of the machine, imagine what could be on the inside and making its way into guests’ linens.

- **Repair Costs Exceed New Equipment**: When the cumulative cost of constant repairs exceeds the price of new equipment, it’s time to replace. For example, if new equipment costs $5,000 with an average life span of 10 years, a property should estimate spending about $500 per year for that equipment. If an older piece of equipment starts to cost $1,000 per year to repair, then it is certainly time to look at replacement.

In the next chapter, we will examine how investing in new equipment will pay for itself through efficiencies in utilities and labor.
HOW INVESTING IN NEW EQUIPMENT CAN QUICKLY PAY FOR ITSELF
MAKING THE CASE FOR REPLACEMENT THROUGH INCREASED EFFICIENCIES AND REDUCED UTILITIES.

Scheduling proactive replacement of aged equipment can help alleviate costly repairs and equipment downtime. Properties can easily work with their distributor to help identify which equipment needs replacing immediately and which equipment can continue operating.

Given the large number of properties it operates, TMI Hospitality worked directly with UniMac laundry manufacturer’s National Accounts team to develop a proactive laundry asset management plan.

After a complete evaluation of all TMI-owned properties, the team identified more than 300 dryers that were fifteen years or older, all with manual timer controls, and more than 70 washer-extractors eight years or older with maximum extraction speeds of only 100 G-Force.

“We put together a plan for TMI’s purchasing team that would allow them to proactively replace aging and inefficient equipment at its properties throughout the country,” UniMac National Accounts Sales Manager Bob Bruce said. “Although our plan was on a much larger scale, this is something a professional laundry distributor can assist single properties with locally.”

AN INVESTMENT THAT WILL PAY FOR ITSELF

While replacement may seem like a big investment up front, the monetary investment will pay for itself in no time through utility efficiencies and increased staff productivity.

The asset management plan for TMI detailed how investing in a new UniMac tumble dryer would pay for itself in approximately 10 months of operation, as well as how new UniMac washer-extractors could add more savings to their bottom line due to the equipment’s advanced features.

TMI detailed how investing in a new UniMac tumble dryer would pay for itself in approximately 10 months of operation.

Using TMI Hospitality as a benchmark, let’s review how this can be done.
CHAPTER 3: How Investing in New Equipment Can Quickly Pay For Itself

REDUCED WATER USAGE

By replacing just one aged washer-extractor with a new UniMac model featuring the UniLinc® advanced control system and OPTispray™ Rinsing Technology, TMI Hospitality can save up to $1,793.00 in yearly water-related costs.*

Unlike bath rinses, which only dilute wash chemistry, spray rinse technology pulls chemicals through the load and down the drain. UniMac’s technology consumes as much as 39 percent less water than competitor brands while still maintaining the same wash quality currently experienced. Spray rinse technology not only decreases the presence of residual wash chemistry by 22 percent, it also decreases cycle rinse time by up to 12 percent, which increases throughput and decreases water consumption.

Additionally, these new models allow staff to choose from nine ECO cycles to further reduce water consumption.

REDUCED GAS CONSUMPTION

Investing in new washer-extractors featuring high G-Force extraction rates will also impact dry times. UniMac equipment featuring 400 G-Force removes more water in the final extraction of a wash cycle, leaving behind less water in the linen before it is moved to the dryer.

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Proactively replacing an older washer-extractor with one featuring 400 G-Force technology can save a property an estimated $3,896.23 per year in gas and labor costs.*

Properties can save even more on gas consumption when 400 G-Force technology is combined with the innovative OPTidry® Over-dry Prevention Technology. OPTidry automatically stops the tumble dryer at the exact moment the ideal dryness level is reached, eliminating unnecessary gas use associated with the over drying of linens. It is estimated that TMI would save an additional $870.00 a year in gas costs per dryer by upgrading to this new technology.**
**CHAPTER 3: How Investing in New Equipment Can Quickly Pay For Itself**

**INCREASE LABOR EFFICIENCIES**

It is estimated that equipment costs only represent eight to 12 percent of a total laundry room budget, while labor costs can account for 45 to 50 percent of the budget. Investing in new equipment featuring advanced controls provides total control over a property’s laundry operation, including its labor.

By upgrading to washer-extractors and tumble dryers with the UniLinc control system, staff can remotely access machine service history logs, receive error notifications and view performance reports for any of its properties nationwide, which for TMI Hospitality includes more than 180.

General managers at every property can see performance trends and if there is an issue, determine whether or not the problem is with the equipment or if it’s caused by the staff. Additionally, operators and the executive housekeeper can pull production reports to help monitor throughput for heavy-occupancy times such as holidays or conventions.

Finally, UniLinc’s advance start feature allows washer-extractors to finish a wash load even before employees arrive on-site to further maximize productivity and throughput.

**EXTEND LINEN LIFE**

If chemicals are present during the drying process, the heat will cause the linens to yellow or gray over time. By simply using washer-extractors with spray rinse technology, which decreases the presence of residual wash chemistry by 22 percent, operators can extend the life of the linens.

A recent survey found that 79 percent of commercial laundry distributors and commercial laundry managers believe that on-premises laundries over-dry linens by more than eight minutes per cycle. In addition to reducing gas consumption, over-dry prevention technology also greatly helps extend linen life. In fact, by replacing outdated tumble dryers with those featuring over-dry prevention technology, hotels can experience up to 31 percent less fiber loss in linens.

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THE BOTTOM LINE

When used together, a new, state-of-the-art UniMac washer-extractor and tumble dryer can save a property $14,751.36 annually in utilities, labor and linen replacement costs. These savings mean a property can pay off the equipment in just 19 months.*

In addition to providing equipment, UniMac Funding is ready to help properties by providing industry-leading finance solutions specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of on-premises laundries. UniMac Funding understands a hospitality’s laundry operation never sleeps and demands fast turnarounds. Applications for up to $100,000 can be completed online via a short, one-page form and the Funding team can make most credit decisions within one business day after receiving an application.

Whether a property needs help maintaining its existing equipment or evaluating the benefits it can receive from investing in new equipment, UniMac’s global distributor network is ready to provide the total solution to ensure every aspect of a property's laundry operation consistently runs at peak efficiency. Hospitality on-premises laundry operators can visit UniMac.com or call 1-800-587-5458 to find a UniMac distributor near them.

CHAPTER 3: How Investing in New Equipment Can Quickly Pay For Itself

When used together, a new, state-of-the-art UniMac washer-extractor and tumble dryer can save a property $14,751.36 annually in utilities, labor and linen replacement costs.

*Based on average energy and labor cost savings, based on 2023 costs. Actual results will vary.
* Assuming 1,400 lb of laundry/day, seven days/week with a water rate of $3.50/1,000 gallons, a chemical rate of $0.02/lb, and a sewer rate of $2.75/1,000 gallons. UniMac models with 100 G-Force versus UW models with 400 G-Force.

** TMI Asset Management Plan