



Book Review Editor: Theodore J. Weidner, Ph.D., P.E., AIA



Most readers know that APPA

publishes several books on subjects that are not available from any other source, and as such, are often recognized as authoritative works. This year, APPA published an update on their three staffing guidelines: Together, they are referred to as “The Trilogy.”

As I was not directly involved in the editorial efforts, I feel sufficiently independent to review them. Of course, if you’re looking for a completely unbiased perspective, you’ll have to write your own review, which I will gladly accept and publish.

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES: CUSTODIAL, THIRD EDITION

Alan S. Bigger, editor-in-chief, Casey J. Wick, Custodial Task Force Chair, APPA, Alexandria, VA, 2011, 356 pages, softcover, Member \$85; Nonmember \$110.

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES: GROUNDS, SECOND EDITION

Alan S. Bigger, editor-in-chief, Thomas Flood, Grounds Task Force Chair, APPA, Alexandria, VA, 2011, 225 pages, softcover, Member \$85; Nonmember \$110.

OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES: MAINTENANCE, SECOND EDITION

Alan S. Bigger, editor-in-chief, Thomas Becker, Maintenance Task Force Chair, APPA, Alexandria, VA, 2011, 297 pages, softcover, Member \$85; Nonmember \$110.

All three guidelines have been updated to reflect recent issues such as sustainability, green practices, and benchmarking. Several of these topics were driven by reader feedback or the passage of time. Ten years ago, sustainability and green practices were not recognized topics despite APPA’s leading efforts to accomplish essentially the same thing.

As with every new edition and changes in contributors, there are improvements to the previous materials. As I used the original guidelines (prior editions), it took some time to get oriented and understand the examples sufficiently to apply them to real-world conditions. Additionally, it was not as easy as I would have liked to refine the staffing recommendations from the guidelines for unique campus conditions, or to address

special spaces that weren’t specifically identified or described. In these new editions, however, the examples and materials to refine the results of the staffing tables for the unique conditions of each campus or facility are superior.

The new guidelines address the unique conditions that exist on every campus, and the contributors have provided numerous tools and examples to refine the analytical results from the staffing tables. For instance, if a campus does not have custodial staff relamp fixtures or dust blinds, there are clear examples of how to utilize the tables and make the customized adjustments for unique campus conditions. These adjustment methods have always been possible with the tabular information available, but these new examples make it clearer. There’s less of a reason to hire a consultant to decipher the guidelines for specific, unique campus conditions.

The first difference I noticed between this edition of the *Custodial* guidelines and the previous one, were changes to the staffing matrix. Cleanable areas per custodian have increased by 10 percent or more. In at least one case, the increase has been 50 percent. While not addressed in detail, the changes in the cleanable areas is the result of the increased experience of the contributors to the guide, and changes in equipment and techniques. I didn’t notice many changes in the staffing matrices for the other two guidelines.

New material on scientific methods to measure the effectiveness of custodial services is presented in a new chapter. While it is good to have the subjective evaluation materials provided in the appendix, discussion about objective tools to verify cleanliness helps a great deal when opinions vary, or when attempting to verify the effectiveness of new cleaning products.

The *Grounds* guideline provides significant new information about sustainability as well as green practices. Different approaches to reduce/reuse/recycle campus waste are presented. In addition, there is significant discussion about low- and zero-emission vehicles that can be used across the entire facilities organization, not just in grounds.

The *Maintenance* guideline changes are notable in the improved clarity of the analytical portions and in human resource management issues. While there are changes to the zero-based budget (ZBB) approach to determining staffing needs, the square-foot based approach is much clearer, with many more examples. These examples address a wide variety of facilities and configurations. They provide significant guidance to develop staffing needs down to the individual trade level for a single building. This new material should be helpful for

anyone needing to answer the question, "How many more people will be needed to maintain a new facility?"

The position descriptions provided follow a uniform, clear format that focus on duties and qualifications that should be easily transferable to any campus. In addition, there's a section on career ladders for trades employees. For those of us with an interest in employee development, the chapter on career ladders is very helpful. This section is applicable across all portions of the facilities organization, with minor adjustments to address custodial and grounds needs.

Overall, all three guidelines represent a significant improvement over previous editions, and reinforce APPA's leadership in providing resources to facility officers that are not available elsewhere. These guides can provide any facility officer with sufficient fact-based information to describe to a supervisor,

customer, or entire campus the 'what,' 'why,' and 'how much' of facility operations. The previous edition of the *Custodial* guidelines was recognized as an authoritative document by the USGBC (U.S. Green Building Council) because it is a reference for LEED-EB (Existing Building) certification. I assume the new edition will be recognized, as well. They all form an important addition to a facility officer's toolkit/bookshelf. These guides should not get dusty. Instead, I expect they will get dog-eared from lots of use. ☺

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