



First Impressions for Visitors to Your Building

Everyone will have his or her own first impressions when it comes to meeting someone or seeing something for the first time. This mental image of the person, place, or thing can be very accurate at times.

When an individual is seeing a building and the property it is located on for the first time, the first impression of this event creates a mental image of that place within seconds. Impression accuracy varies depending on the observer and familiarity. First impressions depend on a wide range of characteristics including age of facility, appearance, neighborhood and the time allowed to observe.

Research finds that the more time individuals are afforded to form the impression, the more confidence in impressions they report. Not only are people quick to form first impressions, they are often long lasting. With this in mind, it is important that the facility managers strive to give visitors a positive first impression experience when they visit any one of their buildings.

Think about the saying, “walk a mile in their shoes” and how buildings are managed, to invite and accommodate one into the buildings while taking into account the visitor’s first impression of the facility. Think about the following examples:

- Is the grass cut and bushes trimmed?
- Are the walkways, steps, and parking clear of snow?
- Are the windows clean?
- Is the building exterior and roof in good condition?
- Is the outside lighting sufficient to feel safe?
- Is there hand-cap access?



Now walking into the building here are six more potential first impressions to consider:

- Is the exterior door easy enough to open?
- Are the floors clean and polished or painted and rugs not worn?
- Is the signage sufficient for you to get to where you are going within the building?
- Is there sufficient lighting?
- Are the interior walls and ceiling in good condition?
- Are there painting, photographs, or other artwork on the walls to give you a warm, inviting feel to the space?

These are just six exterior and six interior first impressions one may have noticed upon arriving in a building within the Cleveland Catholic Diocese. The goal of the facility staff managing the building is to always have visitors arrive and leave the facility feeling good about their first impressions and that it was all very positive. It is always good if the positive experience raised one’s awareness and

that they then shared their experience with others on how the building visited was very nice, clean, inviting, and safe.

If he or she did not come away with these feelings, then it is important to raise this awareness/ feedback to the buildings staff to help improve the image of first impressions for individuals in the future.

Carry on this “first impression” philosophy by going behind those inaccessible doors that house the boilers, cooler, fans, electrical equipment, plumbing and fire protection equipment, and inventory storage. Here are some issues and concerns the building management strive to maintain although “out of sight-out of mind.”

Six first impressions a maintenance person should strive to achieve when local inspectors, contractors, and maintenance personnel walk towards one of these rooms that he or she is responsible to manage and/or oversee:

1. Is the room below grade where one would be concerned with potential for flood water to fill the room?
2. Is there access to this room to bring new equipment through the corridor, down or upstairs, and through the doorway into the equipment room?
3. If the room is on the roof is access easy to bring new equipment and supplied e.g., boxes of air filters on to the roof and through the penthouse doorway?
4. Have provisions be made for equipment on the roof to be serviceable with safety rails for employee protection?
5. How is equipment safely services when installed on a pitched roof?
6. Is there potential hazard for equipment room air intake louver, located at grade and adjacent to parked motor vehicles where exhaust fumes could be drawn in?

Once inside one of these secured rooms first

impressions may be:

- Is the room excessively warm and/or too hot to have employee work in this room for any extended period of time?
- Is there a second exit out of the room should there be an emergency?
- Is the floor clean with yellow and black striped tape/paint to warn the walker of potential tripping hazard or overhead bumping hazards?
- Does the room have sufficient lighting, as well as task lighting for the worker to safely complete his or her task?
- Is there adequate ventilation within the room?
- Is there personnel protection equipment (PPE) readily available for the worker to have access to?

First impressions are very important because they can become lasting impressions. While seeing a beautiful building with unique architectural features provides a first time visitor with great first impressions, it is equally important for those who work in these buildings and more conventional buildings to share their own unique ongoing impressions. After all, they are the occupants on a regular basis.

For more information:
facilities@dioceseofcleveland.org

