Furnishings and Equipment Inventory

Who knows how many desks, or cars, or computers, or gonkalator armatures we have? Someone had better know. Purchasing? Most purchasing agents will tell you, “I bought it, I don’t want anything more to do with it.” The accountants? They might, but if it isn’t numbers, they don’t like it. Plant Manager? “Like, I have time to keep track of adding machines? We have widgets to make.” Since it usually becomes a big database, it is often a good task for the facility manager and his organization. Although these items may not fit the IFMA description of an “environment” they are some type of facility or another. Or looked at a different way, if these things are not tracked they may fall between the cracks. And who is responsible for fixing the cracks? The facility manager! (OK, so it was a reach.)

Procurement and Expediting (a.k.a. Stores)

We talked about procurement and expediting as a possible Transportation function, but what if it isn’t? It may be a separate function of the FM. If this operation does not purchase all production materials, it may at least purchase and stock maintenance and repair parts. This operation is often referred to as “Stores” and may be an FM function or could be part of Plant Engineering/Management.

Key and Core Control

Depending on the age and number of additions to a plant, the Plant Engineer/Chief Engineer/Plant Manager/Maintenance Supervisor/whatever may be carrying enough keys to open the equivalent number of doors in a small suburb of Cleveland. And probably 2/3 of them are no longer functional. I once worked with a crusty old Chief Engineer named George Jones (no, not that one) on a job at Bowman Grey School of Medicine at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, NC (ask me about the night we blew up the main switchgear on a stormy night and ended up thawing a bunch of medical experiments – not a good night). Anyway, George carried on his right side a three-inch key ring, but it didn’t have any keys on it. Instead, it had three other four-inch diameter rings that were each full of keys. Granted, the medical school, which shared a campus with North Carolina Baptist Hospital, had about eight buildings but, holy buckets, that was a lot of keys. But, not to worry, George was counter-balanced by carrying forty-eleven pens, probes and thermometers in his left shirt pocket. I always wanted to ask him if he fell over when he was undressing, but that visual was too much to handle.

To get back on topic, who knows who has been issued what keys, and which locks use which keys? Well somebody had better, or you could have a real access and security problem. Since the
doors and locks are usually understood to be part of the facility, it is a natural function of the FM. In a big enough operation, there may be a couple of people dedicated to keys and cores, including a locksmith. And with more security locks going electronic, this pushes it farther into the FM arena.

[Instructor's sidebar: don’t ever throw away a key to a piece of John Deere or Caterpillar equipment, or to a Masterlock padlock, you’ll probably be able to use them again somewhere else. Ask me about that sometime.]

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