

Understanding Concepts

Large commercial laundries require direct experience over many years for a meaningful appreciation of the tasks involved for a successful operation. They combine complex computer controlled equipment, including the continuous batch washer and the conveyor systems, with large volume of material which is difficult to handle. In some cases, especially where Hospital work is involved, the material can also be potentially dangerous to the health of the people in the laundry. The correct handling of the work begins at the soiled unloading point. The work must be identified and sorted into the appropriate types for loading into the CBW. The counting or weighing process will usually be fully automatic and the systems used must be carefully designed and correctly arranged.

Once the material has been sorted and loaded into the bag system for delivery to the CBW the automatic systems will control the work in normal circumstances through the finishing processes. Discharge of washed and dried items, broken from the “cakes” that are discharged from the CBW's at the finishing systems, should be so arranged to minimise operator movement at the same time given adequate room for the selection of the work. Once the work has been finished, which will predominately be on flatwork ironing equipment, the folding and packing systems will take the work through to storage or return to the systems.

There are classes of work that will not be processed in the automatic systems described above and although important, they represent a small percentage of the total volume of work. Theatre packs and some other specific items may be separately processed in small loads that will be labour intensive. Our office has direct and recent experience with handling and sorting systems, with computer control systems, and the integration of the component parts into a functional total system.

There are some other vital components of the overall laundry systems which must be correctly designed and integrated for the laundry to operate efficiently and cost effectively. The flatwork ironers require a secure system of heating for correct operation.

The chemical and detergent systems are also of great importance. Taken together with proper water filtration and treatment, the chemical and detergent systems have a capacity to reduce the recurrent costs of the laundry operation to a significant degree. The delivery of the detergents and chemicals to the CBW's, and to a lesser extent to the washer extractors, in the correct volumes and at the correct point in the cycle is also vital. Whilst flushing manifold systems can assist with this process, the correct design of the systems and the interconnecting pipe systems, is important. Apart from the design aspects we have completed extensive studies for laundry clients into the overall operation of the laundry. We have models in place for cost of ownership studies and for internal rate of return studies for the laundry. Our experience in these matters, combined with our laundry systems experience ensures a result that combines a highly efficient laundry with a very cost effective business system.