

CERTIFIED FACILITY MANAGER - CFM

CFM EXAM FLASH CARDS

220+ key terminology & study flash cards!

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Facility Management (FM)

An organizational function that integrates people, place, and process within the built environment to improve quality of life and support core-business productivity.

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Demand Organization

The entity that has a need for facility services and the authority to incur costs so those requirements can be met.

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Core Business

The primary entity or activity from which facility-service needs are derived and that FM is intended to support.

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Strategic Facility Plan (SFP)

A long-range plan that aligns facility resources, locations, and services with the demand organization's strategic objectives.

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Facility Management Strategy

The approach an FM organization uses to deliver services and assets so they support organizational goals over time.

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Facility Management Policy

A high-level statement of FM principles and commitments that guides decisions, priorities, and service delivery.

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Stakeholder

A person or organization that can affect, be affected by, or believe itself affected by an FM decision or activity.

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Stakeholder Impact Assessment

A method for evaluating how stakeholders' influence, interests, or other attributes affect an organization, facility, or project.

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Top Management

The person or group that directs and controls an organization at the highest level and can allocate authority and resources.

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Change Management

A structured approach to preparing, supporting, and helping people and processes transition when facilities, services, or workplace practices change.

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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

An organization's voluntary commitment to ethical, social, and environmental accountability beyond minimum legal requirements.

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Vision Statement

A concise description of the desired long-term future state that guides strategic facility and organizational planning.

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Mission Statement

A statement of an organization's purpose and primary activities that frames how FM supports the business.

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SWOT Analysis

A planning tool that evaluates Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats to inform facility strategy.

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Balanced Scorecard

A performance framework that tracks strategic objectives across financial, customer, internal-process, and learning perspectives.

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RACI Matrix

A responsibility assignment chart that clarifies who is Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed for each task.

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Conflict Management

Practices used to identify, address, and resolve disagreements among stakeholders, teams, or service providers constructively.

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Organizational Culture

Shared values, norms, and behaviors that influence how people work and how facility changes are accepted.

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Succession Planning

Identifying and developing people to fill critical FM and leadership roles so capability continues when staff leave.

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PESTLE Analysis

A scan of Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental factors that can affect facility strategy.

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Asset

An item, thing, or entity that has potential or actual value to an organization.

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Asset Management

Coordinated activity of an organization to realize value from its assets over their life cycles.

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Built Environment

The collection of buildings, landscaped areas, infrastructure, and other construction works within an area.

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Facility

A collection of assets constructed, installed, or established to serve an entity's needs.

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Infrastructure

The system of facilities, equipment, and services needed for an organization to operate.

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Service Life

The period after installation during which a building or its parts meet or exceed required performance.

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Maintenance

Actions that keep or restore an asset so it can perform its required function during its service life.

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Preventive Maintenance (PM)

Scheduled maintenance performed at planned intervals of time or use to reduce the likelihood of failure.

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Predictive Maintenance (PdM)

Maintenance triggered by condition monitoring so work is done when indicators show impending failure or degradation.

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Corrective Maintenance

Repair or restoration performed after a fault or failure has already occurred.

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Condition-Based Maintenance (CBM)

A strategy that uses inspections or sensor data on actual asset condition to decide when to intervene.

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Reliability-Centered Maintenance (RCM)

A systematic process that uses asset functions, failure modes, and consequences to select the most effective maintenance strategy.

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Failure Mode and Effects Analysis (FMEA)

A structured method to identify how an asset can fail, what causes and effects result, and how to prioritize risk reduction.

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Mean Time Between Failures (MTBF)

The average operating time between successive failures of a repairable asset, used as a reliability indicator.

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Mean Time To Repair (MTTR)

The average time required to restore an asset to service after a failure, including diagnosis and repair.

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Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS)

Software that tracks assets, work orders, schedules, parts, labor, and maintenance history for operations teams.

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Work Order

A documented authorization and record for maintenance or service work, including scope, location, labor, and materials.

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Deferred Maintenance

Needed maintenance or repairs that are postponed, often creating backlog and higher future cost or risk.

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Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FF&E)

Movable furnishings and equipment used to occupy and operate a facility, managed separately from building systems.

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Building Automation System (BAS)

A control system that monitors and manages HVAC, lighting, and related building systems for efficiency and comfort.

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HVAC

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning systems that control temperature, humidity, and air movement in buildings.

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Commissioning (Cx)

A quality process that verifies building systems are designed, installed, tested, and operated to meet owner requirements.

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Recommissioning / Retro-commissioning

Commissioning of an existing building to improve performance of systems already in place.

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Lockout/Tagout (LOTO)

Procedures that isolate hazardous energy and apply locks or tags so equipment cannot be re-energized during servicing.

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Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Equipment worn to minimize exposure to workplace hazards when engineering and administrative controls are not enough.

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Hierarchy of Controls

A ranked approach to hazard control: elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls, then PPE.

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Janitorial / Custodial Services

Routine cleaning and housekeeping services that maintain hygiene, appearance, and occupant comfort in facilities.

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Risk

The effect of uncertainty on objectives, often expressed as a combination of likelihood and consequence.

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Risk Management

Coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to risk identification, assessment, and treatment.

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Risk Assessment

The overall process of identifying risks, analyzing them, and evaluating whether they are acceptable or need treatment.

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Risk Register

A living document that lists identified risks, owners, likelihood, impact, and planned responses.

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Business Continuity

The capability of an organization to continue delivery of products or services at acceptable levels after a disruption.

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Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

Documented procedures that guide an organization in responding to and recovering from disruptive incidents.

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Disaster Recovery (DR)

Plans and capabilities focused on restoring IT systems, data, and technology operations after an outage or disaster.

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Facility Resilience

The ability of a facility and its systems to withstand, adapt to, and recover from shocks or stresses.

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Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

A written plan that organizes employer and worker actions during workplace emergencies, including evacuation and reporting.

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Emergency Preparedness

Activities that prepare people, plans, and resources so an organization can respond effectively to emergencies.

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Incident Command System (ICS)

A standardized on-scene management structure used to coordinate emergency response roles and communications.

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Tabletop Exercise

A discussion-based drill in which teams walk through an emergency scenario to test plans without full deployment.

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Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA)

A systematic ranking of hazards by probability and severity to prioritize mitigation and preparedness efforts.

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Mitigation

Actions taken before an incident to reduce the likelihood or severity of adverse impacts on people, property, or operations.

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Recovery

Activities that restore facilities, services, and operations to an acceptable level after an emergency or disruption.

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Crisis Communication

Timely, accurate messaging to occupants, staff, and external audiences during and after an emergency or critical event.

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Fire Protection System

Active and passive systems (alarms, sprinklers, compartments) designed to detect, suppress, or contain fire.

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Life Safety

Design and operational measures that protect occupants from fire and other hazards so they can evacuate or shelter safely.

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Security Risk Assessment

Evaluation of threats, vulnerabilities, and consequences to people, property, and information so controls can be prioritized.

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Access Control

Physical and electronic measures that restrict entry to facilities, zones, or systems to authorized persons only.

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Operational Budget

A plan for recurring revenues and expenses needed to run facility operations over a fiscal period.

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Capital Budget

A plan for major investments in assets, renovations, or equipment that typically provide multi-year benefit.

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Capital Expenditure (CapEx)

Spending to acquire, upgrade, or extend the life of long-term assets rather than day-to-day operating costs.

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Operating Expenditure (OpEx)

Day-to-day costs of running facilities, such as utilities, maintenance, contracts, and consumables.

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Life-Cycle Cost / Whole-Life Cost

The total cost of an asset over its life, including acquisition, operation, maintenance, renewal, and end-of-life costs.

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Acquisition Cost

The cost of obtaining an asset, including purchase price and related costs to bring it into use.

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Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA)

A comparison of expected costs and benefits of an option to support investment or policy decisions.

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Return on Investment (ROI)

A measure of financial gain relative to cost, often expressed as a percentage of the investment.

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Net Present Value (NPV)

The present value of future cash inflows minus outflows, discounted to today to compare investment options.

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Internal Rate of Return (IRR)

The discount rate at which an investment's net present value equals zero, used to rank projects.

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Payback Period

The time required for cumulative savings or cash inflows to recover the initial investment cost.

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Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)

All direct and indirect costs of owning and operating an asset across its useful life.

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Business Case

A documented justification for a proposed investment, including need, options, costs, benefits, risks, and recommendation.

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Procurement

The process of acquiring goods and services, from needs definition through sourcing, contracting, and receipt.

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Procurement Plan

A documented approach describing how goods and services will be sourced, evaluated, and purchased.

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Request for Proposal (RFP)

A solicitation inviting vendors to propose solutions, pricing, and approaches for a defined scope of work.

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Request for Quotation (RFQ)

A solicitation seeking price quotes for well-defined goods or services, typically with less solution design.

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Service Level Agreement (SLA)

An agreed document between the demand organization and a provider covering performance, measurement, and service conditions.

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Outsourcing

Contracting an external provider to deliver facility services previously performed in-house.

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Insourcing / Self-Delivery

Delivering facility services using the demand organization's own staff rather than an external provider.

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Co-sourcing

A mixed model in which internal staff and external providers share delivery of facility services.

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Benchmarking

Comparing costs, performance, or practices against peers or standards to identify improvement opportunities.

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Chargeback

Allocating facility costs to internal business units based on usage, occupancy, or agreed formulas.

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Depreciation

The systematic allocation of an asset's cost over its useful life for accounting and tax purposes.

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Sustainable Development

Development that meets present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

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Sustainability in FM

Managing facilities to balance environmental, social, and economic outcomes while supporting organizational goals.

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Greenhouse Gas (GHG)

Atmospheric gases that trap heat; commonly tracked for buildings include CO₂ and related emissions.

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Scope 1 Emissions

Direct GHG emissions from sources owned or controlled by the organization, such as on-site fuel combustion.

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Scope 2 Emissions

Indirect GHG emissions from purchased electricity, steam, heat, or cooling consumed by the organization.

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Scope 3 Emissions

Other indirect value-chain GHG emissions, such as purchased goods, travel, waste, and leased assets.

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Energy Management

Systematic planning and control of energy purchase, use, and conservation to cut cost and environmental impact.

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Energy Star

A U.S. EPA voluntary program that rates and labels buildings and products for superior energy performance.

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LEED

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, a U.S. Green Building Council rating system for sustainable buildings.

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Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ)

The quality of the indoor environment as experienced by occupants, including air, thermal, lighting, and acoustic conditions.

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Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

The air quality within and around buildings related to occupant health and comfort; addressed by ventilation and contaminant control.

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Thermal Comfort

The condition of mind that expresses satisfaction with the thermal environment, influenced by temperature, humidity, air speed, and clothing.

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Water Stewardship

Managing water use, quality, and conservation across facility operations and landscaping to reduce waste and risk.

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Graywater

Relatively clean wastewater from sinks, showers, or laundry that may be reused for non-potable purposes where allowed.

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Waste Hierarchy

A preferred order of waste actions: prevention, reuse, recycling, recovery, then disposal.

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Circular Economy

An economic model that keeps materials in use longer through reuse, repair, remanufacture, and recycling.

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Life Cycle Assessment (LCA)

A method for evaluating environmental impacts of a product, service, or facility across its life stages.

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Wellbeing / Wellness

The state of physical, mental, and social health of occupants as influenced by workplace design and facility services.

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Carbon Footprint

The total GHG emissions caused directly and indirectly by an organization, facility, product, or activity.

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Renewable Energy

Energy from sources that replenish naturally on a human timescale, such as solar, wind, and geothermal.

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Net-Zero Energy Building

A building that produces as much energy from renewable sources as it consumes over a year, on a net basis.

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Green Cleaning

Cleaning practices and products chosen to reduce environmental and health impacts while maintaining hygiene standards.

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Site Management

Sustainable care of grounds, landscaping, stormwater, and outdoor areas associated with a facility.

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Communication Plan

A documented description of stakeholder communication needs, channels, messages, timing, and responsibilities.

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Stakeholder Communication

Intentional exchange of information with people and groups affected by facility decisions, services, or projects.

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Active Listening

Fully concentrating on a speaker, understanding their message, and responding thoughtfully rather than waiting to reply.

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Feedback Loop

A process of collecting responses to messages or services and using them to adjust future communication or performance.

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Help Desk / Service Desk

A single point of contact where occupants submit facility requests, incidents, and questions for tracking and resolution.

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Service Request

A user-initiated ask for a facility service or information that is logged, prioritized, and fulfilled under defined procedures.

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Escalation Path

A predefined sequence for raising unresolved issues to higher authority or specialized teams when SLAs or severity require it.

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Town Hall Meeting

An open forum where leaders share updates and occupants can ask questions about facility or organizational matters.

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Change Notification

Advance communication to affected parties about planned facility work, outages, moves, or policy changes.

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Crisis Communication Plan

Pre-approved messaging roles, channels, and templates for informing stakeholders during emergencies or high-impact events.

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Cross-Cultural Communication

Adapting messages and interaction styles to respect cultural differences among a diverse workforce or global sites.

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Visual Communication

Use of signs, maps, dashboards, and graphics to convey facility information quickly and clearly.

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Brand Alignment

Ensuring facility messaging and visitor experience reflect the organization's identity, values, and standards.

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Occupant Survey

A structured questionnaire used to gather feedback on workplace satisfaction, services, and facility performance.

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Transparency

Open, honest sharing of relevant facility information so stakeholders can understand decisions and performance.

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Two-Way Communication

An exchange model in which information flows both from FM to stakeholders and back, enabling dialogue and response.

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Audience Analysis

Identifying who needs information, what they need to know, and which channels will reach them effectively.

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Knowledge Management

Capturing, organizing, and sharing facility procedures, lessons learned, and documentation so knowledge is retained.

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Quality Management

Coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regard to quality of products and services.

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Quality Improvement

Ongoing efforts to enhance processes, services, and outcomes based on measurement, feedback, and corrective action.

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Continuous Improvement

An incremental approach to regularly refining processes and performance rather than relying only on one-time fixes.

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Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

A measurable value that indicates how effectively an activity or service is achieving a defined objective.

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Service Level

A complete description of requirements for a product, process, or system and the characteristics used to judge delivery.

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Benchmark

A reference point—internal, industry, or best-practice—against which facility performance is compared.

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Customer Satisfaction

The degree to which facility services meet or exceed occupant and stakeholder expectations.

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Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE)

A systematic assessment of building performance and user experience after occupancy to inform improvements.

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Root Cause Analysis (RCA)

A structured investigation to find the underlying cause of a problem so corrective actions address the source, not only symptoms.

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Corrective Action

Action taken to eliminate the cause of a detected nonconformity and prevent recurrence.

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Preventive Action

Action taken to eliminate the cause of a potential nonconformity or other undesirable potential situation.

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Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA)

An iterative four-step cycle for implementing and refining process improvements.

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Six Sigma

A data-driven methodology that aims to reduce process variation and defects to improve quality and efficiency.

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Lean

A management approach focused on maximizing value by eliminating waste in processes and workflows.

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Audit

A systematic, independent examination to determine whether activities and results conform to planned arrangements.

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Nonconformity

Non-fulfillment of a requirement in a product, service, process, or management system.

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Service Quality Gap

The difference between expected and perceived service performance as experienced by customers.

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Performance Measurement

The process of collecting, analyzing, and reporting data that show how well objectives are being met.

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Balanced Metrics

A set of indicators covering efficiency, effectiveness, cost, and customer outcomes so decisions are not driven by one measure alone.

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ISO 41001

The international management-system standard specifying requirements for a facility management system.

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Real Estate

Immovable property including structures, grounds, and undeveloped land.

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Master Planning

Long-range planning of land use, buildings, and infrastructure to guide future real-estate and facility development.

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Space Programming

Defining functional requirements, adjacencies, and area needs before design so workplaces support intended activities.

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Usable Area

Floor area a tenant occupies exclusively, before any share of common building areas is added.

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Rentable Area

Tenant usable area plus a proportional share of common and service areas used for leasing and cost allocation.

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Load Factor / Add-on Factor

The multiplier or percentage that converts usable area to rentable area by allocating common spaces.

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Gross Building Area

The total floor area of a building measured to the exterior face of enclosing walls, including all floors.

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Space Utilization

How effectively space is used, often expressed as occupancy rate, density, or area per person.

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Hoteling / Hot-desking

Workplace strategies in which workers use unassigned seats booked as needed rather than dedicated desks.

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Lease

A contract granting use of real property for a term in exchange for rent and other obligations.

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Gross Lease

A lease in which the landlord typically pays most operating expenses, taxes, and insurance within the rent.

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Net Lease (Single/Double/Triple Net)

A lease in which the tenant pays some or all of taxes, insurance, and maintenance in addition to base rent.

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Triple Net (NNN) Lease

A lease where the tenant pays property taxes, insurance, and maintenance/operating costs in addition to base rent.

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Lease Abstract

A concise summary of key lease terms such as rent, term, options, expenses, and obligations.

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Sale-Leaseback

A transaction in which an owner sells property and immediately leases it back to retain occupancy while freeing capital.

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Due Diligence

Investigation of a property's legal, physical, environmental, and financial condition before acquisition or lease.

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Highest and Best Use

The reasonably probable use of a property that is legally permissible, physically possible, financially feasible, and maximally productive.

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Portfolio Management

Strategic management of a collection of owned or leased properties to optimize cost, risk, and business support.

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Disposition / Disposal

The process of selling, terminating, or otherwise exiting a real-estate interest no longer needed by the organization.

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Acquisition

The process of obtaining real estate through purchase, lease, or other transfer to meet organizational needs.

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Zoning

Local land-use regulations that control allowed building uses, density, height, and site development.

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Facility Condition Assessment (FCA)

A systematic evaluation of building systems' condition, remaining life, and capital needs to support planning.

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Move Management

Planning and coordinating physical relocation of people, FF&E, and operations with minimal business disruption.

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Computer-Aided Facility Management (CAFM)

Software that supports space, asset, and facility planning with drawings, databases, and reporting.

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Integrated Workplace Management System (IWMS)

An integrated platform combining space, maintenance, real estate, projects, and related FM functions.

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Building Information Modeling (BIM)

A digital representation of physical and functional characteristics of a facility used across design, build, and operate phases.

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Smart Building

A building that uses connected sensors, controls, and analytics to optimize performance, comfort, and operations.

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Internet of Things (IoT)

Networks of connected devices and sensors that collect and exchange facility data for monitoring and control.

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Digital Twin

A virtual model of a physical asset or building kept current with data so scenarios and performance can be analyzed.

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Data Strategy

A plan for how facility data will be collected, governed, shared, protected, and used to support decisions.

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Data Governance

Policies and roles that ensure facility data quality, ownership, access rights, and lifecycle management.

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Cybersecurity

Protecting systems, networks, and data from unauthorized access, disruption, or misuse.

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Information Security

Preservation of confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information assets.

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Access Control (IT)

Technical measures that authenticate users and authorize what systems or data they may use.

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Backup and Recovery

Processes for copying data and restoring systems so information remains available after failure or attack.

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OT / IT Convergence

The increasing interconnection of operational technology (building controls) with information technology networks.

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Building Management System (BMS)

A centralized system for monitoring and controlling building mechanical and electrical systems; often synonymously used with BAS.

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Geographic Information System (GIS)

Software that captures, analyzes, and displays geographic data for campuses, utilities, and site assets.

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Space Management System

Technology used to inventory rooms, track occupancy, and support allocation and utilization analysis.

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Work Management System

Technology that captures requests, schedules work, assigns labor, and tracks completion of facility tasks.

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Sensor Data / Telemetry

Measurements transmitted from field devices (temperature, energy, vibration, occupancy) for monitoring and analytics.

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Cloud Computing

On-demand delivery of computing resources over the internet, commonly used to host FM applications and data.

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API (Application Programming Interface)

A defined interface that lets software systems exchange data, enabling CAFM, BAS, and ERP integration.

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Data Privacy

Rules and practices that protect personal information collected about occupants, visitors, or employees.

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Project

A temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result with defined start and end.

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Project Charter

A document that formally authorizes a project and gives the project manager authority to apply resources.

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Scope Statement

A description of project deliverables, boundaries, and acceptance criteria that defines what is and is not included.

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Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

A hierarchical decomposition of total project scope into manageable work packages.

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Critical Path

The sequence of activities that determines the shortest possible project duration; delay on this path delays the project.

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Gantt Chart

A bar chart that shows project activities against a calendar timeline for scheduling and progress tracking.

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Milestone

A significant point or event in a project schedule used to track progress without consuming duration by itself.

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Risk Register (Project)

A project document listing identified risks, owners, responses, and status throughout the project life cycle.

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Change Order

A formal written modification to a construction or service contract that alters scope, cost, and/or schedule.

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Request for Information (RFI)

A formal question from contractor to designer/owner seeking clarification of drawings, specs, or site conditions.

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Punch List

A list of incomplete or deficient work items that must be corrected before final acceptance or closeout.

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Substantial Completion

The stage when the work is sufficiently complete for the owner to occupy or use it for its intended purpose.

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Project Closeout

Final activities that complete the project: documentation handover, warranties, training, as-builts, and contract settlement.

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As-Built Drawings

Record drawings that show the facility as actually constructed, reflecting field changes from original design.

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Owner's Project Requirements (OPR)

A document stating the owner's goals, needs, and criteria that commissioning and design must satisfy.

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Basis of Design (BOD)

The designer's documentation of concepts, calculations, and decisions that meet the owner's project requirements.

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Earned Value Management (EVM)

A method that integrates scope, schedule, and cost to measure project performance and forecast outcomes.

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Stakeholder Engagement

Activities to identify stakeholders, understand their interests, and involve them appropriately throughout the project.

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Design-Bid-Build

A traditional delivery method in which design is completed before competitive bidding and separate construction contracting.

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Design-Build

A delivery method in which one entity is contractually responsible for both design and construction.

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Construction Manager at Risk (CMAR)

A delivery method where a construction manager provides preconstruction services and then constructs under a guaranteed maximum price.

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Value Engineering (VE)

A structured process to improve function and reduce life-cycle cost without sacrificing required performance.

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Contingency

Budget or schedule reserve set aside for identified or unforeseen risks within the project.

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Issue Log

A project document that tracks problems requiring resolution, including owner, status, and due dates.

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