

Chapter 2: Mall Operations



Any Shopping Centre is a building divided up into smaller compartments of differing sizes from where businesses trade to serve the surrounding population. That, of course, is as simple as it gets. Taking care of your Tenants within a structure that must provide a safe and comfortable environment conducive to ease of movement to all your customers is more, much more than I have said it in words here.

For this you need your **Operations or Facilities Manager**. I am not going to dwell on the job title as such. Suffice it to say that this person is the one specialist you will lean on the most. He (or she) is the proverbial giant on whose shoulders you will stand to deliver the Shopping Centre Operational efficiency you desire.

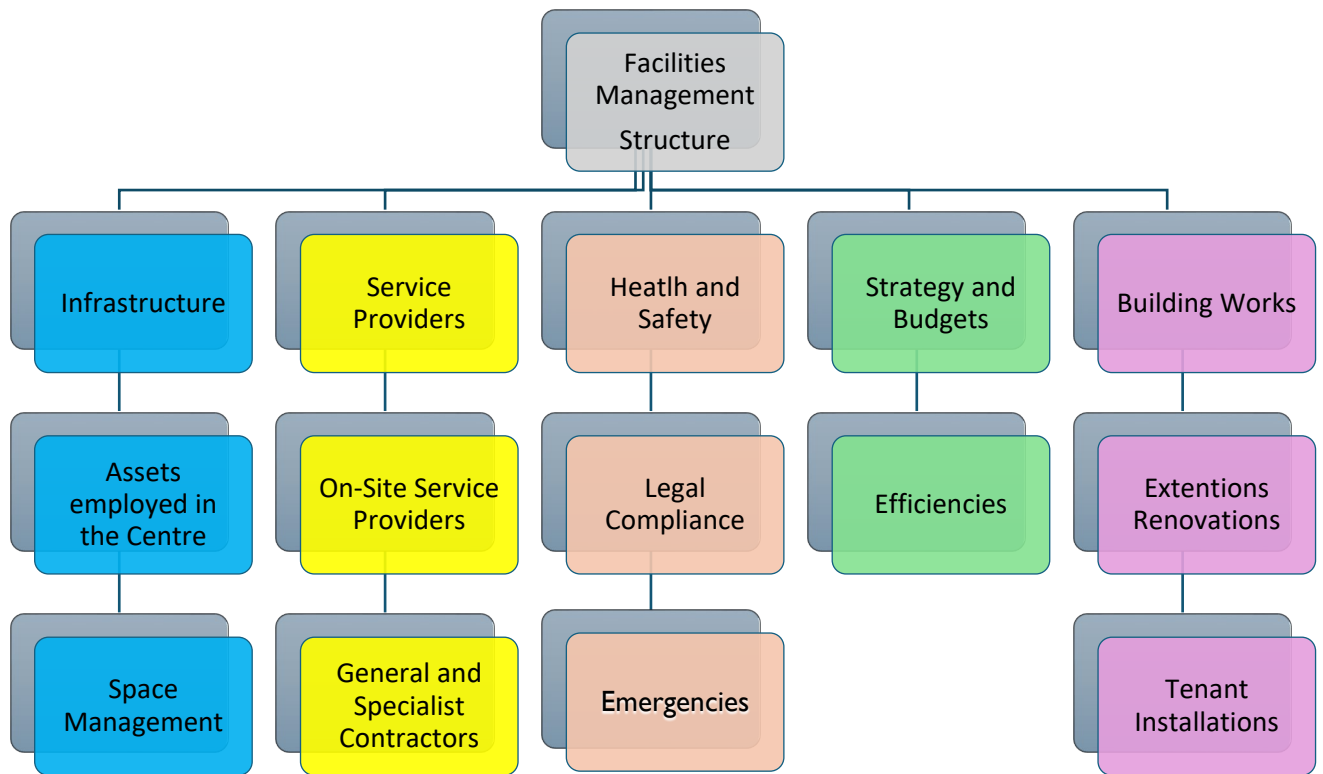


Facilities Management is defined as (by Microsoft Bing AI):

A profession that ensures the functionality, comfort, safety, sustainability and efficiency of the built environment – the buildings we live and work in and their surrounding infrastructure. It is an organizational function that integrates people, place, and process within the built environment with the purpose of improving the quality of life of people and the productivity of the core businesses.

By way of repeating myself, don't let this intimidate you. He/She, being an experienced specialist, must possess the skills that will lead you to managing the Centre best.

For the purposes of covering everything in an orderly manner let me introduce a diagram of functions covered by the Facilities Manager (FM from now on).



All the above is held together by communication skills. In other words, all these blocks (above) contain people who have certain responsibilities and tasks that contribute to the smooth operation of your Centre and it is through co-ordinating them that the FM create a stress-free environment.

Now, here is the first leg we will explore to see how it all fits in with your role (and responsibilities) as the Centre Manager:



Infrastructure

Infrastructure covers the Shopping Centre itself and all of its parts. This covers:

The as-built structure with roofs, walls, floors, glazing, electrical, water and gas reticulation. The Parking lot, Gardens, drainage, roads and delivery bays and all the fixed equipment within.

Let us unpack this, bit by bit, so that you can understand the mammoth task the **Facilities manager** attends to:

The actual (as built) plans of the building as it was approved and constructed should be held by your **Facilities Manager** as he (and many of the other specialists that he will call in from time to time) will need this as reference for many reasons.

These plans must contain drawings of the following:

1. The structure containing all the lettable units that was built and their actual sizes for the purposes of letting. This plan will also contain details of all equipment in use for general public access and movement, such as entrances, escalators, lifts, toilet facilities and fire escapes, for example.
2. A drawing of the electrical reticulation in the building and leading up to the building. This will contain things such as sub-stations feeding electrical current into the building, major electrical distribution boards splitting the electrical reticulation into all the premises in the building, distribution boards within each premises and reticulation from there into terminals within each premises.
3. Drawings of the plumbing in and around the building. This will contain drainage off the roofs, stormwater drainage around the building, off hard surface parking areas and above- as well as underground drainage built to feed water into the drainage systems of the city or town you Mall is in. Also, all the potable water supplies into the building and its reticulation into premises and public toilet facilities in the property. These plans will also contain detail of fat-traps, emergency water tanks, stop-cocks and the likes.

4. Site development plan that shows the entire piece of land on which the structure was built including future space available for development or extension to the property. These plans should also show road links onto and out of the Shopping Centre land and traffic flow links into the surrounding City traffic system.
5. Fire prevention and Suppression systems installed throughout the structure including the feed from the City mains into the property and access to Fire Emergency teams.
6. Gardens and parking lot around the building including irrigation systems (if installed) and detailed number parking bays in existence. Most countries/cities have specific laws (by-laws) requiring of Landlords to provide adequate parking around their Centre usually expressed as x number of parking lots per y square meters of trading space.
 For example, if you have a legal stipulation that the Centre should have 10 parking bays for every 100m² of shopping space: Then a 50,000 square meter Shopping Mall (of which 40,000m² is under actual trading), should have 40,000 divided by 100 times 10 parking bays available. In this case 4,000.
7. Building Management System (BMS) plan which will include the surveillance (camera) system installation, sensor reticulation to air conditioners (those belonging to the Landlord) and other items linked to a BMS (e.g. public address system).
8. Elevation plans showing the entire external façade of the property, with special reference to where Tenant advertising signage may be placed. Most (if not all) Cities have limitations as to how much signage may be displayed on the outside of any building and your architects should have allowed for that in the design of your Centre.
9. Roof plan. Centres have massive roofs which are often forgotten until something goes wrong. Such a plan should show pre-installed access ladders (often referred to as cat-ladders) or staircases leading to the roof. This includes details such as where one should and should not walk on the roof (for reasons of safety) as this area is often used as installation point for satellite dishes, antennas, air conditioners, solar panels or wind turbines for power generation.

There are more, for example, elevation plans of shopfront glazing installations, power generator installations, delivery yards with calculated turning circles, multilevel parking with load bearing restrictions. Yet the above should be a fair set of plans to have for your **Mall Operations**. Just take note that these plans (nowadays) should be available in hardcopy and softcopy formats.

Of course, it will be unreasonable to expect of you as Centre Manager to take responsibility for gathering and keeping these plans in an accessible area, but it will be required of you to check with your **Facilities Manager (FM)** as to whether he/she has. You will find a handy monthly meeting guide in chapter 6, because it will be in such meetings that you cover all necessary matters with your FM.

Just a note of caution, every change that is made to your building regarding the above, should be communicated to your Architects who should make those changes in order to keep the plans current and useful. More of this under “Services” a little later in this chapter.