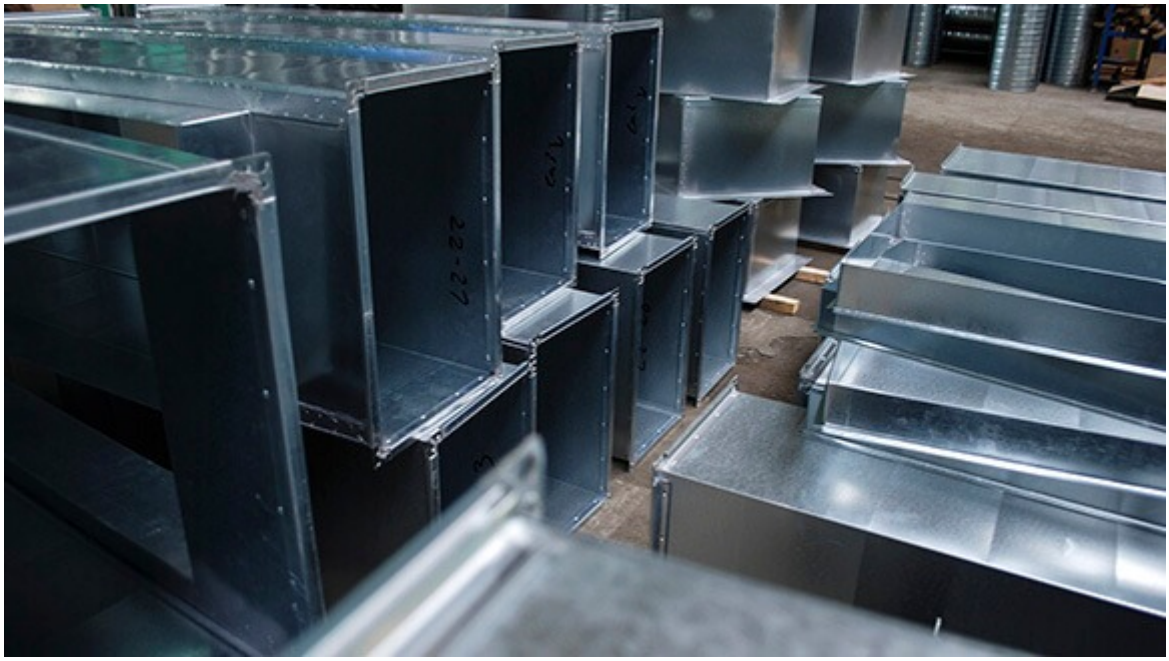
The Basics of Linen Chutes and Installation

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The construction of linen chutes for commercial use is a modern necessity for an operation such as a senior living facility, hotel, hospitality business, multifamily high-rise, or industrial facility. These convenient conduits can be installed inside internal building shafts or as external structures. While relatively simple in design they feature several elements that require construction expertise.

Placing linen chute access points on upper floors allow for the easy transport of dirty laundry down to a central location, often directly into the laundry facility. Dirty and odorous linen can avoid elevators and other common areas. This also prevents potential injury from moving heavy laundry down long hallways or stairs.





Linen chutes are classified as gravity chutes because they are non-mechanical, relying on basic physics to move the load to a lower floor. The main vertical chute is either round or rectangular, traversing several floors.

Building codes and compliance are the top considerations for new laundry chute construction. Proper installation demands mechanisms are in place for the safety of the building and its occupants.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has strict guidelines about linen chute equipment. The governing codes in NFPA 82 include section 11.2.2, which states “Waste and linen chutes and transport systems including chute intake and discharge doors, shall be inspected and maintained not less than annually in accordance with manufacturers’ instructions.”

Fire suppression devices are important features as fire can travel and spread quickly through open conduits such as chutes. The first safety device is a sliding closure at the bottom level. Normally in the open position, it is held in place by a pin assembly that discharges under high heat. This automatically closes the shaft to prevent air, smoke, and fire from spreading rapidly if the laundry room is the point of origin.

Laundry chutes are accessed at each upper floor through hinged metal doors. These doors are typically fire-rated at 90-120 minutes, depending on local codes. They may have other fire suppression features, such as sprinklers at each floor level.

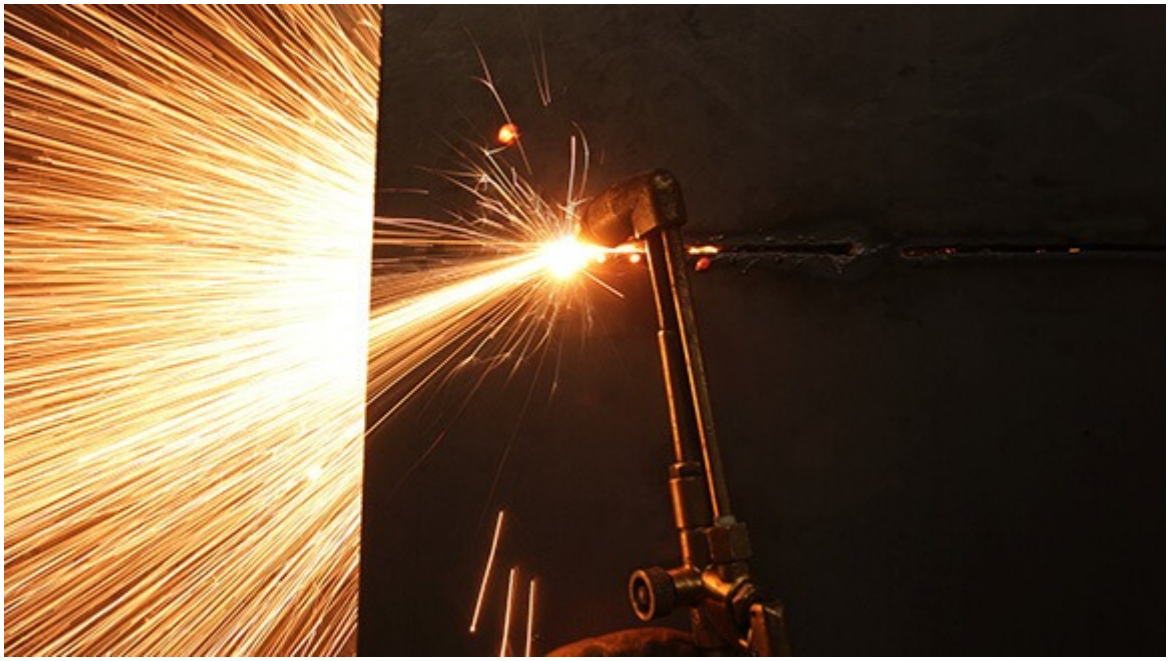
Chutes also have child-safe latches to prevent accidental opening. Doors are self-closing and openings are commonly limited to 18”. All door heights and hardware must be ADA compliant.

Clearly the maintenance and inspection of linen chute systems are important. If you have maintenance questions, repair needs, or concerns about compliance inspections, a good place to start is your facility services team. They may provide this service or can refer you to a reliable source.

Regular cleaning of linen chutes is also essential to maintain hygiene and a good working condition. Even if your system has an internal self-cleaning function, the exterior doors, hardware, and hopper require supplemental cleaning to stop contamination and prevent corrosion.

Linen chutes may appear similar to ventilation shafts but they are typically made of a thicker gauge sheet metal to withstand the weight of heavy linen, which may also be wet. There are other structural elements to account for the heavy load, such as deceleration tracks, braces, and reinforcement at impact points.

Constructed of stainless steel or aluminized steel, long shafts are welded together. The interiors are smooth and fitted to prevent damage to falling linen. Noise dampeners are also employed to reduce banging and ringing sounds. Rooftop exhaust ports are also essential.





While basic in appearance, there are many components that require professional expertise in the construction, custom fabrication, and installation of linen chutes. Incorporating them into existing facilities demands knowledge of commercial construction methods and practices.

Linen chute manufacturers may offer installation but can be unfamiliar with building construction challenges. Chute projects often fall below the minimum threshold required to interest a large construction company. Therefore, the ideal sweet spot for linen chute installation is a small construction company with the industry expertise and flexibility to meet your needs.

A company such as Omnia Pacific Construction is ideally suited to install your linen chute system in California. With decades of experience in the commercial space, they have worked with assisted living facilities, multifamily apartments, hotels, and industrial warehouses to bring convenient and cost-effective upgrades to their facilities. Call 800-974-4515 today to find out what they can do for your property.

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