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# FACILITY

PERSPECTIVES

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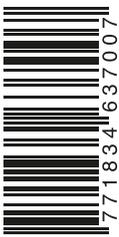
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# WHY FACILITIES AND BUILDING SERVICE CONTRACTORS MUST WORK TOGETHER

Content provided by the Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association

*By communicating effectively, facilities managers and cleaning service providers can meet their targets and protect the community in the face of COVID-19.*

**T**oday, cleaning and disinfecting professionals are working in a whole new environment. As commercial, institutional and publicly trafficked buildings reopen following pandemic-related closures, this new age of cleaning requirements is set to directly impact the roles, responsibilities and expectations of facilities managers and building service contractors (BSCs) alike.

In the next phase of the COVID-19 recovery, industry stakeholders will need to take the necessary steps and precautions to ensure that they consistently adhere to strict regulations and guidelines. But following protocols is only the first step. There will also be a serious requirement to address the legitimate concerns of employees, occupants, customers and contractors. With so much at stake, effective communication and collaboration between all parties becomes absolutely critical.

‘While cleaning and disinfecting services are essential for public health at this time, it is equally important to ease the level of potential confusion in the market,’ says Lauren Micallef, Oceanic Manager at ISSA.

‘Facilities managers are currently being exposed to a tremendous amount of information, news and questions around COVID-19. Not all of it is accurate or helpful. Cleaning and disinfecting professionals can help by adequately informing their customers about what is being done, and why.’

## ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF FACILITIES MANAGERS

Reopened buildings are going to be under intense public scrutiny, and for good reason.

Employees, occupants and customers will expect facilities to have taken additional cleaning measures that provide increased protection. Facilities managers should therefore be relying on the expertise and support of contract cleaning service providers – not only in terms of robust and visible cleaning activity, but in successfully communicating messages about the preventative actions being taken.

Each facility has its own specific needs, from heightened cleaning frequencies to added routine disinfecting or the need to address a potentially contaminated area. Every cleaning and disinfection job should be preceded by a documented risk assessment as part of the BSC’s due diligence.

To effectively achieve COVID-19 cleaning compliance, occupant protection and strategic communication targets, a facilities manager should:

- Perform a risk assessment for the location in coordination with the cleaning provider – as part of the risk assessment, ask the provider to explain what levels of cleaning they identify for normal, heightened-awareness and infected-surface decontamination scenarios, as well as their protocols and training for each level.
- Ask the cleaning provider about ongoing cleaning and disinfecting to minimise the increased risk of cross-contamination.
- While the pandemic is still a reality, ask what method and product the provider recommends using, and how and why they plan to use it in the facility.
- Ask if the recommended chemical or technique is registered with the national authority for the use being suggested.

- Always ask for a safety data sheet and copy of usage instructions. Before use in front of occupants or visitors, ask if the chemical or technique is recommended to be used in an occupied or unoccupied area.
- Always ask for claims of efficacy in writing and be cautious of verbal claims.
- Ask for proof that the people executing cleaning tactics in the facility are trained to correctly use the required technology and any personal protective equipment.

## ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS OF BUILDING SERVICE CONTRACTORS

Post COVID-19, adjustments must be made to ensure that responsible cleaning and disinfecting protocols are in place. As building service contractors prepare to help facilities reopen, customers and their stakeholders will be looking for guidance and reassurance on reducing the risk of contracting the virus in their buildings. Effective communication about cleaning and disinfecting activities will be an extremely important part of this process.

To help facilities managers achieve their COVID-19 cleaning targets, a building service contractor should:

- Revisit the original standards and scope of work for the facility, then ask customers to define their goals and desired outcomes for adjusted cleaning or disinfecting services.
- Make customers aware of why cleaning is important (deactivation of the virus, making surfaces safe) and what it takes for the disinfectant to work (concentration, dwell time and application).



- Communicate the implications these task requirements have on the scope of work.
- Make the customer aware of limitations (i.e., one-time application, re-contamination) and discuss the role the customer can play in limiting contamination (i.e., hand hygiene).
- Discuss the plan of action in detail with the customer.
- Provide a written COVID-19 cleaning and disinfection information sheet on specific services.
- Always be prepared to share the safety data sheet, usage instructions, efficacy data (proof to back all claims) and relevant government registrations for any chemicals or technology being recommended.
- Offer proof of appropriate training.
- Provide written guidance from a third-party cleaning industry authority, such as ISSA or the Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC), that references the proposed tasks.

“Now more than ever, facilities managers and building service contractors must form close, mutually beneficial partnerships to support each other through these unprecedented circumstances.”

- Negotiate any additional customer investment required to meet objectives.

**CONFIDENCE CLEANING**

A critical element of confidence cleaning during a pandemic is assessing the risk of the virus entering the facility and being transmitted to additional occupants.

To further demonstrate commitment to a customer’s success, a BSC can also educate the facilities manager about ISSA’s GBAC STAR facility accreditation. This program assesses that a facility has met 20 criteria

for the most relevant protocols any business should implement to best protect occupant health, whether during routine business operations, a pandemic or a heightened cold and flu season.

‘Now more than ever, facilities managers and building service contractors must form close, mutually beneficial partnerships to support each other through these unprecedented circumstances, while protecting their respective employees as well as the wider community,’ concludes Micallef. 📌