

10 Questions
To ask **before**
hiring a Commercial
Cleaning Company



You should look at the outsourcing the cleaning of your facilities to a commercial cleaning company as a mutually beneficial partnership. You can focus on the running your business rather than managing and scheduling cleaning staff, knowing the job is being done professionally.

The barrier to entry to start a commercial cleaning business is low, therefore there will be numerous cleaning companies that will promise you anything in order to secure your business.

The following ten questions can form the basis of the conversation you will have, when deciding on whom to trust with the keys and codes to your buildings, not to mention your customer's first impressions.

Question #1 **Tell me about your company; How long have you been in business, are you incorporated, how many employees do you have, and what other accounts similar to mine to you service?**

You want to make sure you are dealing with a legitimate company that has experience. If they are incorporated and have multiple employees, you know they are dedicated to what they do, and won't quit in the middle of the night. A sole proprietor might not value their time and work at a cut rate, but what happens when he/she gets sick, has a family emergency, or just plain needs a week off? Lastly, if the cleaner has plenty of experience cleaning a garage, how

well does that translate into cleaning a medical clinic? The company you interview should have plenty of references and testimonials for jobs just like yours.

Question #2 Are you insured? Do you have WSIB

A cleaning company has insurance so that you, the customer are protected, and WSIB so that their cleaning staffs are also insured and protected. As part of the interview process you should ask for a copy of their insurance policy, and for a WSIB Clearance certificate.

Question #3 How do you find, and screen your employees? Are your employees bonded?

When your prospective commercial cleaning company doesn't properly screen applicants, doesn't follow-up on previous work histories, and neglects to inquire about potential criminal records, they put your employees, your facility, and your reputation at risk. Most insurance companies can easily add coverage for employee dishonesty and crime (aka bonded). Ask to see the hiring package the janitorial services company uses when hiring new staff, as well as the crime endorsement section of their insurance policy.

Question #4 What kind of training do your employees receive?

Once your prospective cleaning company has hired a suitable cleaner, they need to thoroughly train that individual in each task they must perform, and the standards they are expected to maintain. Work flow and time management skills are very important so that a facility can be thoroughly cleaned in the time allotted without skipping or overlooking areas. Does your prospective cleaning company have an in-house certification program, or do they rely on third party training companies?

Importantly, Ontario has several mandatory forms of training that every employee (and sometimes employers) must go through. These programs generate certificates, and you should insist on copies of these certificates accompanying their presentation package. Some of these **mandatory** certificates include:

AODA ***The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (the AODA)*** requires every employer and employee in Ontario to take training on the AODA and the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

OHSA **Worker Health and Safety Awareness in 4 Steps** focuses on the health and safety rights and responsibilities of workers, supervisors and employers

WHMIS **Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)** is a Canada-wide system to give employers and workers information about hazardous materials used in the workplace.

Other important programs that may or may not apply to your requirements are Working from Heights, Ladder Safety, Manual Material Handling (lifting, pushing, pulling), and many more. Ask how your prospective applicant manages these situations.

Question #5 How do you manage your cleaning teams?

Managing a team of cleaners starts with ensuring all staff members have gone through proper training, and are certified to do the job at hand. Having staff members wear uniforms builds a more cohesive team, and ensures that everyone knows why they are on the job site. They need to have the proper tools, functioning equipment, and chemicals at hand, as well as a scope of work task list in order to complete the job correctly.

The cleaning staff also needs to feel engaged with the customer, and having a feedback system where they can be coached is very important. Lastly, a system has to be in place to accurately record the time spent on the job so that

the employee is fairly compensated for her/his work. Periodic reviews with both the cleaning team, and the customer are vital to manage expectations and further coach the employees into exceeding them.

Question #6 What quality control checks do you perform to ensure expectations are met?

On a routine basis, all customer locations should be spot checked in the morning with a comprehensive checklist to ensure no corners are being cut. This inspection report should be reviewed with both the client and the cleaner performing the work. This is to manage client expectations, and if any issues are noticed, they are caught early and can be resolved by coaching the cleaner. An above average inspection is also used as the basis of congratulating and team building.

Question #7 Will the same cleaner or cleaners continually maintain my facility?

Neither the customer nor the cleaning company want a steady stream of new faces in and out of your facility. When a cleaner is familiar with a location, the basics of cleaning can be accomplished faster, leaving more time for the detail work. The best cleaning companies hire and keep the best people.

Question #8 Does the cleaning company perform their own work, or do they subcontract out?

When a cleaning company subcontracts out work, all of the above questions become unanswered. Does the subcontract have licences and insurance? You are now paying for two layers of management, and have less control or influence over the quality of the work you are receiving.

Question #9 What services beyond cleaning does the prospective cleaning company offer?

There are many aspects to managing a facility; high window cleaning, parking lot sweeping (and sand removal), snow removal, removing and changing light bulbs & ballasts, stripping & waxing floors, carpet care, cleaning of gutters, etc. You can save time and money if the company you hire can take on those tasks for you

Question #10 Does your cleaning company provide their own equipment, chemicals, & other supplies?

Toilet paper, paper towels, hand soap & sanitizer, window cleaner, stainless steel cleaners, dusters, floor chemicals, vacuums, garbage bags, the list goes on. Hiring a cleaning company that provides those items as part of the contract will save you time and labour. You won't need to remember to place orders with vendors, cut separate checks, and hope the cleaning staff are familiar with, and happy with the tools and products.

BINX Professional Cleaning Has been in business since 2013, cleaning many facilities in the North Bay area. Contact us at (705) 845-0998 today to have a representative provide you a detailed, custom cleaning proposal.

