

Clean & Safe?

When it comes to Health & Safety with window cleaning what should a Facilities manager look for?

“You should never judge window cleaning purely on price” states David Woods Managing Director of All Clean Services “there are many additional factors to be considered when choosing a window cleaning company” some of the key points to look for include: do they employ a dedicated health & safety officer? Do they really carry out site-specific risk assessments? Is window cleaning really understood throughout the company? Or is it just a bolt on service to be sub contracted out? Have they got a successful track record serving similar clients, etc.?

Take a look in more detail at why these factors are so important:

Does the prospective window-cleaning contractor employ a dedicated and suitably qualified health and safety officer?

The benefit is that you can be sure the risk assessments and method statements, which are carried out, are site specific and comply with all relevant legislation including the new working at height directive that came into force last year. This is important as if there was an incident you as the client would be as liable as the contractor is, you need to ensure that your contractor has put everything in place to ensure this does not happen. Too often risk assessments and method statements consist of nothing more than some piece of nonsense downloaded from the internet and normally the operatives carrying out the task have never been trained in how to read them and in most cases they never see the risk assessments anyway. The window cleaners should have had formal training in how to carry out and understand risk assessments and must always see and understand the risk assessments carried out for them.

Does the prospective window-cleaning contractor only employ experienced full time employees?

This is very important as unfortunately many companies within the window cleaning industry use casual labour on a self employed basis which means that the client never knows who will be turning up at their premises to clean their windows or indeed what training that person has had (if any at all!) as an FM manager you should always ask to see staff records as proof that the window cleaners are full time



employees and have been trained and are competent on any access equipment that will be used at your premises.

Have they got a successful track record with similar size contracts?

This will ensure that they have the necessary experience to carry out a high quality job in total safety it's amazing how many inexperienced small companies use flashy web sites to make people think that they are larger and more experienced than they actually are. This presents a massive danger that the company may overstretch themselves and by doing so put their own staff, your staff and members of the public in danger.

Do they provide adequate training for their employees?

The operatives should have attended formal training courses and be regularly trained in use of access equipment. A competent window-cleaning contractor will hold training records for all of their employees.

Have they got adequate insurance?

Bona fide high-level window cleaning insurance is very expensive but also very necessary. Many window-cleaning companies have inadequate insurance, which either has height restrictions or the insurance does not cover them for tasks such as abseiling or cradle

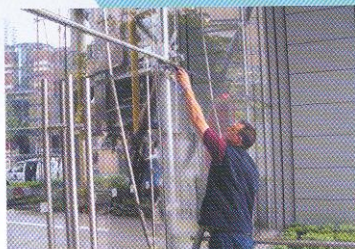


work. Their insurance certificate must clearly state what is covered and must say No height restrictions shall apply and that abseiling, cradle work, cherry picker work, etc is covered.

What quality standards do they adhere to?

As a minimum the window-cleaning contractor should be accredited to ISO 9001 to demonstrate a commitment to quality and to ensure that they correctly monitor their procedures. The prospective contractor should also be accredited to ISO 14001 to show that they take their environmental responsibilities seriously. Above this a serious window-cleaning contractor will also have Health & Safety accreditations such as National Britannia SafeContractor and the highly respected SIAC (Safety in access contractors) accreditation.

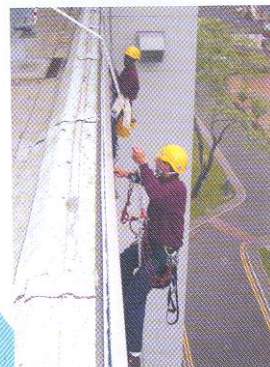
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