



# TODAY'S TECHNIQUES

**When It Comes  
To  
Cleaning  
Buildings...**

**The Closer To  
Perfection  
The Greater  
The Cost**

**This issue tells  
"How To Get  
The  
Right Balance  
Between  
Cleanliness And  
Cost"**

*Every building is a cost center to be closely monitored for possible savings. The number one building cost is energy, which receives most of the cost-cutting attention. Often overlooked is cleaning, which is building cost number two.*

*Cleaning is a labor-intensive operation, so the closer to perfection the greater the cost. The key is to get the right balance between cleanliness and cost.*

*This issue of Today's Techniques shows how to achieve that balance. It gives three steps to get the quality of cleaning you want, plus important tips to aid in cost-control.*

*Summarized from extensive industry research, Today's Techniques brings you a brief, executive overview on how to get the most from your cleaning budget.*



**STEP #1. DECIDE** what level of cleaning your building needs.

Levels of cleanliness are a highly subjective matter. Everyone has a different definition of clean. The first step is to arrive at a clear understanding of your buildings' cleaning needs. Does it need the same level of cleaning throughout? If so, what level will satisfy everyone? Can you segment the building into different cleaning levels? Are there areas where minimum cleaning is acceptable? When you decide what your buildings' needs are...

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**STEP #2. WRITE it as a Standard.**

Standards define clean. They are the end result of what you want the cleaning task to accomplish. They take the subjectiveness out of cleaning by stating the objective of the cleaning operation.

Many companies try to reach the level of cleaning they want by using specifications to detail cleaning tasks. The problem is, the cleaning crew does not really know how clean you want the area to be.

A common spec will usually read: Dust all desks, file cabinets and horizontal surfaces five times per week. However, the cleaning crew can dust - leave behind finger prints, stains and marks - and still be within specifications.

A better way is to change the spec to a standard by stating the objective of the operation. For example: All desks, cabinets and exposed horizontal surfaces are to be left free of dust, dirt, stains and marks. Authorized cleaning five times per week, or as needed.

Now the crew knows exactly what you want. They can now use judgement to perform the operation that will give the desired end result, which may require more or less, than a spec direct dusting.

When specifications, alone, are used, cleaning operations and frequencies are built in and must be adhered to and charged for. Since all cleaning needs are never spotted when the original specs are drawn up, specifications tend to multiply and become more costly.

Standards on the other hand, can be used to cut costs, because standards allow judgement. When a cleaning operation is not necessary to maintain the standard, it can be left out until it is necessary.

To write a good standard, simply state the end result you want to achieve. You will find that three or four standards will cover almost any situation.

To help you with your planning and cost control, here are four standards you can use.

1. Prestige cleaning - To be completely free from removable dust, dirt, stains or marks. (Suggested for executive and reception areas)
2. Quality cleaning - To be bright and clean without any noticeable dust, dirt, stains or marks. (Suggested for general office and equipment areas)
3. Commercial cleaning - To be uniformly clean and free of litter. (Suggested for work shops, engineering and maintenance departments)
4. Bare bones cleaning - To be presentable and free of unnecessary dirt and litter. (Suggested for storage and other minimum access areas)



**STEP #3. SPECIFY tasks required to meet the standard.**

When listing the tasks necessary to accomplish the standard, you will find that the task, followed by the standard, gives all the direction necessary for the cleaning crew. For example:

TASK	AUTHORIZED FREQUENCY	STANDARD
1. Sweep floor	5 times per week	(Prestige) To be completely free of removable dust, dirt, stains or marks
2. Vacuum carpets		
3. Dust file cabinets, desks, and all exposed horizontal surfaces.		



## TIPS FOR IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY AND CUTTING COSTS

### **TIP #1. Recognize that man hours are your greatest cost.**

The only way to really cut costs is to use less man hours. Plan your program to use as few man hours as possible. Give the on-site supervisor discretionary power over some cleaning tasks. Specify maximum cleaning where it is needed, but use standards to allow judgemental cleaning where it is acceptable.

Check your building for man hour traps. Fix, renovate, or install, wherever feasible, to facilitate the cleaning operation. Use quality, high technology products with long-lasting properties to further reduce the frequency of maintenance.

### **TIP #2. If you are not already using contractual cleaning services, consider it.**

Whereas contractual cleaning services have set performance criteria for accountability purposes: Many in-house operations work on tradition; personal productivity is not as closely monitored; the traditional way of doing the job becomes established year after year.

Another in-house productivity problem is managers who consider the custodial function as a less than glamorous operation, which brings them into contact with marginal labor. Due to this attitude, cleaning receives less than full enthusiasm from many in-house staffs.

With contractual services there is less negative attitude toward the cleaning function. Contract workers are generally more motivated and better prepared to do a good job.

Other advantages of contractual cleaning are: Lower costs for supplies because of larger quantity discounts; use of specialized equipment without "up-front" investment; and reduced load on your personnel department. You don't have to worry about police checks, or replacing workers due to vacations or absences.

Last, but not least, contractors are always available for emergencies.

When choosing a cleaning contractor, have a reasonable knowledge of costs so you will know when bids are entirely too high or too low. Such bidders are not accurately responding to the standards and specifications you have outlined.

Don't request too many bids. When contractors are aware many companies are bidding, they may not be as meticulous. Taking bids from a few companies will produce more realistic and carefully developed bids.

### **TIP #3. Cost Control Maintenance**

#### **CARPETS:**

Soil builds up most rapidly in traffic lanes, especially at entrances. These areas can be lightly cleaned several times before a thorough cleaning of the entire carpet is necessary. As a start, try traffic vacuuming four days per week and detail vacuuming on the fifth day.

Use carpets in elevators and stair landings, to avoid soil transfer from one floor to another.

Don't mix carpet and tile. Be uniform to avoid the use of non-compatible equipment and processes adjacent to each other.

Keep soil out with gratings, mats and grid carpets.

Pay prompt attention to spills.

#### **FLOORS:**

Use quality products even though they are more expensive initially. Quality products last longer and reduce man hours, which is where your real costs are. Stripping is the most labor-intensive, high-risk part of floor care. To increase intervals between stripping resilient floors, try the new self-polishing, non-buffable, high solids, metal polymer finishes. They are highly durable, and designed to look good without daily buffing. They provide a tough, long lasting coating which is easy to remove when the time comes for stripping. (These finishes are maintained by periodic spray buffings of the same solution.)

#### **RESTROOMS:**

Hang stalls from the ceiling and wall mount fixtures. For venting, try larger vent covers and grills in the doors.

Replace single tissue and towel dispensers with double dispensers to reduce the frequency of filling. Make sure soap dispensers are placed over sinks (not between) to avoid spills.

Where problems with vandalism and graffiti exist, try motivational posters on the walls.

