

Day Cleaning

By Dave Frank

How often have you walked into a building during normal business hours and not spotted a single cleaning worker? Probably pretty often, considering many cleaning crews don't start their shifts until most of the occupants have left buildings for the day.

Building owners and facility managers often opt for cleaning crews to clean buildings at night to keep cleaning workers out of the sight and out of the way of building occupants and visitors. However, some owners and managers are realizing that there are benefits to flipping the switch to a day-cleaning operation and are choosing to have cleaning workers work during the day.

Why switch?

There are many reasons why more and more facility managers, cleaning contractors and managers are standing behind day cleaning. Consider the following:

Cost savings. For some facilities, switching from night to day cleaning results in average cost savings of 8 percent to 10 percent. The savings begin with the elimination of duplicate services provided by day porters and day matrons, and they are compounded by lower employee turnover, the need for less direct supervision, and the use of high-productivity equipment and processes.

Further cost savings can result from keeping lights turned off at night. Some facilities have experienced \$50,000 to \$100,000 or more in annual energy savings per building.

Less employee turnover and easier recruitment. Studies have shown that people overwhelmingly prefer day shifts because they have easier access to transportation, better daycare options and the ability to spend their evenings with their families. Day shifts are particularly attractive to semi-retired and retired workers who have security and vision issues after dark.

Increase in worker productivity. Day cleaning can be more productive than night cleaning, especially when workers are equipped with the right tools. High-productivity equipment, such as walk-behind or rider sweepers and battery powered light weight floor and carpet sweepers are used daily to clean main and secondary corridors quickly. Low-decibel vacuums are used weekly to clean offices and cubicles. Staffing can also be streamlined. The day porter and/or day matron who stocks the restrooms is replaced by restroom specialists who actually clean the restrooms. The need for more supervision is reduced because cleaning takes place in an occupied environment. Workers are not as tempted to take extra or extended breaks.

Some proponents of day cleaning report that the presence of cleaning workers in the buildings fosters a feeling of community responsibility for the cleanliness of the facility. For example, occupants who see restrooms cleaned will keep the are clean by wiping the countertops after washing hands and making sure their used towels get in the waste containers.

New developments in technology make day cleaning less disruptive. The use of low-decibel vacuums, microfiber cloths and gender-specific cleaners help prevent disruptions and hazards. More disruptive activities such as office vacuuming and restroom floor cleaning are performed before the building opens or after it has closed.



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Is day cleaning a fit for your facility?

Now that you know the positive aspects of a day-cleaning program, you should make sure the pros of day cleaning would outweigh any cons (if there are any) when it comes to the best way to clean your facility.

In general, day cleaning has been most successful in single-tenant owned buildings, K-12 schools, universities, multi-tenant office buildings, hospitals, 24/7 call centers and factories. There are facilities where day cleaning would not be the best scenario.

In addition to considering the type of facility you clean, think about what goes on in and around your buildings. When contemplating the feasibility of day cleaning, General Motors officials, for example, developed a checklist to determine whether or not day cleaning would be a success for their buildings. One building in downtown Detroit has restrictive parking. This building was not considered for day cleaning because the parking area could not accommodate the existing building occupants and visitors during the day, let alone additional cleaning staff. Officials also found that manufacturing facilities with heavy vehicular traffic and areas requiring extensive wet cleaning work would not be good day-cleaning candidates.

The key to determining whether or not your facility can be cleaned during the day is to know the facility and operations intimately. Consider the amount of foot traffic, machinery, equipment and events in each building. Would a day-cleaning program conflict with people, activities or other running equipment?

A switch in thinking

Once you have made a confident choice to implement a day-cleaning operation, the next step is to clear your mind of the old ways of cleaning. Your mind must be open to new ideas, systems, schedules, products and equipment.

If you have an in-house operation, you must ignore how your night cleaning crew has been working and step back and build your day-cleaning program from scratch. Think about how you will make day cleaning work — not why day cleaning would not work.

Start to research the facility and all cleaning components. As already discussed, an intimate knowledge of the facility and the day-to-day operations is critical. Determine what type of cleaning tasks can be conducted at each time of day to keep intrusions to a minimum. Research equipment, chemicals and processes to determine what would be best for the facility to enhance health, sustainability and productivity.

The more you research, the more prepared you will be when it comes time to communicate the program concept first to upper management for approval and support and then to the occupants of the building. Having support from upper management and occupants will help you achieve goals and expectations of the program.

Another key element: proper planning and organization. A workloading software program will help you best plan and organize the program and any changes.

Making the transition

After getting management approval and occupant support, the next step is to develop a scope of work for the day-cleaning program. It is important to keep upper management involved in this step to support the process and to achieve successful implementation.



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Use a computer workloading program to help you determine scope of work, including labor hour requirements and job descriptions for employees. Develop a communications plan to inform and educate all occupants of the building on the day-cleaning program, beginning about eight weeks prior to full implementation. Increasing the frequency of communication with occupants as the transition date approaches.

Select the appropriate chemical systems, cleaning equipment and train the staff on best practice for day cleaning.

Plan everything thoroughly and stick to your plan. One final tip: When transitioning from night cleaning to day cleaning, it often works best to stop night cleaning on a Friday night and begin day cleaning on the following Monday. This allows you to use the weekend for orientation and proper closet preparation.

Achieving success

Flipping the switch from evening cleaning to day cleaning can be successfully accomplished through proper planning and organization. Properly done, the transition is seamless with building occupants only noticing the higher level of cleaning and actual cleaning being done in restrooms and break areas. Successful day-cleaning transitions have found little interruption in productivity, higher quality cleaning and substantial cost savings.

Day cleaning in an owner-occupied building

6 a.m.- 7:30 a.m.

- Clean executive and human resources offices
- Clean restroom floors (scrub and vacuum ceramic and wet mop vinyl)
- Sweep all primary and secondary corridors.

8 a.m.- 4 p.m.

- Clean and restock restrooms continually with same-sex cleaning workers
- Clean break areas
- Clean and reset conference rooms.

1 p.m.- 4 p.m.

- Empty all trash. Have employees place wastebaskets at the outside wall of offices or 'cubicles by noon
- Clean cafeteria and dining rooms.

Saturday morning or scheduled off-hours

- Backpack vacuum and dust cubicles and offices
- Clean carpet and finish all wet work.

Day cleaning in a K-12 school building

6 a.m.- 7:30 a.m.

- Clean school office, gymnasium and heavily used classrooms.

8 a.m.- 4 p.m.

- Clean and restock restrooms while classes are in session
- Sweep all corridors while classes are in session
- Clean all classrooms during lunch periods or unoccupied periods.

1 p.m.- 4 p.m.

- Clean cafeteria and clean gymnasium if unavailable early morning
- Have representative from each classroom transport wastebasket to designated collection area and dispose.

After-school programs requiring cleaning schedule and pay staff to be present for lock-up and cleaning or the activity sponsor locks the building and cleaning is performed the next morning. Carpet cleaning and all wet work will be scheduled on a sixth work day.



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