

# Mall Sweeping:

by Karl Stauty

Why Contract Sweeping Can Be  
More Cost Effective  
Than In-House.

- Most malls sweep less frequently. To properly amortize a mall sweeper over its lifetime, it often must be used for such a long period that the equipment is outdated before a new one can be purchased. Contractors use their sweepers much more, so are more likely to be able to keep them updated.
- In comparison to a mall's sweeper operator or its property manager, the owner of a sweeping company is much more likely to keep up with changes in the industry as a whole.
- Another advantage of higher per-day usage is that contractors tend to be more preventive maintenance oriented. Drivers become more accustomed to how the sweeper operates, and so are often able to spot problems with equipment before they get serious – and expensive.
- Contractors usually have more than one sweeper and driver, and sometimes have several types of sweeping equipment. As a result, they may be more responsive to needs outside the normal sweeping times, emergencies, etc.
- Because contractors usually have more than one sweeper, backup units are often available in the event of a breakdown, or during routine maintenance of the primary sweeper.
- Contractors who own several sweepers often have their repair work done in-house, at lesser cost than malls which hire outside mechanics.
- Because they sweep more, the volume of replacement, normal wear and other standard usage items is higher for contractors, even if they have just one sweeper. This may bring them volume buying power for wear items.
- Liability insurance must be obtained on an in-house sweeper. Contractors typically get a cost savings due to having more than one sweeper.
- Once trained, the sweeper operator must be supervised. Most mall management staffs are ill equipped to perform this function well. Seldom will the operator of a mall-owned sweeper be a specialist in the field, or have quality supervision and feedback on operation.
- Because training and general sweeper knowledge tend to be less for mall-owned sweepers, and because the machine is used relatively less frequently, there may be a higher incidence of accidents or misuse of the machine.
- Malls must pay insurance on the sweeper at an individual, rather than at a fleet, rate.
- Most malls purchase fuel for their sweeper off-site, so their units must be licensed and tagged each year even if they sweep exclusively on mall property.
- Malls must usually rent an additional dumpster for disposal, and sometimes contractors can save money by pooling dumping costs.
- There is a cost associated with overseeing and outfitting an in-house operator. This may include uniforms, higher tax rates, etc. The same holds true for storing the sweeper itself.
- Contractors may usually be dismissed without incurring any expenses or paperwork, and always without an increase in unemployment compensation rate. In addition to paying benefits, unemployment compensation and other tax payments, there are also costs related to filling out this paperwork.
- Malls must train an employee to run the sweeper – and often no one at the mall knows how to do this. With even a moderate turnover rate in sweeper operators, this training factor can become expensive to the mall.

*Consider all the factors before you decide!*

Information provided courtesy:

