

What Customers Should Find Out About Their Sweeping Contractors

by Ranger Kidwell-Ross, editor, [World Sweeper](#) magazine

Since sweeping doesn't require any type of specific licensing, facility management companies often do not realize how to confirm that their contractor of choice is worthy of their business. Although situations vary from state-to-state, in most areas a reputable sweeping contractor will be able to provide their clients with the following:

Certificates of insurance for both sweepers and general liability. In the case of an accident for which a sweeping contractor is liable, if the contractor doesn't carry insurance coverage then the owner of the property on which it occurred is much more likely to be held financially liable.

Proof of compliance with the workmen's compensation laws of the state. Some companies cut corners by not paying the workmen's compensation on their employees. Without it, there is a much greater chance that a sweeper operator who gets injured will sue the owner of the property for damages.

Local business licenses and a federal tax identification number. Another way to identify legitimate businesses is to confirm that the company complies with all the statutes to which ethical business people must conform. Most cities require that a local business license be issued to companies doing business within the city limits, and this usually includes sweepers. Also, if a company doesn't have a federal tax ID number, it is much more likely that necessary taxes are not being paid. These include payroll taxes and the remittance of any sales taxes which are due in some states. It is not in a property manager's best interest to hire a company which could be shut down at any time for non-payment of taxes.

Bank references. Retail centers have a high profile in their local business community. For this reason, the bank references of all contractors they use should be checked. By insisting on a good bank reference, property managers can know for certain that their contractor is not floating checks around town and at the same time using them for a reference.

Trade references. Most management companies want to do business with an established company, one which has a good chance of being there some years from now. Another way for a mall manager to get a handle on reputability is to talk to others who supply the sweeping contractor with his parts and supplies.

Waste disposal information. It has been found that both the contractor and the property owner can be held liable for incorrectly dumped waste. If an account manager does not provide an on-site place to dump collected litter, he or she should confirm that the litter from the site is being disposed of at an approved dump facility. Dumping fees are becoming an ever larger component of doing business in many areas, and, although the incidence of 'midnight dumping' is being successfully reduced, some companies still dump on their personal property or elsewhere in order to cut costs.

Industry associations. Membership and active participation in industry associations is a clear indication of the sweeping contractor's commitment to employing the best practices that exist in the industry. In addition, this participation enhances the services the sweeping contractor provides through awareness of critical issues facing the industry, thereby allowing a proactive approach to those challenges.

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