



WSA/WorldSweeper Email Exchange with Walmart Facilities Management

Background: A power sweeping contractor reported to us that they had provided service to one of their Walmart accounts under a contract with that store's manager. Because they did not have a contract with Service Channel (Walmart Corporate), the invoices were ultimately not paid.

When this information was publicized to the World Sweeping Association Members, one of them came forward with, essentially, the same story. No complaints had been made about either contractor or the service provided by the individual store managers.

WSA/WorldSweeper agreed to investigate. The following is the email exchange that has taken place to date.

Once our initial email was referenced to the correct person, Darrell Antonio Bennett, Walmart's Facility Manager, he sent the following email on December 1, 2016:

Ranger,

Please provide the vendors name along with their Walmart vendor number, ad well as the store(s) in question that they claim they are owed for services provided so we can research. A copy of the contract would help as well.

Thanks,

Darrell Antonio Bennett Facility Manager, AIM
Facilities Management – Exterior Services
Parking Lot Sweeping & Power Washing

Office: 479-277-7795

Email: Darrell.Bennett@wal-mart.com

Walmart
2001 SE 10th Street
Bentonville, AR 72716-5535

After conferring with the contractors who had not been paid, both of whom were concerned about reprisals from Walmart on the many other Walmart accounts they service, we responded on December 13, 2016 as follows:

PO Box 667, Bellingham, WA 98227 • editor@worldsweeper.com • 360.724.7355

EARTH'S LARGEST POWER SWEEPING RESOURCE SM

Darrell,

I have been told that you are already aware of the recent non-payment situation. And, at the moment the contractor is loath to have me re-provide the information you requested. That's because they do not want this situation to compromise their continuing relationship with the many Walmart stores they continue to service.

That said, on behalf of the power sweeping industry I believe this type of non-payment situation by Walmart is detrimental to the industry as a whole. In that regard, I would like to work with you, or the correct responsible member of Walmart management, to eliminate this sort of scenario from happening. Adding to this concern is that when I notified the other members of the World Sweeping Association about what had occurred, I received a response from another contractor who reported the same thing had happened to them several years ago. A portion of his/her email is shown below:

Just a quick note re: Walmart, we also have been asked to up the days of service but I told the store mgr she had to put the work order in and I need the actual work order numbers to do this...we have been waiting months for this to happen and now it know why it has not happened, thanks for the info.

Also a few years ago we had a store that was not under Service Channel at the time, it was a fairly new store and was told by the store manager to keep sweeping until they got under Service Channel, He repeatedly told us this, and also always told us what a good job we were doing....well he left the store and the new mgr refused to pay us the \$9,000+ they owed us. She said that we were not supposed to be sweeping the lot (even though we had a signed contract and was told to keep doing so). I went back and forth for 2 years and still no payment, we gave up on this but I would say it's good to let others know of this.....

At the time when I tried to contact corp there was no way to contact them...I talked to several people over the years and was handed off to too many to count...still never payment....we do a lot of work for Walmart and this was very upsetting. I wish they would get rid of Service Channel all together, there is sooooo much mis-communication between them and the stores it unbelievable the stuff we have gone through with them...

This information, which spans several previous years, makes it appear that having store managers request services — even to the point of signing contracts with sweeping industry vendors — and then not paying for the services subsequently rendered is an ongoing Walmart policy. If a store manager signs a contract with a vendor, who then performs satisfactorily under that contract, Walmart policy should be that the vendor gets paid. Any 'disciplinary action' should fall to the manager, not the contractor. Because this is reported as something that happened several years ago — and is still happening today — it would appear to be either chosen Walmart policy to save money or, alternatively, a deliberate course of action taken in recognition that vendors, concerned about reprisal for current contracts, will be reluctant to pursue (sue for) money owed to them in these types of situations. It is also expensive to litigate for a few thousand dollars.

My understanding is that you were a) made aware of the current non-payment situation, b) that a valid contract existed from the store manager to the contractor, and c) your decision was to not pay the invoice for services rendered.

PO Box 667, Bellingham, WA 98227 • editor@worldsweeper.com • 360.724.7355

EARTH'S LARGEST POWER SWEEPING RESOURCE SM

If I have your assurance in writing that a) there will be no reprisal of any type toward the reporting contractor, and, b) that, if there is indeed a signed contract from the store manager and no complaints were lodged about the subsequent service provided by the contractor that provided the work, then their invoice will be paid, then I will be glad to re-contact the reporting contractor to discuss their providing the information to you once again.

I look forward to your reply given these additional details. I have not written to the entire sweeping industry to see if this Walmart policy is more pervasive than is currently recognized. Once I receive your reply it should direct our actions in that regard.

Thank you for your time and involvement.

Cheers,
Ranger



Ranger Kidwell-Ross
Editor, WorldSweeper.com
Executive Director, World Sweeping Association

PO Box 667
Bellingham, WA 98227
360.724.7355
director@worldsweepingpros.org
www.worldsweepingpros.org

Winner of U.S. APEX Awards of Excellence, 1994-2016



Later on December 13, 2016 we received the following from Bennett:

Ranger,

We need requested information for us to research the claimed amount owed. We cannot move forward without this information. Legally I cannot provide any assurances for the items you request. However, any decisions made regarding the providers status will be made based on performance and compliance history.

Thanks,
Darrell Antonio Bennett Facility Manager, AIM

On December 14, 2016, WSA/WorldSweeper responded as follow:

Darrell,

Unfortunately — and understandably — both of the contractors have declined to provide this information given current circumstances. Both cited fear of reprisal by Walmart corporate for their remaining accounts.

I am dismayed that your company policy — which you cite as “legally” — will not allow you to guarantee payment given the conditions I stated, which included: signed contracts existed between the store managers and contractors; no complaints lodged by the store management in regard to service; and, confirmation there would be no reprisals aimed at the contractors involved.

I am currently evaluating our options given our communication to date. Most likely, we will provide the information on this situation to the sweeping industry as a whole to see if there are more contractors who have received similar treatment by the Walmart organization. I regret sincerely that there appears to be no other feasible alternative avenue to move forward at this time. Should one occur to you please let me know.

Cheers,
Ranger

On Dec 15, 2016 Darrell Bennett wrote:

Ranger,

Thanks for the follow up. The vendors are welcome to report their concern to <https://www.walmartethics.com/ReportAConcern.aspx>. Feel free to provide the necessary information at any time so my team can research and I will share my findings so we can move forward.

Later on Dec 15, 2016 Ranger Kidwell-Ross replied:

Darrell,

I would exert more effort in convincing them to report these concerns except I am told that:

- a) there were valid contracts in place with both of the store managers
- b) there were no complaints about the service provided by the contractors
- c) you were included in the 'previous loop' and so were previously made aware of the lack of payment; perhaps made the decision not to pay yourself.

Given those factors — as well as that you refused to guarantee there would be no negative sanctions/repercussions for the contractors we have been discussing in the event they re-provided the information to you — your offer wouldn't appear to be in their best interest at this time. However, in the event all members of your management team are not aware of this occurrence, let me know and I will provide this full email exchange at the portal. Otherwise, if you have not already done so, please forward all of the email exchanges on this matter to your direct manager. I invite them to contact me should they choose to do so.

At the moment, my plan is to conduct a survey of the U.S. power sweeping industry as a whole to determine if this practice seems to be a standard for Walmart corporate or, rather, if these two situations that surfaced off the top are outliers.

Thank you for your time to date.

Cheers,
Ranger

Later on Dec 15, 2016 Darrell Bennett wrote:

Ranger,

I am sorry if it seems like we are making things difficult, but I cannot do research or help get them paid with 0 information.

If you or the vendors have any other questions, please let me know.

Thanks,
Darrell Antonio Bennett Facility Manager, AIM
Facilities Management – Exterior Services
Parking Lot Sweeping & Power Washing
Office: 479-277-7795
Email: Darrell.Bennett@wal-mart.com

Walmart
2001 SE 10th Street
Bentonville, AR 72716-5535
Save money. Live better

Our intent at this point is to publicize the situation in an upcoming WorldSweeper.com e-Newsletter to the entire industry in an attempt to see how widespread this practice is by Walmart corporate. This link will be updated as events change.

PO Box 667, Bellingham, WA 98227 • editor@worldsweeper.com • 360.724.7355

EARTH'S LARGEST POWER SWEEPING RESOURCE SM