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How the critics of janitorial outsourcing are right: Safety - by Alan France

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Alan France,
ABM Industries

Critics of janitorial outsourcing often say that safety is among their top concerns. While all janitorial providers care about the safety of their workers, not all of them do enough to prevent accidents. Low-cost janitorial providers may neglect important training and safety protocols because they lack safety expertise or don't see the value in spending time and resources on it.

But a safety incident can be devastating, with injuries ranging from minor to grave. Plus, workplace accidents often disrupt business while the injured person is being attended to and the cause of the accident is investigated.

A well-run facility is a safe facility. Your janitorial program should accommodate the safety of building occupants, cleaning staff, and, in manufacturing environments, your products. And cleaning staff is often at the frontlines of maintaining the safety of your facility. Whether they are handling hazardous substances or cleaning up a spill, they need to be trained to be safety-conscious in everything that they do.

A quality-oriented janitorial provider accomplishes that by taking the proper precautions and training employees to be aware of safety. Here are some of the topics that should be covered in a safety training program:

- Proper equipment and chemical usage
- Personal protective equipment
- First aid
- Emergency evacuation

- Hazard communication
- Ergonomics awareness
- Slips, trips and falls

Beyond training, janitorial providers should also have protocols for reporting, filing claims, and getting employees back to work in a reasonable time frame. Safety shouldn't be something that you focus on only when there's an accident. Janitorial providers should cultivate a culture of safety awareness.

Alan France, CS-P, CSR-P, is vice president, quality and sustainability, ABM Industries, New York, N.Y.

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540