

The Green Cleaning Business

From the U.S. Green Building Council to the Association of Physical Plant Administrators of Universities and Colleges (APPA) to the everyday soccer Mom, the marketplace has created a demand for green cleaning.

About The Industry

Understanding the U.S. Commercial & Residential Cleaning Industry

Source: Bharat Market Research

This Market data study examines the huge **\$83 billion commercial contract cleaning and maintenance services market**. The business, which encompasses janitorial services, pest control, window cleaning, carpet/floor cleaning, parking lot maintenance, security, HVAC/facilities management and more, is very competitive, **comprised of 734,000+ mainly small operators, including 40,000 franchised outlets**. Competitors run the gamut from mom & pop cleaners, to giants such as ABM Industries with \$2.4 billion in revenues and ServiceMaster with \$877 in commercial maintenance sales.

Steady sales gains of 5-7% per year, and 10% in 2007 came to a halt in 2008-2009 with the recession, rising office building vacancy rates, and cutbacks in the frequency of cleaning by clients. Some customers even shifted to in-house cleaning. Low-ball prices, discounts and rebates have become the norm, hurting profits. **Green cleaning and certification has become more important.**

APPA Guidelines Adopted for LEED Green Cleaning Standard

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) recently revised its LEED for Existing Buildings (LEED-EB) standard to make green cleaning a prerequisite. Now **all buildings seeking LEED-EB certification must have a green cleaning policy**. The USGBC recently added credits for those institutions conducting an audit of their facilities using APPA's *Custodial Staffing Guidelines for Educational Facilities*, recognizing buildings that have superior cleaning programs.

The intent of the assessment, according to the LEED guide is, "to reduce the exposure of building occupants and maintenance personnel to potentially hazardous chemical, biological and particulate contaminants - which adversely affect air quality, human health, building finishes, building systems and the environment - by implementing, managing, and auditing cleaning procedures and processes."

Initially published by APPA in 1992 and now in its second edition, *Custodial Staffing Guidelines* covers five levels of clean used to assess facility appearance (see chart on page 2). The guide includes information on such specialized facilities areas as dormitories, health care facilities, and more. Thirty-three room categories in all are covered by the APPA staffing guidelines. The *Custodial Staffing Guidelines* are based upon the feedback of hundreds of individuals and institutions and have been in use for over two decades by an ever-increasing number of institutions to validate staffing requirements at institutions in higher education as well as K-12, and to justify the need for custodial budgets. To order APPA's *Custodial Staffing Guidelines*, visit the APPA bookstore at www.appa.org.

LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance Rating System (LEED-EB) can help K-12 and higher educational institutions reduce energy consumption, water consumption and solid-waste disposal. For more information, visit www.usgbc.org/leed/eb.

Primary Green Cleaning Strategies

Why Green Cleaning

An increasing focus, across industries, toward sustainability, conservation and environmental “best practices” includes the chemical-intensive tasks of commercial and residential cleaning. Green cleaning includes two key elements:

- **The development and use of biodegradable and petroleum-free cleaning products.** Once a service with little oversight and a penchant for using the harshest of chemical, there were few effective options for eco-friendly products that were readily available. Today, there are several dominant green cleaning products brands including – Seventh Generation, Simple Green, and now Green Works a Clorox product line.
- **Industry standards and certification for green cleaning practices.** The most important are the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEEDS standards for Facility Cleaning & Maintenance, including Chemicals. This has extended to specific cleaning guidelines established by the Association of Physical Plant Administrators of Universities and Colleges (APPA) in partnership with LEED. There are also LEED standards for retail and healthcare.

Green Business Start-up: Major Steps

Decide the type of cleaning market to specialize in.

- Residential
- Commercial

Develop a strategy for eco-friendly cleaning techniques, strategies and products.

Permits, Codes & Regulations – These will vary widely for each city and county. List applicable permits, codes and regulations:

Third-party certifications – including the US Green Building Council LEED, janitorial or cleaning association programs.

Short-Cuts

What is Green Cleaning? Source: Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E)

<http://cms.h2e-online.org/about/>

Green cleaning is about maintaining and improving cleanliness and supporting infection control while protecting workers and the environment from the risks posed by cleaning materials and processes. It encompasses a broad set of practices and is **not about simply switching one product for another**. A successful program is focused on overall “quality cleaning” – standardized operations, effective tools and cleaning chemicals, uniform dispensing systems, comprehensive staff training, proper protective equipment, and clearly written policies and protocols for the various levels of cleaning and response to blood and body fluid spills. It also includes ongoing performance evaluation and improvement. With planning and oversight, **green cleaning provides a high-performance cleaning process that prioritizes infection control but also reduces waste, risks to workers and building occupants, and negative impacts on the environment.**

Resources

Green Seal for Cleaning Services Certification

www.greenseal.org

- GS-42 Commercial and Institutional Cleaning Services
This standard is for cleaning service providers including in-house and external cleaning services including all indoor activities typically required to clean commercial, public and industrial buildings
- GS-49 Residential Cleaning Services
This standard establishes criteria for professional cleaning services of residential facilities, areas, or spaces.