INVO CLEANING SERVICES
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INVO EXECUTIVE GUIDE SERIES

Executive Guide No. 1

Why Two Buildings of the Same Size Can Cost Very Different Amounts to Clean

A practical guide to comparing commercial cleaning programs and selecting the right long-term partner

Educational Resource • Complimentary Edition • Version 1.1

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Executive Summary

Your organization requests proposals from three commercial cleaning companies. Each company visits the same building, walks through the same offices, and receives similar information. A week later, the proposals arrive. One is significantly lower than the others, one falls in the middle, and one is noticeably higher.

The first question almost everyone asks is: “Why are these prices so different?”

Many people assume commercial cleaning is priced primarily by square footage. Building size matters, but it tells only part of the story. Cleaning companies build recommendations around the amount of work required to consistently support the people who use the facility. Occupancy, visitor traffic, layout, service frequency, organizational priorities, communication expectations, quality control, and long-term consistency all influence the recommended cleaning program.

That is why two buildings with identical square footage can require very different approaches and receive very different proposals. This guide explains why those differences occur, how to compare recommended cleaning programs fairly, and what decision-makers should consider beyond the monthly invoice.

> **EXECUTIVE INSIGHT**
>
> **Commercial cleaning is not purchased simply to clean a building. It is purchased to support the people, operations, and reputation of the organization inside it.**

At a Glance

- Square footage is only one part of a commercial cleaning recommendation.
- Labor is usually the largest cost driver because people perform nearly every cleaning task.
- Similar scopes of work do not always produce similar results; execution and staffing matter.
- Proposals should be compared on an apples-to-apples basis before price is compared.
- The lowest monthly invoice does not always produce the lowest overall operational cost.
- Consistency does not mean perfection; it means reliable communication, correction, and follow-up.
- A well-managed cleaning program should reduce management workload, not become another responsibility.
- The best long-term choice is the program that most realistically supports the organization’s priorities.

How to Use This Guide

Read the guide for context, then use the companion Selecting the Right Cleaning Partner Worksheet while reviewing providers. Record what each company emphasized, questions that remain unanswered, and the reason one recommendation inspires more confidence than another. Revisit the relevant sections during internal discussions instead of relying only on memory or the monthly price.

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Introduction - How to Use This Guide

This guide was written to educate - not to sell.

Its purpose is to help organizations understand why commercial cleaning recommendations differ so they can evaluate any provider, including INVO Cleaning Services, with greater confidence. It intentionally avoids arguing that the highest price is best, that the lowest price is automatically risky, or that one operating model fits every building.

Where guidance is based on public sources, the source is identified. Where the guide reflects practitioner experience, it is presented as professional observation rather than universal fact. If the guide helps a decision-maker ask better questions, compare recommendations more fairly, or define expectations more clearly, it has accomplished its purpose.

About This Guide

This guide is designed for business owners, office managers, facility managers, property managers, medical office administrators, and other decision-makers evaluating commercial cleaning services. It is not intended to persuade readers that a higher-priced proposal is always better or that a lower-priced proposal should automatically be viewed with suspicion.

A lower price may represent excellent value when the scope, staffing, and service expectations align with the organization's needs. Likewise, a higher price should reflect additional value rather than simply a larger invoice. The purpose of this guide is to help readers understand why recommendations differ and how to evaluate them thoughtfully.

> **PRACTICAL TIP**
> **Keep the guide and worksheet with the proposals. The strongest decision usually becomes clearer when the recommended programs are compared side by side.**

Chapter 1 - Commercial Cleaning Is an Operational Decision

Commercial cleaning is often viewed as another monthly expense. In practice, it affects how a workplace functions day after day. A well-designed cleaning program helps create an environment where employees can focus on their work, visitors receive a positive first impression, and managers spend less time addressing preventable facility concerns.

Like technology, security, heating and cooling, landscaping, and waste removal, commercial cleaning is an operational service. Its effects are experienced long after the agreement is signed. Selecting a provider is therefore more than a purchasing decision. It is a decision about how one part of the organization's daily environment will be managed over time.

A proposal does not merely state what a company charges. It reflects a series of professional decisions: how the facility should be staffed, which areas deserve the greatest attention, how quality should be monitored, how communication should occur, and how the company believes the building should be cared for.

> **WHAT THIS MEANS**
>
> **Compare recommended cleaning programs, not just proposal documents. The proposal is the paper; the program is the service your organization will experience.**

Chapter 2 — The Story of Two Buildings

Imagine two commercial buildings. Each contains 20,000 square feet. Each requests cleaning three evenings per week. If price were based only on square footage, the proposals should be nearly identical. They probably will not be.

Building A: Professional Accounting Firm

- 18 employees
- Two restrooms
- One employee break room
- Mostly private offices
- Limited visitor traffic
- Carpet throughout most of the building

Employees generally arrive in the morning, work at their desks, attend meetings, use the break room at lunch, and leave at the end of the day. By evening, the office remains orderly. The recurring work is predictable: emptying trash, vacuuming, dusting accessible surfaces, cleaning restrooms, wiping break-room surfaces, spot-cleaning entrance glass, and preparing the office for the next day.

Building B: Busy Medical Practice

- More than 60 employees
- Continuous patient traffic
- Multiple waiting and exam areas
- Several public restrooms
- Hard-surface flooring throughout much of the building
- Many frequently touched shared surfaces

From opening until the final patient leaves, the facility experiences constant activity. Employees move between rooms, restrooms receive heavy use, reception counters remain active, and shared surfaces are touched repeatedly. Although the building is the same size and the requested frequency is identical, the workload is substantially different.

DECISION POINT

If both buildings contain the same square footage, should they require the same amount of labor? Probably not. The square footage did not change. The activity did.

Buildings Do Not Create Cleaning Requirements

Daily operations do. An empty building requires little routine cleaning. Add employees, customers, patients, tenants, deliveries, meetings, lunch breaks, and weather tracked through entrances, and the amount of work changes quickly. People fill trash cans, use restrooms, leave fingerprints, spill coffee, and create the daily activity that cleaning must address.

A Walkthrough Is More Than an Estimate

A professional walkthrough is an operational assessment. An experienced estimator evaluates how the building functions, identifies high-traffic areas, observes where employees gather, learns what matters most to the organization, and recognizes challenges that may not be obvious from a floor plan. The quality of the walkthrough often influences the quality of the recommendation.

Chapter 3 — The Variables That Matter

Commercial cleaning recommendations are built around a collection of variables. Some relate to the physical facility, others to the people using it, and others to the organization's expectations. No single variable determines the monthly investment.

The Building

- Layout and walking distances
- Number of entrances and restrooms
- Break rooms, kitchens, and shared spaces
- Flooring materials
- Stairwells, elevators, and glass
- Specialty or regulated areas

Two facilities with identical square footage can require different amounts of work because the space is arranged differently. Six restrooms require more recurring attention than two. Multiple entrances create more glass, floor soil, and seasonal maintenance. Long walking distances reduce the amount of productive cleaning that can be completed in the same period.

The People

- Number of employees
- Daily visitor or patient traffic
- Public access
- Shift schedules and operating hours
- How shared spaces are used
- Seasonal or event-related fluctuations

If the building determines where cleaning occurs, people determine how much cleaning occurs. More occupants generally mean more restroom use, more trash, more traffic, more fingerprints, and greater use of break rooms and shared spaces.

The Organization's Priorities

Not every organization defines success in the same way. A law firm may place greater emphasis on reception areas and conference rooms. A manufacturer may prioritize employee restrooms, break rooms, and locker areas. A medical practice may place additional emphasis on patient-facing spaces and frequently touched surfaces. A good cleaning program reflects what matters most to the organization rather than relying on a generic checklist.

The Provider's Operating Model

Two providers can understand the same building yet operate very differently. One may use a local, hands-on management model; another may rely on centralized account management, larger crews, or subcontracted labor. Travel distance, route density, supervision, insurance, equipment, administrative support, and the ability to respond when staffing changes all influence the resources required to serve an account.

Hiring and screening practices can also affect cost. Some organizations require background checks, structured onboarding, documented training, or tighter access controls. A lower price does not prove that these safeguards are absent, and a higher price does not prove that they are present. Ask each provider to explain its process rather than making assumptions.

Geography matters as well. A location far outside a provider's normal service area may require additional travel, supervision, and backup planning. Those costs do not change the amount of floor space, but they can change what is required to support the relationship reliably.

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

The best cleaning program is not the one with the longest task list. It is the one intentionally designed around the facility's actual use and the organization's priorities.

Chapter 4 — Why Labor Matters More Than Square Footage

Building size matters, but it does not perform the work. People do. Every restroom cleaned, trash can emptied, carpet vacuumed, floor mopped, fingerprint removed, supply dispenser checked, and inspection completed requires human effort. That is why labor is usually the largest factor influencing a commercial cleaning recommendation.

Real Buildings Do Not Operate Under Perfect Conditions

Meetings run late. Employees work overtime. Weather changes what enters the building. Unexpected spills occur. Special events create additional work. Cleaning companies manage real people working in active facilities where every evening is a little different. A sustainable program accounts for normal variation while still delivering dependable results over time.

The Human Side of Commercial Cleaning

Productivity estimates are useful planning tools, but cleaning teams are made up of real people, not machines. Experience, training, building familiarity, equipment, working conditions, and individual pace all influence how work is completed. Responsible providers plan around normal human variation rather than assuming every cleaner will perform every task at an identical rate.

Stable staffing can improve consistency because employees learn the building, recognize recurring needs, and understand the organization's preferences. Companies that invest in training, respectful treatment, and competitive employment practices may reduce avoidable turnover, although no employer can eliminate turnover entirely. These investments can influence price—and the service experience that follows.

A Scope of Work Is Only Part of the Story

Two companies may list nearly identical tasks: vacuuming, dusting, restroom cleaning, trash removal, and break-room cleaning. On paper, the scopes appear the same. The difference may be found in execution.

A scope of work describes what should happen. The cleaning program determines whether it actually does. Training, supervision, workflow, staffing, quality monitoring, and available time all affect whether the stated scope can be delivered consistently.

Consider a modeled example. One provider develops a plan that realistically allows about four labor hours per visit. Another plans two and a half hours for a similar scope. If the available time is insufficient, the team may work faster, prioritize the areas most likely to be noticed, rotate lower-priority tasks, or postpone details. None of that must be visible on the proposal itself, but the results may become visible over time.

> **EXECUTIVE INSIGHT**
> **A scope of work explains what should be cleaned. The operating plan determines whether it can be cleaned consistently.**

Labor hours are best treated as an internal planning tool, not as a client-facing performance guarantee. Different providers use different equipment, workflows, staffing arrangements, and levels of experience. The better question is whether the agreed-upon results are being delivered consistently—not whether a stopwatch matches an estimated number.

Chapter 5 — Comparing Proposals Apples to Apples

Price matters, but price becomes meaningful only after the recommended programs are understood. Two proposals may both say "commercial cleaning" while describing different levels of service, different assumptions, and different methods of managing the relationship.

A Proposal Is More Than a Scope of Work

A complete recommendation may include the cleaning schedule, scope of work, assumptions, communication process, quality-control approach, exclusions, periodic services, and monthly investment. The scope is one component. Read the proposal as an explanation of how the company intends to support the facility.

When the Organization Provides the Scope

Not every proposal begins with the cleaning company developing the scope of work. Many organizations issue their own specifications through a Request for Proposal, Invitation to Bid, Request for Quote, corporate standard, or procurement process. In those situations, each provider is generally responding to the same requested services.

Even then, proposals may differ. Companies may interpret the specifications differently, identify unclear requirements, recommend exceptions, or make different assumptions about the labor and supervision needed to deliver the requested program. When the organization supplies the scope, compare not only whether each provider priced it, but whether each provider interpreted it the same way and raised concerns that could affect delivery.

What to Compare

- Areas included and cleaning frequency
- Clarity and detail of the scope
- Communication and primary point of contact
- Quality inspection and corrective-action process
- Periodic services quoted separately
- Contract terms and responsibilities
- How future changes to the facility or scope will be handled

What the Monthly Price May Reflect

Price can reflect more than cleaning time. It may include training, supervision, inspections, replacement staffing, screening, insurance, communication systems, management involvement, and the administrative work required to support the account. These elements are not always visible in the scope, but they can influence the experience after service begins.

The opposite is also true: a higher price does not guarantee stronger systems. The purpose of the proposal process is to understand which practices are actually included rather than assuming quality from price alone.

Routine and Periodic Floor Care

Routine sweeping, vacuuming, and mopping are typically part of recurring service. Specialized work such as machine scrubbing, burnishing, stripping and refinishing, or carpet extraction is commonly quoted separately because it is performed periodically and requires additional equipment, materials, and labor.

Restroom and Other Consumable Supplies

Toilet paper, paper towels, hand soap, liners, and similar consumables are variable costs. Usage can change substantially with occupancy and traffic. These items are therefore often billed separately or based on actual consumption. If an organization asks for them to be included in a fixed monthly amount, the provider may need to estimate—and often overestimate—future usage to protect against unpredictable consumption.

DECISION POINT

Before comparing monthly prices, ask: Can we clearly explain why the recommended programs are different? If not, the next conversation should be about understanding the recommendation, not negotiating the number.

The Lowest Price May Be the Best Choice

A lower-priced recommendation may offer excellent value when the building is efficient to service, the scope is realistic, and the provider can consistently deliver the expected results. A higher-priced proposal does not automatically guarantee better service. Both deserve the same careful evaluation. The goal is not to select the highest or lowest number; it is to understand what each number represents.

Chapter 6 — Your Cleaning Program Reflects Your Priorities

Different organizations place different emphasis on appearance, employee experience, workplace wellness, public-facing spaces, or minimal management involvement. Those priorities influence the recommended cleaning program.

Every Building Has Moments That Matter

Employees do not experience every square foot equally. They pass through entrances, use restrooms, eat in break rooms, prepare food in shared kitchens, and meet in common spaces. These moments often shape how people perceive the condition of the workplace more strongly than areas they rarely use.

A manufacturing employee may accept that a production area will become dirty during the workday while still valuing a clean break room and restroom. Those spaces provide moments of comfort and communicate that the workplace is cared for. In an office, employees may notice overflowing trash, fingerprints on entrance glass, or an untidy kitchen long before they notice dust on a seldom-used shelf.

Poor cleaning can also create complaints, distractions, and avoidable management conversations. Cleanliness is only one of many factors that influence morale and productivity, but neglected employee spaces can send an unintended message about how the workplace is cared for. Restrooms and break rooms often matter disproportionately because employees use them every day and expect them to provide a clean pause from the work environment.

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

Employees may not notice every task the cleaning team completes. They almost always notice whether the workplace feels cared for.

Workplace Wellness

Many recurring cleaning programs include attention to frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, push plates, light switches, handrails, break-room tables, refrigerator handles, microwave handles, and shared countertops. The level of emphasis and frequency should reflect the facility, the agreed-upon scope, and the organization's priorities.

Current CDC guidance recommends regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces, cleaning other surfaces when visibly dirty, and using disinfection when illness or elevated risk makes it appropriate. The CDC also distinguishes cleaning from disinfecting and advises cleaning surfaces before disinfecting them. EPA guidance emphasizes using disinfectants according to the product label. Cleaning is one part of a broader approach to healthier indoor environments; it does not eliminate illness by itself.[1][2][3]

DECISION POINT

Does the current cleaning program align with the organization's expectations for frequently touched surfaces—especially during periods of increased seasonal illness?

Chapter 7 — Looking Beyond the Monthly Invoice

Price is the amount shown on the invoice. Cost is everything the organization experiences after service begins. Some costs are easy to measure. Others appear gradually as emails, follow-up calls, inspections, return visits, repeated complaints, and management time.

Two Different Experiences

In one organization, the monthly invoice is lower. Small concerns appear over time: a missed trash can, an inadequately stocked restroom, fingerprints before a client meeting, or a break-room surface left unattended. Each concern is corrected, but another follows. Eventually, the office manager begins checking the facility more often because experience has taught them to do so.

In another organization, the monthly investment is higher, but the team becomes familiar with the building, communication is proactive, supervisors periodically inspect the work, and concerns are addressed before they become recurring frustrations. Management rarely thinks about the cleaning program because it is dependable.

The first organization may pay less on the invoice while spending more in management attention and operational distraction. The second may pay more on the invoice while requiring far less internal oversight.

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

The lowest monthly invoice does not always produce the lowest overall operational cost.

Management Time Has Value

If an office manager spends only twenty minutes each week dealing with recurring cleaning concerns, the total exceeds seventeen hours over a year—more than two workdays. Those hours could have been spent supporting employees, serving customers, improving operations, or training staff. A cleaning provider should reduce this burden, not create another service the organization must supervise.

The Hidden Cost of Uncertainty

When managers regularly wonder whether the building was cleaned, whether restrooms were checked, or whether they should inspect before an important meeting, confidence has already begun to erode. A mature cleaning program replaces uncertainty with dependable expectations.

Chapter 8 — Consistency Does Not Mean Perfection

Every cleaning company is made up of people, and people occasionally make mistakes. An item may be overlooked. Weather may create unexpected work. A late meeting may interfere with the normal route. Most reasonable organizations understand that occasional oversights happen.

What separates a professional program is the consistency of the response. When a legitimate concern arises, communication should be prompt, the concern should be taken seriously, corrective action should be completed, follow-up should confirm resolution, and the provider should take reasonable steps to prevent the issue from becoming a pattern.

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

Consistency is not the absence of mistakes. It is the consistent way mistakes are communicated, corrected, followed up on, and prevented from becoming recurring problems.

Small Problems Become Big Problems When They Repeat

A single missed detail rarely destroys a business relationship. Trust is damaged when similar concerns continue without meaningful improvement. Professional service is evaluated over time. Consistent performance and consistent response—not an unrealistic promise of perfection—build confidence.

A Great Cleaning Program Should Become Predictable

One of the highest compliments a cleaning provider can receive is: “We rarely have to think about the cleaning.” The work has not become unimportant; it has become dependable. Employees expect a clean workplace, visitors receive a positive first impression, and managers focus on their actual responsibilities.

Positive Feedback Matters Too

Commercial cleaning often happens in the background, so providers may hear from clients only when something needs attention. Positive feedback is equally useful. It reinforces successful practices, helps supervisors understand what the organization values, and can improve morale for employees whose work is rarely visible during the business day.

Do not wait for something to go wrong before communicating. A brief note that the restrooms have been consistently well maintained or that the break room looks better than it has in years can be meaningful and helps the provider continue doing what is working.

Chapter 9 — Changes in the Facility May Require Changes in the Program

Every proposal reflects a moment in time. It is based on the information available during the walkthrough: current occupancy, operating hours, traffic, layout, service frequency, and stated priorities.

Organizations grow and change. Staffing increases, operating hours expand, renovations alter layouts, new tenants occupy space, public traffic rises, or priorities shift. When these changes materially increase or decrease the agreed-upon work, the cleaning program and monthly investment may need to be revisited.

Professional service agreements are based on the work both parties originally agreed to. It would be unreasonable to expect any professional service provider to absorb a significant increase in work indefinitely without reviewing compensation. The same principle applies to commercial cleaning. The review should also work in the other direction when the scope is meaningfully reduced.

The objective is not to preserve the original price forever. It is to keep the program accurate, fair, and sustainable for both organizations as the facility evolves.

WHAT THIS MEANS

A successful cleaning relationship should adapt to material changes rather than forcing an outdated scope and price to govern a different operating reality.

Chapter 10 — What You Are Really Purchasing

When organizations think about commercial cleaning, they often picture vacuuming, dusting, restroom cleaning, trash removal, sweeping, and mopping. Those tasks matter, but they are the means of delivering the broader service.

Consistency

One exceptional visit does not create a successful cleaning program. Employees judge the workplace based on what they experience today. Consistent execution makes the environment predictable.

Reliability

Reliability means the organization knows what to expect without routinely checking. Commitments are honored, service occurs as agreed, and the building is ready for the next business day.

Communication

Businesses change, special events occur, and questions arise. Professional communication should be prompt, respectful, clear, and focused on solutions. Good communication does not simply solve problems; it often prevents them.

Accountability

Accountability becomes visible when something does not go as planned. Professional providers acknowledge legitimate concerns, correct them, follow up, and learn from recurring situations.

Peace of Mind

The most valuable benefit may never appear as a line item: confidence that the building will be ready, concerns will be handled, employees can begin their day in a suitable environment, and management does not need to routinely inspect completed work.

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

The goal is not merely to hire a company that cleans the building. The goal is to hire a company that professionally manages the cleaning program.

Chapter 11 — What a Well-Designed Cleaning Program Looks Like

Clear Expectations

Both organizations understand what is included, what is excluded, the cleaning frequency, communication procedures, and how concerns will be handled. Clear expectations reduce misunderstandings before they occur.

Consistent Communication

Communication should not occur only when something goes wrong. Brief check-ins, inspections, and routine questions about whether expectations are being met help prevent small concerns from becoming larger problems.

Professional Management

The cleaning provider—not the client's office manager—should manage employee training, supervision, quality control, corrective action, and continuous improvement. The organization's role is to communicate expectations and provide appropriate feedback, not to supervise the provider's day-to-day operations.

Continuous Improvement

Buildings and operations change. Strong relationships mature as the provider learns the facility, the organization provides useful feedback, communication becomes more efficient, and the program improves. A successful relationship should generally require less management attention as it matures, not more.

A Sustainable Program

The scope, frequency, staffing, and available resources should be realistic enough to deliver consistently month after month. An extensive scope that cannot be maintained is less valuable than a focused program that reliably meets the organization's priorities.

Chapter 12 — Questions to Ask Before Choosing a Provider

1. Are we comparing the recommended cleaning programs on an apples-to-apples basis?
2. Does the recommendation reflect how our building actually operates?
3. Does the scope address the areas and outcomes that matter most to our organization?
4. Are the included services, exclusions, periodic services, and responsibilities clear?
5. How will quality be monitored and legitimate concerns corrected?
6. Will we know exactly whom to contact?
7. How will material changes to occupancy, traffic, operating hours, or scope be handled?
8. Does the program appear realistic and sustainable?
9. Will this provider reduce our management workload?
10. Which company gives us the greatest confidence two years from now—not just the lowest price today?

References Are Valuable—Ask Why

References can provide useful insight into reliability, communication, professionalism, and how a provider responds over time. But every reference evaluates value differently. One organization may be satisfied because service is inexpensive, another because communication is exceptional, and another because detailed cleaning is its highest priority.

Do not stop at asking whether the reference is satisfied. Ask what they value most, how concerns are handled, whether the provider adapted as needs changed, and whether they would make the same decision again. The most useful reference is often the one whose expectations most closely resemble your own.

- What mattered most when you selected this provider?
- What do you value most about the relationship today?
- How does the company respond when something needs attention?
- Has the provider adapted as your facility or expectations changed?
- Would you choose the same provider again? Why?

DECISION POINT

The best proposal is not automatically the longest, the cheapest, or the most expensive. It is the clearest, most realistic recommendation for supporting the organization's actual needs.

Conclusion - Choosing a Program That Can Be Defended

Why can two buildings of the same size cost very different amounts to clean? Because buildings are only part of the equation. People, daily operations, layout, expectations, professional judgment, communication, consistency, and the resources required to deliver the work all influence the recommended program.

A proposal is more than a monthly number. It is a recommendation for how one company believes the workplace should be supported over time. Understanding that recommendation helps organizations compare programs more thoughtfully, ask better questions, and make decisions with greater confidence.

The objective is not simply to find the lowest price or assume the highest price must be best. The objective is to choose a realistic, sustainable cleaning program that supports the organization's people, operations, and long-term expectations.

Long after the monthly price has been forgotten, employees, visitors, and managers will continue experiencing the quality of the decision.

> **FINAL THOUGHT**
>
> **The best commercial cleaning program is not the one that demands attention. It is the one that quietly earns trust and allows everyone else to focus on what they do best.**

Frequently Asked Questions

Common questions about commercial cleaning proposals and program value.

Is commercial cleaning priced by square footage?

Square footage provides useful context, but it does not describe occupancy, traffic, layout, restroom use, flooring, expectations, or the amount of labor required. Two buildings of the same size can require very different programs.

Why can two proposals for the same building be so different?

Companies may make different professional judgments about frequency, staffing, workflow, supervision, quality control, communication, and the resources required to meet expectations. The difference is not automatically evidence that one provider is right and another is wrong.

What if our organization provides the scope of work?

The same evaluation principles still apply. Confirm that every provider interpreted the scope the same way, identified assumptions or exceptions, and included enough resources to deliver it consistently. A common scope creates a stronger comparison only when the interpretation and service expectations are also common.

Does a lower price always mean lower quality?

No. A lower-priced recommendation may offer excellent value when it is realistic and aligned with the organization's needs. A higher price also does not guarantee better service. The important question is why the programs differ and what value each is expected to provide.

Should I ask how many labor hours my building will receive?

It is usually more helpful to discuss expected results, quality control, communication, and the provider's process for delivering the agreed-upon scope. Labor hours are internal planning estimates, not a guaranteed quantity of time or an automatic basis for discounts. Focusing too closely on hours can reward slower work and distract from the more important question: are the agreed-upon results being delivered consistently?

Why are paper products and soap usually billed separately?

They are variable consumable costs. Usage can change substantially with occupancy and traffic. Separate billing or billing based on consumption often avoids building a large usage estimate into a fixed monthly price.

Are stripping, waxing, machine scrubbing, and carpet extraction included?

Routine sweeping, vacuuming, and mopping are generally included in recurring service. Specialized floor and carpet projects are commonly quoted separately because they occur periodically and require additional equipment, materials, and labor.

What should happen when something is missed?

The concern should be acknowledged, corrected promptly, followed up on, and used as an opportunity to prevent recurrence. Consistency is demonstrated through the response, not through an unrealistic claim that nothing will ever be missed.

How often should a commercial building be cleaned?

There is no universal schedule. The appropriate frequency depends on occupancy, traffic, business type, operating hours, facility use, expectations, and priorities. A professional walkthrough helps determine a realistic program.

Should we change providers because another proposal is cheaper?

Not necessarily. Consider communication, consistency, management time, confidence, transition costs, and whether the current provider is meeting expectations. A modest price difference may not outweigh the value of a dependable relationship.

What is the most important factor when comparing proposals?

Confidence: confidence that expectations are understood, the program is realistic, communication will be professional, concerns will be addressed, and the relationship can support the organization over time.

Companion Resource - Selecting the Right Cleaning Partner Worksheet

A practical side-by-side worksheet for comparing service plans, not just prices.

The companion worksheet helps decision-makers compare providers side by side without reducing the decision to a numerical score. It provides room to identify each provider, record observations about scope, communication, quality control, sustainability, confidence, and monthly investment, then document the preferred provider and the primary reason.

How to Use the Worksheet

Complete the worksheet after reviewing each proposal. Identify Providers A, B, and C; record what each company emphasized; note unanswered questions; compare the recommended programs; and document the preferred provider and primary reason. The worksheet intentionally avoids a rigid scoring formula because organizations do not all value the same outcomes equally.

> **PRACTICAL USE**
>
> **The worksheet is intentionally one page and is supplied as a separate editable Excel and print-ready PDF companion resource.**

Methodology and Evidence Boundaries

How practitioner experience, public guidance, and modeled examples were combined in this guide.

This guide combines practitioner observations from commercial cleaning operations with publicly available government guidance, industry resources, and modeled educational examples. It distinguishes among public guidance, common operational principles, and professional experience.

Examples are hypothetical and do not represent actual clients, proposals, pricing, staffing plans, or confidential business data. Claims involving cleaning and disinfection guidance were checked against current official sources before publication.

Evidence Boundaries

- Square footage is treated as one workload factor, not a complete pricing formula.
- Labor planning examples are educational and do not disclose proprietary estimating formulas or provider-specific margins.
- A higher price is not presented as proof of better service, and a lower price is not presented as proof of lower quality.
- Cleaning is presented as one operational service and not as a complete infection-prevention, wellness, or safety program.
- Professional observations are not treated as universal requirements.

Sources and References

Selected evidence used to develop this guide. Direct links are provided for verification.

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “Cleaning and Disinfecting.” Updated June 3, 2025.

[2] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. “When and How to Clean and Disinfect a Facility.” Updated April 16, 2024.

[3] U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. “Six Steps for Safe & Effective Disinfectant Use.” Updated April 1, 2026.

[4] Occupational Safety and Health Administration. “Cleaning Industry - Overview.”

[5] Occupational Safety and Health Administration. “Protecting Workers Who Use Cleaning Chemicals.” OSHA Publication 3512.

[6] ISSA - The Association for Cleaning & Facility Solutions. “Healthy Buildings: Helping Drive Better Outcomes for Business & Public Health.”

SOURCE NOTE

Online guidance may change over time. Sources were reviewed and accessed July 16, 2026.

About INVO Cleaning Services

Commercial cleaning experience translated into practical decision support.

INVO Cleaning Services is a veteran-owned commercial cleaning company serving businesses throughout the Michiana region. Drawing on practical experience in commercial cleaning operations, walkthroughs, proposal development, quality management, and long-term client relationships, INVO created this guide to help organizations make better-informed decisions - whether they ultimately select INVO or another qualified provider.

INVO believes successful commercial cleaning begins with understanding the organization, establishing realistic expectations, communicating openly, and consistently delivering the services that have been agreed upon. The company's approach emphasizes professionalism, accountability, and long-term relationships because commercial cleaning is more than a recurring task list; it is an ongoing partnership built on trust.

About the Executive Guide Series

INVO Executive Guides are designed to help business and facility decision-makers understand commercial cleaning choices, compare recommendations more fairly, and establish realistic expectations before selecting or changing a service provider.

PUBLICATION NOTE

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