

The Commercial Cleaning Scope Checklist

Everything worth settling *before* you sign a commercial cleaning contract in New York. Take it into a meeting with any vendor — including us.

Why this exists. Almost every complaint about commercial cleaning traces back to the same thing: a scope document that never said how much labour was being bought. A vendor cannot be held to a standard that was never written down. Everything below is designed to get it written down.

1. Before you ask anyone for a price

- ☐ **Measure the actual cleanable area.**
Not the leased square footage. Subtract areas nobody services.
- ☐ **Count restrooms, pantries and kitchens.**
These drive more of the price than total floor area does.
- ☐ **Note the floor types and rough split.**
Carpet, vinyl, sealed concrete, stone. Each has a different labour rate.
- ☐ **Check your lease first.**
In many Class A towers, suite cleaning is already bundled into base rent. You may be about to buy something twice.
- ☐ **Find your building's vendor requirements.**
Insurance limits, additional-insured wording, vendor registration, access hours.

2. What the scope document must state in writing

- ☐ **Cleaner-hours per visit, and crew size.**
The single most important line. Without it, 'clean the office' can honestly mean 45 minutes or three hours.
- ☐ **Frequency next to every single task.**
Nightly, weekly, monthly, quarterly. A task with no frequency is not in scope.
- ☐ **What is explicitly excluded.**
Interior windows above reach, dish washing, refrigerator interiors, server rooms, exterior glass, floor stripping.
- ☐ **Who supplies consumables, and whether they are billed.**
Paper, soap, liners. This is the most common surprise line on invoice one.
- ☐ **Periodic work, with a schedule and a price.**
Carpet extraction, floor restoration, high dusting. Named months, not 'as needed'.

3. Contract terms worth reading twice

- ☐ **Notice period AND the auto-renewal window.**
These are two different dates. Missing the renewal window can commit you for another twelve months.
- ☐ **A named crew, with a cap on substitutions.**
Plus advance notice before the people in your space change.
- ☐ **A monthly inspection score, in writing, with a floor.**
85 on a 100-point scale is a reasonable Class B/C target. Ask what happens below it.
- ☐ **A service credit for a missed visit.**
Defined in advance, so a miss is a calculation rather than an argument.
- ☐ **Price-increase mechanics.**
How much notice, tied to what, and how often it can happen.

4. Ask every vendor these five questions

- ☐ **How many cleaner-hours per visit is this price built on?**
Watch how fast the answer comes. A real operation knows it instantly.
- ☐ **Are the cleaners your W-2 employees or subcontracted?**
If an uninsured contract worker is injured in your suite, the exposure can land on you.
- ☐ **What is screened before someone gets a key?**
Identity, work authorisation, criminal background, references actually called.
- ☐ **Who walks the work, and how often?**
Daily supervisor verification is what stops quality drifting after the first quarter.
- ☐ **Can you send a sample of the monthly inspection report?**
If none exists, the absence of measurement is the real answer.

5. Red flags

- ☐ **A price quoted without a walkthrough.**
Nobody can scope a commercial space from a phone call.
- ☐ **A quote well below the others with an identical scope.**
It is almost never generosity. It is fewer hours for the same words.
- ☐ **Reluctance to state labour hours.**
Usually means hours are the variable that absorbs pressure from other accounts.
- ☐ **No named account manager.**
You will be escalating into a voicemail box at 7pm.
- ☐ **Certifications implied but not evidenced.**
Ask for the certificate number and the public directory listing. Apply this to everyone.

One honest note. We publish this because the same checklist that protects you from a bad vendor is the one that makes a good vendor easy to work with. If you use it on us and we cannot answer something, that is worth knowing before you sign, not after.

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