

Facilitator — April/May 2014

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From the Inside Out

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Tackling critical preventative maintenance areas

Within our industry, facilities professionals are hired to protect company assets in an efficient and economical manner. There are, at a minimum, four main preventative maintenance areas that need to be addressed for each location:

- HVAC/refrigeration
- Hood/ductwork cleaning
- Fire suppression
- Grease-trap pumping

Determine Scope of Work

To address these areas, the first step is to consider the proper scope of work for each item listed above. Usually your organization will have already established these, but if one does not, it is important to obtain references from equipment manufacturers for their recommendations or the service vendors. There are several factors that determine a good scope of work, including the type of equipment under the hood (fryers, grills, ovens, steamers, etc.), the size of the trap and others. Work with the equipment manufacturer, or national vendors, peers and other RFMA members to determine the best scope of work.

The Bidding Process

Next, bid out the work accordingly. The number of stores and their locations will determine whether you need a national vendor versus a local one. Again, discuss it with your vendors to obtain references and ask targeted questions about the vendor's performance, ongoing service and customer service. Utilizing RFMA vendors is highly recommended as they are themselves professional, competent partners.

Tracking the Work

Once you choose a contractor, you'll need a way to track their work to ensure it is completed in a timely manner. A simple Excel spreadsheet can accomplish this by listing the contractor name, yearly frequency, scheduled date of service, actual date of service and a comments section. Expect that dates will be missed and explanations will be needed from contractors to assist them with their scheduling.

Simple schedules include quarterly hood cleaning, trap pumping and HVAC maintenance. Each vendor can provide the scheduled service dates per store and the actual dates when invoices are received. Updated spreadsheets should be sent to the contractors every month to assist them with their scheduling. By reviewing these spreadsheets periodically, you can ensure repair and maintenance expenses in the long run and satisfying federal, state and local codes, which ensure the protection of the company assets.

Signing Off on the Work

Lastly, the quality of the work will need to be supervised. If the facility manager is not available on site during the service visit, before-and-after photos showing the work is a must. You'll need input from the operations department to ensure the work was done properly. All vendor invoices will need a service ticket with an explanation of the work completed before paying. Periodic written performance review forms should be sent to operations for contractor evaluation.

Seasonal Tip

Obviously all of the preventative maintenance tasks are important, but with the summer season approaching, make sure the preventative maintenance checks on the HVAC systems are completed before the heat hits. This work should be scheduled approximately two to four weeks before any air conditioning is needed. Check the scheduled service dates with your HVAC vendor to ensure the work is completed on time. This simple step can prevent an expensive repair and keep your facility cool.

All of these items are imperative for operating any restaurant to keep the employees and customers safe, minimize repair costs and comply with any codes.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at the RFMA office at (972) 805-0905 or email me at jeff@rfmaonline.com. Dover and out!

Jeff Dover's facility career started in 1985. He was employed by several major chains (Ponderosa, Steak & Ale, Bennigan's, TGIFriday's, Fuddruggers and recently Five Guys Bistros). His technical education enabled him to take the lead as Energy Manager, Facilities Manager and Director of Facilities at the various brands.