

Crystal Clear

Paul Collum

The benefits of professionally cleaned windows

Though dirt and debris can affect the lifespan of glass and the framing, commercial window cleaning is notoriously low on a business' maintenance list.

No matter what business you're in, appearances matter. The way your business presents itself says a lot to your current customers and prospective ones. For restaurants, the focus is on food quality, but don't discount the importance of clean windows. They make a difference in customer perception and in their dining experience. They also can help reduce energy costs by letting in more natural light.

You may think it's enough for restaurant staff members to clean the windows. They may use Lysol wipes or a spray bottle and towel, but this smears the dirt and debris around the window and can leave a fog or haze on the glass. Professional window cleaners are trained to remove dirt and particulates with specialized tools and techniques so the windows shine.

Choosing a Professional

When you're ready to hire a professional window cleaner, look for uniformed and courteous professionals. The company should offer training programs that meet OSHA-approved standards. Training programs can include in-house training programs and weekly safety trainings that adhere to OSHA 10 and International Window Cleaning Association (IWCA) safety certifications. Finally, and most importantly, confirm the company has the proper insurance to cover repairs and workers' compensation. Specific coverage for scratched glass should be included in their general liability policies.

Cleaning Schedule

You should professionally clean windows depending on these few factors:

Location: Windows close to highways, busy streets and even oceans accumulate dirt and grime faster. Carbon emissions and dirt from passing vehicles may require restaurants to clean their windows weekly. Hard water stains may be found on restaurant windows located as far as 10 miles away from salty oceans. If hard-water stains are not cleaned off, they can sun bake or etch into the glass, and your only remedy is replacement.

Landscaping: Sap-dripping trees, mulching, grass mowing and power washing can project dirt and debris onto the window. If not cleaned off, it can create corrosion and scratches on the surface of the glass. The more frequently the grass is cut and the sidewalk is power washed, the more frequently the windows should be cleaned.

Weather: In areas with snowy seasons, windows can collect a white crust of salt and dirt. This can cause hard-water stains over time and replacement of your windows might be necessary. After snow melts, immediately clean the windows to prevent corrosion and deterioration of the glass. During a rainy spring season, wash the windows frequently to remove the mineral deposits left by the rain. With rain comes blooming flowers and pollen. The rain and particles in the air leave mineral deposits that can deplete your windows.

Table proximity: Windows adjacent to dining tables are susceptible to finger and hand prints as well as food splatter. This makes your windows look dull and grimy, resulting in dissatisfied customers who question the cleanliness of their surroundings.

As a basic guideline, restaurant windows should be professionally cleaned on both sides every two weeks. Staff members can perform small touch-ups in between cleanings. Moisture and grease can build up within that time period, and dirty, grimy, fingerprinted windows are unappetizing and detract from the image of quality you're trying to project.

Paul Collum, Franchise Support Specialist, has been with Fish Window Cleaning Services for three years. He also sits on the Board of Directors for the International Window Cleaning Association and is the Chair of the Education Committee and Co-Chair of the Glass Committee.