

Facilities Management from A to Z

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The cleaning of windows in commercial premises is one of the most undervalued services in the facilities portfolio. However, it can have a direct impact upon the well being of building occupants, can affect the reputation of the organisation itself and is an area where careful management of health, safety and environmental concerns is critical.

Glazing plays an increasingly important part in modern architecture. Windows are used to maximise natural light in the workplace with consequential health, employee morale and productivity benefits. Studies have shown that natural light lifts spirits, makes spaces appear larger and lessens demands on electricity. Natural light also has been shown to reduce eyestrain and even decrease absenteeism in the workplace.

The first impression of a building façade and exterior makes a big difference to how potential tenants and their clients perceive a building. Dirty windows, atria, canopies and porches can have a detrimental effect on an organisations image which regular and expert cleaning could avoid.

Throughout the evolution of building design, cleaning techniques have needed to rise to the challenge of regularly keeping windows clean in places which are often very exposed and inaccessible. Access solutions including cradles, the bosuns chair, abseiling and cherry pickers are common solutions to this problem.

However, despite new technology, ladders are still widely used within the commercial window cleaning industry. Confined spaces and places where there are many obstructions, still call for the use of a ladder to reach areas where other access machinery is inaccessible. The Ladder method also allows the window cleaner to clean the window sills and frames that other methods would miss.

Reach and wash systems have become increasingly popular. This is where the window cleaner cleans the windows from the safety of the ground using waterfed pole. The water is pumped up a light weight telescopic pole which can extend to heights of 20m. The water is jet sprayed through a soft bristled brush at the top of the pole that is used to remove the dirt off the window. An overhead rinse on the dual hose systems can also be used as a detergent dispenser for more vigorous cleaning jobs. The use of Waterfed Poles removes the need to work at height which in turn dramatically reduces injuries and in some cases death from falling off ladders.

The Federation for Window Cleaners FWC is the Trade Association for the industry providing useful advice on their website www.f-w-c.co.uk