

Facilities Make Life Easier by Specifying New CIMS Service Standard

More and more property managers and contract negotiators are ridding themselves of the headache typically associated with finding a quality service provider. How? By taking advantage of a new standard created by the cleaning industry, and endorsed by the International Facility Management Association (IFMA), to qualify potential janitorial service providers.

From the Air National Guard to state authorities, airports, school districts, colleges, and international financial institutions, specifying compliance with the new Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) has been a no brainer for those looking to more effectively outsource janitorial services. Frustrated with the difficulty in finding providers who are well-managed and deliver consistent, quality and customer-focused service, buyers have found CIMS to be a valuable pre-qualification tool that helps take guesswork out of the equation.

Less than a year after its introduction, many facilities already are specifying that their contractors achieve CIMS certification to be awarded a janitorial contract. The certification uses third-party, on-site assessments to assure the contractor has met the requirements in five categories of management best practices: quality systems; service delivery; human resources; health, safety, and environmental stewardship; and management commitment.

The Air National Guard Readiness Center (ANGRC) at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland was the first organization to recognize the value of CIMS and the ability of certification to offer assurance that the company hired is managed effectively and capable of meeting expectations. The ANGRC, therefore, quickly incorporated CIMS into its cleaning-service requirements which were viewed as consistent with the strict standards the group has established for its high-profile facilities (Andrews is the home of Air Force One).

"When we're hiring a cleaning company, we are dedicated to go out and look at as many as possible," says Senior Master Sgt. Mark Gyure, responsible for the center's 200,000 square feet of facilities. "If I look at 100, and 95 of them are not CIMS certified, that's 95 bidders I can cross off my list before I go any further."

Many facilities have followed the ANGRC's lead, including

the international financial institution Morgan Stanley which has included a bonus in the "Key Performance Indicators" schedule of its specifications that provides a direct financial incentive for certification. CIMS was included in lieu of ISO certification.

"We elected to pursue CIMS as an alternative to ISO to validate the various industry-specific, value-added service-delivery and accountability components we had instituted," says Mike Eisenberg, president of Guardian Services,

which secured the contract due to CIMS certification.

Heartland Community College in Normal, IL, has followed suit, mandating CIMS certification in its cleaning RFP, and awarding an extension to Peoria, IL-based Vonachen Services, which certified in 2007.

Facilities also have received benefits by participating in their contractors' pursuit of certification. By opening their sites to the audit process they were able to get a free, third-party assessment of the services they receive.

"I got a letter asking if I would agree to be a part of this, and I was delighted to do it," notes Kevin Weber, of Jones, LaSalle Americas, who participated in the assessment process for his cleaning provider, Norridge, IL-based Kimco Corp. "I was on board with anything that would help our facility."

In-house organizations also have begun to certify their operations as a way to strengthen their services and demonstrate to upper management that they are as effective as for-profit cleaning companies.

Find out more about specifying CIMS in your facilities, by contacting Dan Wagner, ISSA Director of CIMS at 800-225-4772 (North America) or daniel@issa.com. The developer of CIMS, ISSA – The Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association, makes numerous resources available, including sample RFQ specifications, a list of certified cleaning firms, and a free compliance checklist at issa.com/standard.



IFMA and ISSA will host a free Webinar October 1, "Helping Facility Managers Increase the Odds of Cleaning Success." Visit www.issa.com/events for details.

