

Caution: Before start reading this section, make sure that you have already gone through the main sections of EASY READING BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT TOOL FOR WOMEN. By reading the tool, you will have clearer understanding on processes and requirements to start and manage the business

Starting a Cleaning Business in Calgary and Surrounding Area



This guide will help you start a cleaning business in Calgary and surrounding areas. A cleaning business is a relatively simple business. The City of Calgary has a detailed guide on how to start the Cleaning Business on their website. See Links to Important Websites section.

Business Overview

Cleaning businesses clean the interior of offices, homes and other buildings and cleaning may include washing the exterior of a building.

Cleaning businesses operate through individual cleaning service contracts between a company and a person or business. Customers can be either residential, commercial, or both.

Cleaning businesses are good business for:

- People who are attentive to detail and have a strong work ethic
- People who feel comfortable performing manual labor for many hours
- People who start this type of business usually have a passion for cleanliness
- Entrepreneurs who tend to work long hours and can communicate with different types of people

Ideal customers are long-term corporate or multi-year clients willing to sign service contracts.

Cleaning businesses make money by charging clients for various cleaning services. These charges can be per hour, per square foot, or per contract.

The cleaning business does not need huge investments. Initial investments require basic cleaning supplies available at supply stores. Some basic supplies include garbage can liners, spray bottles, trash bags, buckets, feather dusters and dusting rags, mops, toilet brushes, paper towels, squeegees, general or all-purpose cleaners, toilet-specific cleaners, and floor cleaners. See Links to Important Websites section.

Daily routine of a cleaner

- Day-to-day activities of a cleaning business includes vacuuming, mopping, dusting, sweeping, window cleaning, and general cleaning of rooms and possibly exterior surfaces of some buildings
- Business owners also maintain customer accounts and invoices
- Smaller cleaning businesses typically maintain a small client load
- Larger companies spend time maintaining and signing customer accounts

Most cleaning companies have websites and business phone number. Client appointments are booked either online or over the phone.

Steps to Start a Cleaning Company

Cleaning companies require a municipal license from the City of Calgary for any of the following types of cleaning:

1. Housekeepers
2. Cleaners
3. Residential cleaning
4. Commercial cleaning
5. Window washing
6. Chimney and furnace cleaning
7. Pressure washing exterior windows and walls
8. Janitorial and caretaker services
9. Laundromats
10. Dry cleaning plants

All types of cleaning companies need a land use and fire permit from the City of Calgary

Cleaning services and Contractors also need to have police clearance and provincial permits.

When a contract is set up with a cleaning company in Canada, that company will take care of my business registration and all permits and licenses.

As cleaning involves the handling of cleaning chemicals, the business staff require certification to handle hazardous materials. Workplace Hazardous Material Information System (WHIMS) training and certification are available online and through classes. Certification is valid for three years but it is recommended to have refresher once a year. This certification course is about:

1. How to handle and dispose of hazardous products
2. How and where to store hazardous materials
3. Know about the labeling of hazardous materials
4. When and where to use the different materials in the cleaning process

See Links to Important Websites section.

Recommendations for Cleaning Businesses

1. Get professional liability insurance for your business. It protects the client from any damages that occur due to errors, omissions or negligence when performing professional services.
2. Cleaning business staff and owners should drive and have their own vehicle, especially residential cleaners. Saving travel time between cleaning jobs and carrying supplies and equipment is important.
3. Always sign a service contract with your clients. A service contract is a contract between the cleaning service provider and clients. Service contracts clarify:
 - Client expectations
 - The legal relationship and minimize risk
 - Payment terms and conditions
 - Service level expectations

See Links to Important Websites section.

4. Consider running a business is through a contract with a cleaning company. The cleaning company is then responsible to sign and manage the service contract with the client.
5. When signing a service contract with a commercial client check into storage and supplies provided by the client. Some commercial cleaning contracts provide you with storage places and basic supplies for cleaning.
6. Consider purchasing Bond protection for your customer protection. It is different from insurance. It adds to the credibility of the business.