



COMPANY:

Fort Rucker

HEADQUARTERS:

Fort Rucker, AL, USA



Are All Cleaning Service Providers Capable of Delivering on the Services Promised?

For the past fifteen years, Orrin Israel has been tasked with handling the service providers who are responsible for cleaning and maintaining more than 800,000 square feet spread out over 115 facilities at Ft. Rucker in Alabama. During his work as Ft. Rucker's Director of Facilities, he has found that selecting a quality cleaning organization that can be entrusted with the health and cleanliness of the facilities can be quite a challenge. After all, how can one be assured that the cleaning organization that is hired is capable of delivering on the services promised? Frustrated with the uncertainty associated with selecting a cleaning service provider, he set out to find a third party management certification which offers him a level of assurance that the company he hires is professionally and effectively managed and capable of efficiently delivering quality services.

Israel's first step was to inquire with ISSA, the worldwide cleaning industry association. Israel was already using the association's Official "540 Cleaning Times" booklet to workload Fort Rucker's facilities and determine appropriate staffing levels for janitorial services and hoped that ISSA would have a tool that he could implement into the contractor selection process. Little did he know that the association's Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) and certification program would be exactly what he was looking for – a Standard based on universally accepted management principles that are the hallmarks of successful cleaning organizations and a certification program that requires a comprehensive, third party evaluation of a cleaning organization's management framework.

Upon taking time to learn more about the Standard and certification program, Israel became more impressed. He relished the Standard's comprehensive nature and specific criteria, discovering that the CIMS elements cover exactly the kind of things he all-too-often found lacking in his previous experience with cleaning providers. For example, frustrated with dealing with "custodial contractors that utilized custodial staff that had no training in how to properly perform the many tasks required to keep the facility clean and healthy," he was pleased that CIMS includes a strict requirement that both cleaning and management personnel receive procedural and safety training.

Israel was also impressed to learn that the third-party assessors confirm compliance with the CIMS criteria by actually visiting a cleaning organization's headquarters and customer accounts and observing work as it is being performed in the field. There they interview management and cleaning personnel, especially to assure that safety and procedural training have actually been conducted as required by the Standard.

Israel's past experience had taught him that "contractors can range from total failures to delivering an acceptable level of performance" and he wanted to ensure that he avoided the "failures." That being said, he recognized CIMS and certification as a tool to help offer such assurance and raise the likelihood that a cleaning service provider is professionally managed and among the best firms in the industry. Israel, therefore, elected to require CIMS certification to be eligible to be awarded a janitorial contract.

Specifically, Israel included language in Ft. Rucker's contract specifications document noting that "The contractor shall hold a current ISSA Cleaning Industry Management Standard-Green Building (CIMS-GB) certification or shall obtain ISSA Cleaning Industry Management Standard-Green Building (CIMS-GB) certification within 180 days of the contract's start date."

“ By going through the CIMS and CIMS-GB certification process the contractor improves their operations, increases the efficiency with which they deliver services, trains their staff, giving them better job skills and making them professionals, and ultimately gives the organization a leg up on the competition. ”

—Orrin Israel
Fort Rucker

BEST TIP FOR COMPANIES THINKING ABOUT CERTIFICATION:

Always remember that you get what you pay for, so look to partner with a quality, customer focused, CIMS-GB certified cleaning provider, in order to assure that you will be working with an experienced and trained staff that has the ability to maintain the facilities in accordance with the performance work standards in the contract.

Requiring CIMS-Green Building certification in addition to traditional CIMS management certification offered even greater value. Faced with increased governmental and private focus on green initiatives, Israel recognized the importance of making sure that a cleaning contractor is capable of delivering quality green cleaning services. Setting forth the key elements of a comprehensive green cleaning program, CIMS-GB assured him that the cleaning company he hires can partner with him in providing a clean and healthy indoor environment at Fort Rucker, while aligning its services with the Fort's overall sustainability goals. In addition, since CIMS-GB is based on the green cleaning requirements of LEED: EBOM, a CIMS-GB certified contractor is prepared to partner with a facility in the LEED: EBOM certification process. Israel was especially intrigued by the inclusion of CIMS/CIMS-GB in the new draft of LEED: EBOM, meaning that Ft. Rucker will likely be able to achieve a point toward LEED certification just for using a CIMS-GB certified contractor.



Israel admits that traditionally, he had based his selection of a cleaning provider on whether they “offered the lowest cost of service and were technically acceptable.” However, having had unsatisfactory experiences with the lowest bidders, he began to look at cleaning as an investment and took a deeper look at the company that would have great responsibility for safeguarding the health of Ft. Rucker's facilities. Concluding that quite often “you get what you pay for” when selecting a cleaning service provider, he now focuses on competitive pricing and quality services. His goal is now to partner with a quality, CIMS-GB certified organization in order to be assured that he is working with an “experienced, trained staff that has the ability to maintain the facilities in accordance with the performance work standards in the contract.” This fits perfectly with Israel's belief that “the health and safety of occupants in the buildings is first and foremost. A clean and healthy facility allows the employees within the buildings receiving custodial service to concentrate on their assigned tasks and not have to worry about custodial issues”.

Ultimately, Israel views requiring CIMS/CIMS-GB certification as a “Win – Win.” “We get a contractor that is professional with a trained and knowledgeable staff,” he stresses. “At the same time, by going through the CIMS and CIMS-GB certification process the contractor improves their operations, increases the efficiency with which they deliver services, trains their staff, giving them better job skills and making them professionals, and ultimately gives the organization a leg up on the competition.”

ABOUT CIMS:

CIMS is the first comprehensive management and operations standard for cleaning organizations. Administered by ISSA and the American Institute for Cleaning Sciences, CIMS is a standard of excellence designed to help building service contractors and in-house service providers develop quality, customer-centered organizations.

The CIMS framework is built around five quality principles that have proven to be the hallmarks of well-managed, successful cleaning operations:

- Quality Systems
- Human Resources
- Management Commitment
- Service Delivery
- Health, Safety & Environmental Stewardship

Why should a company certify to CIMS? Daniel Wagner, director of facility service programs for ISSA, explains: “Implementation of the standard's elements affords an organization a tremendous opportunity to validate its management systems and processes. Professional, customer-centered cleaning organizations finally have a touchstone resource, a common rallying point around which all members of the industry can gather and work toward achieving an unprecedented level of professionalism and excellence.”



For more information visit
www.issa.com/standard
or call 800-225-4772