

THE (UNSEEN) IMPORTANCE OF POST-CONSTRUCTION CLEANING

November 2019, ABM.co.uk, By Alex Blake, ABM Critical Solutions



Alex Blake, Business Development Director for ABM Critical Solutions explores the challenges faced by post-construction cleaning teams in order to keep up with the rising demand of cloud storage.

It's no surprise that we are moving away from file and object storing of data at a rapid pace. In the UK alone, growth is forecast at 40,000 square metres of new data centre raised floor space per annum¹. The use of block storage saved in the public cloud is increasing as businesses continue to switch to cloud storage. With every new business and the regular growth of large corporations, new-build data centres are in high demand. And with every data centre build, comes a post-construction cleaning plan.

Air contamination is the enemy of data storage, meaning only impeccable spaces can be cleared for use post-construction. But what are the biggest considerations for technical cleaning teams looking to keep up with demand?

Industry Qualifications

Working on a construction site brings with it a wealth of health & safety regulations. Cleaning teams must have CSCS cards which allow them to work onsite as well as being IPAF certified and trained in working at height. Only teams with fully up-to-date paperwork should take on a post-construction clean to ensure no bumps in the road!

Level of Involvement

A challenge faced by post-construction cleaning teams is that they aren't always brought into the clean as early as they like. It is commonplace for the onsite builders to complete the first stage of a post-construction clean; commonly called 'the builders' clean'. In an ideal world, the critical team would be onsite to complete all three stages; builders', maintenance and critical. If you get the 'builders' clean' right, it will decrease the amount of subsequent work needed to complete the job, so it's important to communicate this to the client in the tender process.

Location

As ABM Critical Solutions is a UK based business, post-construction cleaning teams need to be flexible and ready to travel for projects sometimes lasting over a year. The challenge faced by operations management is finding a reliable and qualified team that are ready to fly to a site on short notice. Places like Ireland and the Nordics are becoming increasingly popular for new build data centres in addition to the main 'FLAP' (Frankfurt, London, Amsterdam and Paris) locations. Being flexible in terms of team changes and travelling is something critical teams face on a daily basis, and therefore a great deal of attention to forward planning is essential.

Additionally, many countries have intricate tax regulation for foreign companies and workers, especially within the construction industry. It is essential that critical cleaning companies have compliant tax solutions in place before they are appointed.

Time Constraints

Getting the timing right is another consideration for critical cleaning teams. Working alongside hundreds of contractors at different paces can be challenging, especially for the cleaning team who is tasked with the final job before the data centre is functional. Additionally, the demands created by the roll out of 5G means timelines have become tighter and deadlines more final and therefore it is imperative that critical teams keep up. This is achieved first by meticulous planning and then delivered by a professional, highly skilled team.

With the speed of data centre construction showing no sign of slowing, critical cleaning teams need to rise to the challenges they face by ensuring they keep one step ahead on training, management, and planning; while maintaining the flexibility needed to cope with inevitable delays that come with working side-by-side with other trades.



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