

# How to Choose a Great Home Cleaning Service



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## How to Choose a Great Home Cleaning Service and Ensure Top Notch Service

**Deal with a professional company** - There are many persons or "private parties" that will clean your home and may do a good job. However, if you hire an individual rather than a company to clean your home and pay them a certain amount in a year; you are their employer. If they fail to pay proper taxes on the money you pay them, you could end up being liable (not to mention the next time you are up for a cabinet position, this is sure to end up all over CNN!)

Also, if someone comes into your home to work for you, and is hurt or injured, you could be liable. When you hire a professional maid service, you are, ideally, avoiding all these risks. The service owner should carry the burden of payroll taxes, Worker's Compensation, and liability insurance. A professional service will also offer training for their employees. All of the risk and liability is no longer your responsibility as the customer. That kind of peace of mind is worth an extra \$20. Isn't it?

### **Go for professional, but not on image alone** -

Just because a business has glossy business cards, and a Web site that rivals Microsoft, you still need to do your homework. Keep these questions in mind when making your decision on which cleaning company to hire:

**Who will be cleaning my house?** Do they use employees or independent contractors?

Whatever the answer is, you need reassurance that you are getting the protections that should come with a professional service.

**Do they use individuals or teams?** Ask them why they use the model they do. Different business models work for different reasons. Just be sure the company you want to hire is doing it

for the right reasons. The IRS has a useful guide on their Web site to determine what defines an employee and independent contractor relationship.

### **Do they perform criminal background checks and pre-screen employees?**

Every service should have a policy for background checks and pre-screening employees. With today's technology, even the smallest company has access to low cost tools over the Internet. You will want to know the policy they follow and what their process is for due diligence when hiring.

**Are they properly insured?** Insurance includes general liability insurance and Workers Compensation.

### **Do they offer a satisfaction guarantee? What does it entail?**

How long after the service is performed, do I have to call to report problems that need to be addressed? No matter how good a service is, or how great the employee training program, it is imperfect human beings cleaning the house. As the customer, you should have reassurance that if the team has a "bad day", the company will make it right.

### **Who will have the key to my house? What is the policy?**

How can I be sure I am safe? This should be a huge concern, and most customers don't think to ask this question. Are the keys signed out each day? How are the keys kept at other times? Where are they kept? Are they locked up? Who is responsible for them? If they were to be lost or stolen, are there any markings that identify where they go? Make sure there is nothing to identify your address on the key. Also, ask up front, in the event the key is lost or stolen, what is the replace / re-key policy?

**Are you both on the same page?** All too often, the culprit of the cleaning service-customer relationship going south is a lack of communication. An astute cleaning service owner should walk you through what their service will do for you and your home and give you a clear picture of what you can expect. Be sure that you pay attention to what they tell you. Better yet, perhaps they have flashy print materials that also convey what their service can offer you. Everyone has their "hot buttons" (what clean means to them); what one person thinks is clean may not be "clean" to another person. It's just human nature. For some people it is the bed made just the right way; for others, it is a clean sink. Figure out where you fall from one end to the other in the spectrum of being picky. If what really matters to you is not being done, bring it up. You should not simply assume that it will be done and that they should "just know".

**What should I do if I am not happy with the service I receive?** Perhaps it is not until the first, second, or third cleaning that you discover what your cleaning "hot buttons" are. (Side note: pay attention to what these are. It can save you YEARS of therapy if you pay close attention to what they are). I hope that some of these discoveries will be good things your professional maid service team has done that you did not expect to impact you the way they did. However, if you find "things" that grate

your nerves, you should address them. Make sure it was not simply the day at the office that is affecting your perspective. CALL, express your concerns to the owner/ manager. Believe it or not, the most successful service owners APPRECIATE and welcome constructive criticism. It is the best way to build a better business, and professionals will see your input as a gift. If it is something small, let it slide until the next visit. If it does matter to you, then ask that they send the team back to correct it. They should be happy to do so as soon as reasonably possible. Remember, this is an intimate relationship and relationships require communication; relationships without communication fail!

Now you know what to ask (and you have a few other unsolicited pieces of life changing advice to boot). Ask the right questions; receive the great service you need and enjoy. It is sure to add to the quality of your life. A little insight: the best days will be when you forget the cleaning team is coming and you come home to a clean fresh smelling home ... Nice!

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