

The Importance Of Keeping Business Parking Areas Clean...

Keeping all outside areas clean and properly maintained is becoming increasingly recognized as an important element of successful business property management. Studies have shown that cleanliness ranks as a top factor in determining where people shop, and external cleanliness is seen by many as equally important as that of the interior of the building.

Gauging customer loss due to having unkempt grounds is harder to pin down, however, than doing a similar assessment for a business' interior. The number of people who choose not to patronize a particular business establishment or mall because they 'don't like the looks' is almost a complete unknown, since it is a choice made by many before they ever park and come inside.

In today's highly competitive market, business property managers can't afford the tarnished image caused by cutting back on exterior grounds maintenance, and regular sweeping is arguably the most important component contributing to overall looks.

Following are some of the many reasons why it is so important to retain a professional sweeping contractor on an on-going basis:

- ☞ Outside parking areas are where business owners hope their potential customers will derive an initially favorable 'first impression.' The appearance of the outside area also projects an image of how the rest of the facility will be operated. If the exterior maintenance is slipshod, then potential customers might well expect the internal cleanliness and other affairs of the mall or business to be poorly run as well.
- ☞ People like to patronize the successful. Clearly, all businesses would choose to have a clean parking area, all other considerations aside. The unwillingness or inability to keep a particular area cleaned projects an image of not being successful.
- ☞ Shopping centers are finding maintenance of market share to be an increasingly competitive proposition. It's virtually impossible to develop or retain the desired competitive edge if the grounds on the exterior of the business are unkempt.
- ☞ Even the most beautiful landscaping is negated by a parking lot cluttered with debris. If the parking area contains debris which might puncture a tire, people hesitate to venture in, due to the potential for tire damage.
- ☞ Correct management of stormwater runoff is a big factor for owners of parking areas today. Sweeping is a Best Management Practice (BMP) for stormwater runoff, and a structured sweeping program can help to ensure the business is doing all it can to minimize pollutants in its stormwater runoff stream.
- ☞ When a parking area is clean to begin with, shoppers are less likely to throw trash out of their cars when they come to shop.
- ☞ Sand, dirt and other trash are abrasive, and will shorten the useful life of pavement, as well as the length of service time of any sealcoating, striping, etc.
- ☞ The professionalism of the local business community at large is a composite of the individual images projected by each of the businesses within it. When people have several places in a particular neighborhood or township where they feel comfortable shopping, traffic is increased throughout the entire general area.
- ☞ When a parking area remains unswept for a long enough period, it will attract rodents and other potentially disease-carrying or dangerous animals.
- ☞ Keeping litter picked up reduces the chances of slip-and-fall injuries, as well as the business property's potential liability in any resultant lawsuits.
- ☞ When dirt is allowed to stay on pavement, it quickly starts deteriorating the paving material. This is especially true when enough dirt collects to start plants growing, since their roots cause cracking in cement and asphalt. Replacement costs for pavement far exceed the routine expense of sweeping.

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