

The Cleaning SLA Checklist

Eight clauses to put in every cleaning contract — for property managers, community & HOA managers, and retail center managers. Untracked contracts cost operators an estimated 18–24% of contracted maintenance spend per year; these clauses are how you close that gap.

01 Scope defined by area

List each area explicitly — lobby, restrooms, elevators, amenity rooms, parking, loading — with tasks per area. Reject any scope that just says “common areas.” Vague scope is where service quietly shrinks.

02 Visit frequency, days, and time windows

Specify visits per week, which days, and arrival windows. Match frequency to traffic, not habit — and revisit quarterly as building usage changes.

03 Proof of service on every visit

Require check-in/check-out records plus room-by-room photos, delivered automatically — not on request. This is the single highest-leverage clause: scope decay stops when every visit is documented.

04 Complaint response time

24–48 hour response with a named contact. Log every complaint; the log feeds the monthly quality review.

05 Monthly quality score, reviewed together

Agree on a simple scoring method (inspections + tenant feedback) and review it monthly with the vendor. What gets scored gets managed.

06 Insurance & background checks

Current COI naming the property as additional insured; background-checked, identifiable crew members. Non-negotiable for residential access.

07 Remedies with teeth

Service credits after two missed standards in a month; termination for cause after three. Without remedies, an SLA is a suggestion.

08 No silent auto-renewal

Cap auto-renewal at 12 months and require written re-approval. Benchmark pricing annually; re-bid every 18–24 months so escalators never outrun the market.

2026 cost benchmarks (U.S.)

Building type	Per sq ft, per visit	Notes
Office (recurring, standard)	\$0.07 – \$0.20	Most fall at \$0.10–\$0.18
Residential common areas	\$0.08 – \$0.15	Lobbies, hallways, amenity rooms
Retail / shopping center	\$0.10 – \$0.25	Restrooms & food courts price higher
Medical / specialized	\$0.20 – \$0.35+	Compliance & disinfection standards
One-time deep clean	\$0.25 – \$0.50	Floor care extra

Hourly billing typically runs \$30–\$75 per worker; standard janitorial work most often quotes at \$35–\$60/hour. Major metros (incl. Miami) price 15–30% above national averages.

The 4-step vendor audit (one afternoon per property)

1. Inventory every contract — vendor, scope, price, escalator, renewal date, termination clause. **2. Benchmark each price** against the table above; flag anything 15%+ over range. **3. Check delivery against scope** — pull 90 days of service records; no records means assume decay. **4. Re-quote flagged contracts** — two competing quotes minimum.

Want every clause on this list handled automatically?

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