



4 Ways to Identify a Sanitation Partner That Will Keep Your DC Audit-Ready

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Global demand for food is exploding and industry experts expect it to be more than just a lasting trend. According to the USDA, demand for food is estimated to rise by 70-100% by the year 2050. In turn, this demand will continue to drive significant growth and the need for food processing, production and distribution space. Much of that new space, along with existing facility infrastructure, needs to be sanitized to meet precise specifications for maintaining food safety.

4 Ways to Identify a Sanitation Partner That Will Keep Your DC Audit-Ready

Outsourcing sanitation services will help control costs and reduce burden on internal staff. The key is to find a quality provider that can deliver consistent outcomes and scale as you respond to the market. Here are four ways to identify a capable sanitation partner.

1. Verify staff expertise

One of the benefits of outsourcing is that you don't have to shoulder the burden of hiring your own employees. A qualified sanitation partner will be able to provide certified sanitarians and skilled laborers to work in the facility. Their leadership team should have extensive experience in food and beverage production Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) and distribution so they can collaborate with you to shape a master sanitation schedule (MSS) to maintain audit readiness. They don't just need to understand the basics of sanitizing processing equipment, dry or cold storage, conveyor systems, refrigeration units and packaging machines. They should also be familiar with broader issues impacting sanitation. An expert partner will be proactively engaged with the evolving regulatory environment, training

protocols, labor resources and have experience in responding to emergencies and safety incidents.

To further streamline broader facility maintenance and labor needs, look for a partner that delivers additional self-performed services. For example, some providers can offer facilities engineering HVAC and mechanical work, electrical and lighting, energy solutions and powered industrial truck (PIT) equipment operators with specialized food distribution expertise. You may also be able to find partners that can provide labor to perform food production support services, corrugate and pallet management, shipping and receiving functions, thrift store stocking and other warehousing functions.

2. Assess their training programs

A good sanitation partner will be experienced in providing their employees with a written comprehensive training plan to meet regulatory standards for food safety. Ask potential providers to demonstrate how they reduce the spread of foodborne illnesses and pathogens by reviewing which topics are covered in their



training programs, how frequently they train their employees and who conducts it.

They should have an existing training program that incorporates some or all of the following:

- Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) Principles
- Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs)
- Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) for individual pieces of equipment and various surfaces
- Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)
- ISO 22000 Food Safety Family of Standards
- Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI)

3. Inquire about ongoing audit readiness

Inspections, both internal and external, can occur at any time. And, in the wake of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), documentation standards are growing more stringent and complex. An inexperienced provider can easily become overwhelmed by the sheer volume of records required. The only way to prepare is to always be audit-ready. Being audit-ready 24/7 requires the right combination of trained and certified personnel, a well-developed MSS, Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) and technologies that simplify workflow management and documentation.

A qualified provider partner should be able to demonstrate their competence in hiring the right people and empowering them with the tools and processes to deliver consistent and verifiable services. They should be able to show you the best practices and workflows they follow to ensure that every employee adheres to the MSS and SSOPs for every task and piece of equipment. For a sanitation expert, being inspection-ready isn't just about documentation, it's about doing the job right, every time.

4. Ensure a proactive partnership

A good sanitation partner should support you in achieving a variety of business goals, not just passing inspection. Ask potential partners how they would use their expertise to help you control costs, reduce downtime and explore new technologies. They should continually seek out ways to improve service delivery and help navigate the pressures of meeting auditor expectations.

These practices not only protect consumers and employees, but also help you be a better partner to your customers and colleagues. Having a well-run sanitation operation (and the strong inspection record that comes with it) enables you to achieve your business goals, like expanding into new markets.

As your business adapts to shifts in the market, maintaining rigorous standards for sanitation can become more challenging. If you choose to outsource, look for a provider that prioritizes expertise, safety, transparency and proactiveness. With a consistent, well-qualified partner ensuring that you're always audit-ready, you can focus on scaling your operations to meet the ever-expanding demand for your consumer products.



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