

Cleanliness tips for your annual tenant meetings

As the Great Recession loosens its grip on the economy, more Americans head back to work. This is particularly true in Denver as the city is growing and more businesses are launching. The numbers don't lie – Denver truly has become a booming area for commercial properties. In addition to local and national accolades recognizing Denver as an ideal place for economic and job growth and the tax benefits many technology companies receive when moving to Denver, it's no wonder why dozens of new age companies who call Denver home are poised for explosive growth.

Naturally, all of this new business growth is accompanied by a growing need for property managers. We've noticed a recent trend toward consolidation that puts a lot of pressure on property managers who are expected to work with office managers and other staff members to handle more facility maintenance projects on a smaller budget. So how can property managers, working on a budget, keep their facility looking great while keeping the work environment green, clean, safe and healthy?

The tips to follow are suggestions property managers can share with their tenants and their tenants' office managers during annual or semiannual meetings in order to



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help everyone work together to keep the facility looking great while keeping the work environment green, clean, safe and healthy.

Let's start with the tips that will get employees involved in ways that help delegate responsibility.

First, establish a cleaning policy with your tenants. Educate your tenants on the damaging effects of cleaning products and create real consequences for those who disregard warnings and instructions. Then, encourage your tenants and office managers to work with their employees to come to a consensus on temperature. A recent survey suggests that employee conflicts over room temperature is as much literal as it is metaphorical, as more than 50 percent of employees fight over the office temperature. Get everyone together to come to a consensus and restrict employee access to the thermostat to keep the peace.

Next, make sure the companies occupying your properties are willing to pivot for millennial employees. The same survey showcased the difference between millennial

and baby boomer employees – 55 percent of millennials would consider taking a new job and/or less pay to work in a clean office set at the temperature they prefer (only 25 percent of baby boomers said the same).

Two additional employee-focused tips to help property managers make that pivot are urging employees to stay home when sickness strikes and encouraging employees to take food home. Few things are more disruptive than a sick office mate and more annoying than a cluttered fridge full of food that's gone bad.

Now on to tips for property managers seeking to help office managers protect their fellow employees and effectively maintain their office. Most importantly, remind them that quick fixes mean danger. Tenants should avoid using air fresheners and fabric protection sprays because they contain chemicals linked to endocrine system issues. Also, if possible, avoid carpet. However, if an office already has carpet, encourage office managers to rely on steam cleaning over carpet treatment processes that can expose their office to dangerous chemicals. And lastly, beware of old furniture that puts offices at risk. Many old items contain PBDEs – fire retardants that break down into dangerous metabolites linked to cancer –

so when in doubt, get them out!

On a more granular level, anyone responsible for office cleanliness and facility maintenance should carefully inspect warning labels and avoid any cleaning products that contain dangerous chemicals like phthalates, formaldehyde and "chemical surfactants."

To combat these problems, they can replace cleaners with do-it-yourself tricks – like using lemon, cooking oil, vinegar or baking soda to clean surfaces and handle tough odors. Using those tricks and making sure maintenance staff sets reminders to change filters often will keep younger employees happier and, hopefully, more productive because these efforts will make air quality a high priority. That's a big deal in light of a recent U.S. Environmental Protection Agency study that concluded the toxic chemicals in household cleaners are three times more likely to cause cancer than outdoor air.

These are tips property managers can share with office managers and tenants, but if it all becomes too much for one person or a small staff to handle, hire an experienced integrated facility services partner who can help you embrace new cleaning technology while cutting costs on expensive products and equipment.▲



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