Cleaning Business Startup Checklist

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Key takeaways

- Start residential: it's cheaper to launch and builds recurring weekly income
- Get general liability insurance and a janitorial bond before your first home
- Switch from hourly to flat rates by home size once you know your times
- A Google Business Profile plus reviews is your #1 source of local clients

1. Plan

- [ ] Choose your niche and the services you'll offer first
- [ ] Define your service area (keep it tight to cut drive time)
- [ ] Write a one-page plan: who, where, what you charge, how you'll get 10 clients
- [ ] Check local competitors' services and prices

2. Register & insure

- [ ] Pick a business name and check your state registry, trademarks and the .com domain
- [ ] Choose a structure (sole proprietor or LLC)
- [ ] Get a free EIN from the IRS (irs.gov)
- [ ] Check city/county business license requirements
- [ ] Open a separate business bank account
- [ ] Get general liability insurance before your first paid job
- [ ] If you clean inside homes, consider a janitorial bond as well as general liability insurance. Many clients and most property managers ask for both. Some cities also require a general business license.

3. Equipment

- [ ] Vacuum with HEPA filter
- [ ] Microfiber cloths (color-coded by room)
- [ ] Mop and bucket system
- [ ] Spray bottles and labeled cleaning solutions
- [ ] Scrub brushes, squeegee and extendable duster
- [ ] Caddy to carry supplies
- [ ] Gloves and basic safety gear

4. Pricing

- [ ] Track your real job times on your first jobs
- [ ] Set a target hourly rate that covers pay, taxes, insurance, fuel and admin time
- [ ] Create a simple price menu and a minimum charge

- [ ] Use estimate and invoice templates for every quote
- [ ] Check your numbers with the free calculator on ServiceStartKit.com

5. Get online

- [ ] Register a short domain and set up a professional email
- [ ] Launch a 4-page website: home, services & prices, reviews/photos, contact
- [ ] Create a Google Business Profile with photos and your service area

6. First clients

- [ ] Create a free Google Business Profile and ask every happy client for a review
- [ ] Post in local Facebook groups and Nextdoor with a first-clean offer
- [ ] Introduce yourself to realtors and property managers for move-out cleans
- [ ] Leave door hangers in the neighborhoods you want to work in
- [ ] Offer existing clients a reward for referrals
- [ ] Ask every happy client for a review and a referral

7. Money

- [ ] Invoice every job and log every expense
- [ ] Keep a mileage log for business driving
- [ ] Set money aside for taxes each month
- [ ] Review prices at least once a year

General information, not legal, tax or insurance advice. Rules vary by state and city.