



Top 10 Custodian Interview Questions and Their Answers [Updated 2024]

Description

Getting ready for a custodian position interview can be a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be! This guide will walk you through some of the most common questions that employers ask, and provide you with strategies on how to answer confidently and effectively.

Custodian Interview Questions

Can you describe a situation where you had to handle a difficult task or problem as a custodian?

How to Answer

Try to give a specific example of a situation where you faced a challenging task or issue. The interviewer wants to see your problem-solving skills and how you handle adversity. Explain the situation, what actions you took to address it, and the outcome. Make sure to emphasize any positive results or lessons you learned from the experience.

Sample Answer

In my previous job, there was a day when the sewage system backed up, causing a mess in the restrooms. It was a difficult situation because it happened during peak business hours and required immediate attention. I immediately notified the management team, started the cleaning process, and contacted a professional plumbing service. Though it was a challenging task, I managed to clean and disinfect the area swiftly, minimizing the disruption to the business. This experience taught me the importance of quick decision-making and problem-solving in a crisis.

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Tell me about a situation where you had to work with others to ensure cleanliness in a large facility. How did you manage this task?

How to Answer

To answer this question, focus on your teamwork skills and your ability to coordinate tasks with others. Discuss a specific situation where you had to work with a team to clean a large facility. Explain the role you played and how you ensured everyone was on the same page. Highlight any challenges faced and



how you overcame them.

Sample Answer

During my previous role at a large university, we had a team of five custodians responsible for maintaining multiple buildings. I was responsible for coordinating our efforts. I established a rotating schedule and designated specific tasks to each team member. This ensured that all areas were cleaned regularly and efficiently. We faced challenges when team members were absent, but I always had backup plans in place to ensure tasks were completed on time. My ability to coordinate and collaborate with others ensured the cleanliness and hygiene of the entire campus.

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What steps would you take to ensure safety while performing your duties as a custodian?

How to Answer

In your response, highlight your knowledge and understanding of safety procedures and regulations in the custodial field. You can mention any training you've received in this area, and provide an example of how you've prioritized safety in the past. It's important to show that you're proactive in minimizing risk and protecting yourself and others.

Sample Answer

Safety is my top priority when performing my duties as a custodian. I always make sure to wear the appropriate protective gear, such as gloves and safety shoes, to protect myself from potential hazards. I also follow all safety procedures and guidelines, including properly storing cleaning supplies and maintaining equipment. For example, at my previous job, I instituted a routine check for all cleaning equipment before and after each shift, this reduced the incidence of equipment-related accidents significantly.



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What is your process for handling and disposing of hazardous materials?

How to Answer

The candidate should detail their knowledge on the proper handling and disposal of hazardous materials. They should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the safety protocols and regulations pertaining to hazardous waste. They should also talk about their experience dealing with such situations.

Sample Answer

In my previous role, I often came across hazardous materials while performing my duties. I always ensured to handle such materials with care, wearing the appropriate personal protective equipment. I was also responsible for disposing of these materials, and I strictly followed the guidelines set by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. For example, I would collect the materials in the appropriate containers, label them correctly, and then transport them to the designated hazardous waste disposal area.

How do you prioritize your work when you have multiple tasks at hand?

How to Answer

To answer this question, you should discuss your ability to manage time effectively and prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance. You can share how you use to-do lists, schedules or any other tool to keep track of your tasks. It's also beneficial to provide an example of a situation where you had to prioritize your tasks and how you successfully managed it.

Sample Answer



When I have multiple tasks to perform, I typically prioritize them based on the level of urgency and importance. For example, if there's a spill in the hallway, this would take precedence, as it's a safety hazard. For less urgent tasks, like general cleaning or desk wiping, I schedule them when the area is least busy to avoid disruption. I also use a daily checklist to ensure all tasks are completed by the end of the day. There was a time when we had an unexpected visit from district officials, and I quickly adapted my schedule to ensure all areas were clean and presentable in time for their visit.

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How do you deal with unexpected issues or emergencies during your work shift?

How to Answer

The interviewer wants to know how you react in unexpected situations or emergencies. Your answer should show that you are able to remain calm and composed, act swiftly and responsibly, and handle the situation effectively. It will be good to mention any procedures or protocols you would follow in such situations.

Sample Answer

In the event of an unexpected issue or emergency, my first step is to immediately assess the situation. Depending on the severity and type of issue, I would then follow the appropriate protocol for addressing the problem. For example, if it's a safety hazard like a spill, I would secure the area and then clean it up as quickly as possible to prevent any accidents. If it's a more serious issue like a fire or a major equipment failure, I would alert the appropriate personnel or authorities right away. In all situations, my main goal is to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone in the building.

How would you handle a situation where you discovered a serious maintenance issue while cleaning?

How to Answer

The interviewer wants to understand your ability to identify and react to maintenance issues. Discuss how you would observe the issue, assess its severity, and report it to the appropriate department or person. Explain how you would follow up to ensure the issue gets resolved and if necessary, how you would help with the resolution. It's also important to note how you would continue your cleaning duties while ensuring the issue doesn't pose a safety threat.

Sample Answer

If I discovered a serious maintenance issue, the first thing I would do is assess the situation. If it's something that poses an immediate danger, I would make sure the area is secure and notify my



supervisor immediately. If it's not an immediate threat, I would document the issue and report it to the maintenance department. I would also follow up to ensure the issue is being addressed. Meanwhile, I would continue with my cleaning duties, making sure to work around the problem area to ensure safety.

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What steps do you follow when you're assigned a new area or facility to clean?

How to Answer

The interviewer is looking to understand your methodical approach to a new task. In your response, discuss the steps you would take, such as examining the area, planning your tasks, prioritizing based on the needs of the area, and the actual cleaning process. It would be beneficial to mention any specific techniques or methods you use to ensure thoroughness and efficiency.

Sample Answer

When assigned a new area or facility to clean, the first thing I do is conduct a thorough examination of the space. This gives me an understanding of what needs to be done and helps me to plan my tasks. I then prioritize these tasks based on urgency and importance. For example, if there's a spill or other hazardous situation, that would be dealt with first. After that, I proceed with the actual cleaning process, making sure to cover every area systematically. I also ensure to use the appropriate cleaning supplies and equipment for each specific area or surface to ensure thoroughness and prevent damage.

What techniques or methods do you use to ensure thorough cleaning of high traffic areas?

How to Answer

The candidate should describe their approach to cleaning high-traffic areas, including the specific techniques or methods they use to ensure they are thoroughly cleaned. They should also discuss their understanding of the importance of cleanliness in high-traffic areas and how they maintain this standard.

Sample Answer

In high-traffic areas, I typically start by sweeping and mopping the floor to remove any visible dirt and debris. I then use a professional-grade disinfectant to clean all surfaces, paying special attention to high-touch points like door handles, light switches, and handrails. I also understand the importance of regular, deep cleaning in these areas to maintain cleanliness and prevent the spread of germs and bacteria. Therefore, I schedule deep cleaning sessions at least once a week where I use special



equipment and cleaning solutions to thoroughly clean and disinfect these areas.

Can you describe your experience with using industrial cleaning equipment?

How to Answer

Talk about the types of equipment you have used in previous roles, such as floor buffers, carpet cleaners, power washers, etc. Discuss your comfort level with using these types of equipment and any training you have received. If you have not had the opportunity to use such equipment, discuss your willingness to learn and adapt to new tools.

Sample Answer

In my previous role, I had extensive experience with a variety of industrial cleaning equipment. I regularly used floor buffers and carpet cleaners to maintain the facility's flooring. I also have experience with power washers for exterior cleaning tasks. I have received training on the safe and effective use of this equipment, and I am comfortable operating them. If there are any specific pieces of equipment that I have not used before, I am always eager to learn and adapt to ensure I can do the job efficiently.

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Custodian Job Title Summary

Job Description

A custodian, also known as a janitor, is responsible for keeping buildings clean and in an orderly condition. They perform heavy cleaning duties, such as cleaning floors, shampooing rugs, washing walls and glass, and removing rubbish. They may also perform routine maintenance activities and notify management of need for repairs.



Skills	Physical stamina, Attention to detail, Ability to work independently, Knowledge of cleaning products and procedures, Problem-solving skills, Time management, Reliability
Industry	Education, Healthcare, Retail, Hospitality, Corporate
Experience Level	Entry-level
Education Requirements	No formal education is required. On the job training is usually provided.
Work Environment	Custodians work both indoors and outdoors, cleaning and maintaining buildings and grounds. They may work in schools, offices, hospitals, stores, or residential buildings. Their work can be physically demanding and sometimes dirty.
Salary Range	\$24,000 – \$40,000 per year
Career Path	Custodians may advance to become head custodians or building superintendents. With additional education or certification, they may move into jobs such as building maintenance worker or facilities manager.
Popular Companies	ABM Industries, GCA Services, Sodexo, Aramark, ISS Facility Services

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