

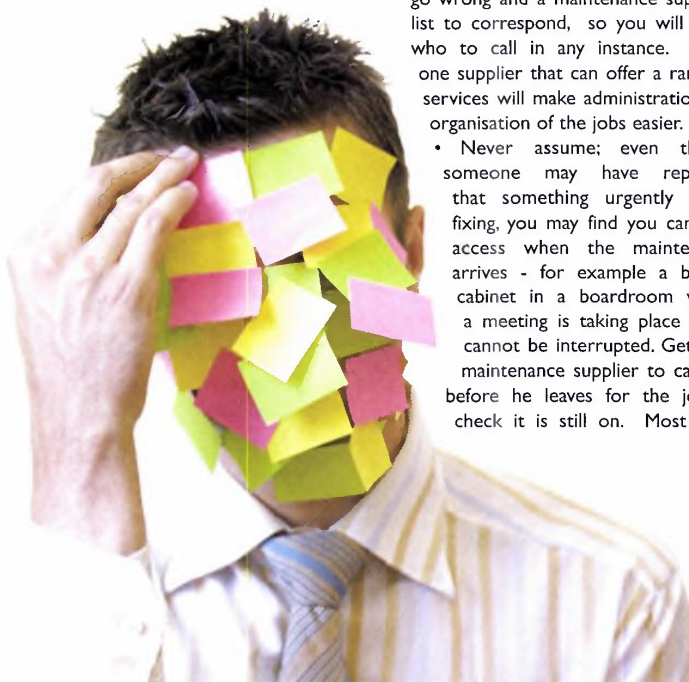


Some top FM tips

Nathan Majumdar, Client Services Director of London-based property maintenance and refurbishment firm, Aspect Maintenance, offers some essential tips to help facilities managers run a tight ship

The daily challenges of a facilities manager pull them in many directions. Every problem or fault that is logged is urgent to the person reporting it, and it's down to the facilities manager to deliver – yesterday! Their reputation is constantly on the line. Not only do they have to cope with these urgent demands, they are also under the constant pressure of having to operate against tight budgets, which means that the job requires a lot of insight and tenacity. Here are a few pointers which might just make life a little easier for the average under-fire FM:

- Prioritise the requests that come in. Is the issue business critical? Is it a health and safety matter? Some enquiries will be - others won't. All matters should be treated as being important, but some have to be prioritised above others.
- Put a response time in place – this helps you set expectations to the employee. Ensure that your response time can be delivered by having a trusted team, or maintenance supplier.



- Have a list of all facilities that could go wrong and a maintenance suppliers list to correspond, so you will know who to call in any instance. Using one supplier that can offer a range of services will make administration and organisation of the jobs easier.
 - Never assume; even though someone may have reported that something urgently needs fixing, you may find you can't get access when the maintenance arrives - for example a broken cabinet in a boardroom where a meeting is taking place which cannot be interrupted. Get your maintenance supplier to call you before he leaves for the job to check it is still on. Most firms charge a cancellation fee and some a call out fee, so keep wasted call-outs to a minimum.
 - Don't always look for a 'quick fix'. It is sometimes more economical to replace something or do a deeper service rather than sort out the 'surface' problem.
 - Preventative maintenance. Make sure that you have serviced all electrics (Periodic Inspection) and portable appliances (PAT tests according to 1989 Electricity at Work regulations). If this has not been done it can invalidate the insurance. Always make sure that you are up to date with scheduled services for the air conditioning, heating system and main drains. By doing this, you can prevent many emergency call-outs from happening in the first place.
 - Be mindful of fees charged by maintenance companies, a low hourly rate may be supplemented by billing you for travel time, petrol and the London congestion charge for example.
- Adopting these measures should help today's facilities managers meet the demands of their role to maximise business continuity.