

Facilities Administrator interview questions

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What to expect

Facilities Administrator interviews focus on how you organise maintenance, contractors and compliance records, and how you communicate when something goes wrong. Employers want to see that you can keep a calm head, follow process and manage competing requests.

- **Process and systems:** Questions about how you log, prioritise and close out work orders in a CMMS, and how you keep asset and compliance records accurate.
- **Behavioural:** Past examples of dealing with contractors, difficult stakeholders or competing priorities, usually asked as tell me about a time questions.
- **Scenario or judgement:** A building fault, urgent request or no-show contractor, to see how you triage safety, communication and escalation under pressure.
- **Technical and compliance:** Questions on WHS obligations, essential services, Australian Standards, access control and the records that sit behind them.
- **Client or tenant facing:** How you handle requests, complaints and service updates for staff, tenants and building management.
- **Administrative and budget:** Purchase orders, invoice matching, forecasting and reporting, often with a short Excel or data task.

A typical process starts with a phone or video screen with a recruiter or hiring manager, covering your background and availability. The main interview is usually with the facilities or operations manager, sometimes on a panel with a senior administrator or WHS representative. Larger organisations and government departments may add a practical exercise, such as prioritising a list of work orders, a short Excel task, or a written response to a building services scenario. You may be asked to walk through your CMMS experience in detail, so be ready to name the systems you have used and describe the reports you produce.

1. Walk me through how you manage a maintenance request from the moment it comes in to when it is closed out.

Why they ask

This is a core process question. Interviewers want to hear that you follow a repeatable system and do not let requests fall through the cracks.

How to structure your answer

Process walk-through. Start with how the request arrives, then intake and triage. Explain how you log it in the CMMS, set priority, assign the right contractor or internal tradesperson, communicate with the requester, verify the work and close the job. Finish with how you record costs and update the asset register.

Example answer

"A request usually comes in by email, phone or through the help desk portal. First I check whether it is an emergency or a routine job. If it is a safety issue, like a water leak or a power fault, I escalate straight away and call the on-call contractor. For routine jobs I raise a work order in the CMMS, note the location, the asset, the fault description and the priority. I assign it to the right contractor from our panel and send them the access details and any site induction requirements. I always reply to the requester with the work order number and a realistic time frame. When the contractor attends, I check the job notes and any photos, confirm with the requester that the issue is fixed, and then close the work order. I update the asset register if a part was replaced and code the invoice against the purchase order. At the end of the week I review open work orders to make sure nothing is sitting too

long.”

2. Tell me about a time you had to deal with a contractor who was not meeting the agreed standard.

Why they ask

Contractor management is central to the role. The interviewer wants evidence you can have a firm conversation, follow the contract and protect the organisation without burning the relationship.

How to structure your answer

STAR. Situation and task, then the specific actions you took, and the result. Keep the focus on the conversation, the evidence you used and the outcome.

Example answer

“We had a cleaning contractor who was missing the scheduled deep clean in two buildings, and staff had started to notice. I gathered the service records and photos over a fortnight so I had clear evidence. I called the account manager and asked for a meeting on site. I set out the missed services against the contract schedule, explained the impact on staff and asked for a written plan to get back on track. I also arranged spot checks for the next month. The contractor put a new supervisor on the account, the missed services were completed, and we did not have another gap for the rest of the contract. It taught me that a calm, evidence based conversation works better than escalating straight away.”

3. A burst pipe has flooded part of a floor and staff are being sent home. What do you do in the first hour?

Why they ask

This tests judgement under pressure, safety awareness and communication. The interviewer wants to see you prioritise people and building safety before paperwork.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure. Work through safety first, then isolate the issue, then communicate and escalate, then document. Do not jump straight to the CMMS.

Example answer

“First I make sure nobody is at risk. I would check whether the area is safe to enter and whether there is any electrical hazard, and if there is, I keep people away and call the emergency contact. I would find the isolation valve or call the building manager to shut off the water. Then I would notify the facilities manager and the WHS contact, and ask the floor warden to account for staff. I would send a clear message to the affected teams about the evacuation, the meeting point and when they will hear an update. I would call the plumber and the make safe contractor and arrange access. Once the immediate response is under control, I would take photos, log the incident in the CMMS and start a record for the insurance or incident report. I would also check on any staff or contractors who were nearby.”

4. How do you keep on top of compliance records and essential services maintenance across multiple sites?

Why they ask

Compliance is a major part of the role. The interviewer wants to know you are systematic and can handle deadlines that cannot slip.

How to structure your answer

Technical and process. Describe your system: the register, the calendar, the CMMS, the checks and the reporting. Give a concrete example of how you catch issues early.

Example answer

"I start with a single compliance calendar and asset register that covers every site. Each essential service, like fire systems, emergency lighting, lifts and electrical testing, has its due date, the standard it falls under and the contractor who holds the contract. I set reminders in Outlook and the CMMS at 90, 60 and 30 days before the due date. I book the service early and confirm attendance in writing. When the report comes back, I check for defects, raise any remedial work orders and file the certificate against the asset. Every month I pull a report of upcoming and overdue items for the facilities manager. If a site is slipping, I escalate before the due date rather than after. That system has kept my current portfolio audit ready without last minute scrambling."

5. Describe a time you had to say no to a staff member or tenant request because of budget or policy.

Why they ask

This tests customer service and boundary setting. The role involves frequent requests for furniture, moves, repairs or access, and not all can be approved.

How to structure your answer

STAR, with emphasis on how you explained the decision and offered an alternative. The interviewer wants to see empathy and a clear rationale.

Example answer

"A team leader asked for new ergonomic chairs for their whole team because a few people had mentioned discomfort. The budget did not cover a full replacement, and our policy was to assess individual needs first. I explained that I could not order chairs for everyone without an assessment. Instead, I booked a workstation assessment for the staff who had raised concerns, arranged a trial of two chair models, and put a business case to the facilities manager for the highest need cases. Three chairs were approved for the staff with documented needs, and the rest of the team got adjustments to their current setup. The team leader was initially frustrated but later thanked me for finding a practical path. I learned to lead with the process and the alternative, not just the no."

6. You have three urgent jobs, one contractor no-show, and a manager asking for a report. How do you prioritise?

Why they ask

This is a scenario question about competing priorities. Facilities administrators juggle reactive work, contractors and reporting, so the interviewer wants to see a clear triage method.

How to structure your answer

Scenario prioritisation. Name your criteria: safety first, then contractual or legal deadlines, then business impact, then internal requests. Explain the communication you would send for each.

Example answer

"I would sort by risk and impact. If any of the three urgent jobs involved a safety hazard or an essential service, that goes first. I would check whether the no-show contractor has left a compliance gap or a vulnerable area, and if so I would call them and then their backup. If not, I would log the no-show, send a written follow up and arrange the next available slot. The manager's report may have a deadline, so I would ask what time it is needed and whether part of it can be sent now. I would send a quick update to everyone affected so no one is left guessing. Then I would work through the remaining jobs, keeping the CMMS updated as I go. At the end of the day I would review what was not completed and rebook or escalate it."