

Facilities Manager interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Facilities Manager roles in Australia typically assess your ability to balance maintenance, budgets, contracts and compliance. You will need to show you can manage both the day-to-day and the unexpected.

- **Technical:** Questions about CMMS tools, building systems, maintenance planning and compliance with WHS and Australian Standards.
- **Behavioural:** Questions asking for examples of managing contractors, stakeholders or difficult situations, using the STAR method.
- **Scenario:** Hypothetical situations such as an emergency repair, budget reduction or tenant complaint, to see how you prioritise and communicate.
- **Process:** Questions about how you plan maintenance, manage budgets or ensure regulatory compliance, expecting a step-by-step explanation.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about dealing with tenants, building occupants or service providers, focusing on communication and conflict resolution.

The process often starts with a phone screen with a recruiter or hiring manager, followed by a panel interview with the facilities lead and possibly a finance or operations manager. You may be asked to walk through a building or review a maintenance scenario. Some employers include a short technical assessment on CMMS or compliance.

1. Walk me through how you plan and prioritise maintenance across a portfolio of buildings.

Why they ask

This tests your process for balancing preventive and reactive work, and how you use data or systems to make decisions.

How to structure your answer

Use a step-by-step walk-through: assess asset condition and criticality, review work order history, schedule preventive tasks, allocate resources, and monitor completion. Mention any CMMS you use.

Example answer

"First, I review the asset register and identify critical equipment like HVAC, lifts and fire systems. I check the CMMS for overdue tasks and recent breakdowns. Then I build a monthly schedule that groups work by location to reduce travel time. I prioritise safety and compliance tasks first. I also set aside time for reactive repairs, and I track completion rates to adjust the plan. At my last site, this approach cut emergency callouts from weekly to monthly."

2. Tell me about a time you managed a difficult contractor or service provider.

Why they ask

Contract management is core to the role. They want to see how you handle performance issues, negotiate and maintain relationships.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result. Focus on the specific steps you took to resolve the issue and the outcome.

Example answer

"Situation: A cleaning contractor was consistently missing areas and not responding to complaints. Task: I needed to improve performance without disrupting service. Action: I set up a meeting with the contractor's manager, shared a log of issues, and agreed on a performance improvement plan with weekly inspections. I also introduced a simple checklist that our team used to record problems. Result: Within a month, complaints dropped and the contractor assigned a dedicated supervisor. The relationship became more collaborative."

3. A building you manage has a major water leak affecting multiple tenants. How do you handle it?

Why they ask

This is a scenario question to see how you respond under pressure, prioritise safety and communicate with stakeholders.

How to structure your answer

Use a judgement-under-pressure structure: immediate safety, containment, communication, repair, follow-up. Explain your priorities and who you would call.

Example answer

"First, I ensure everyone is safe and evacuate if needed. I isolate the water supply if possible and call the emergency plumber. I notify tenants about the situation and expected timeline. I contact the building owner and insurer. Once the leak is contained, I arrange for damage assessment and repairs. I then review the incident to see if preventive maintenance could have avoided it."

4. How do you ensure compliance with WHS regulations and Australian Standards in your facilities?

Why they ask

Compliance is a critical part of the role. They want to know you understand your obligations and how you keep records.

How to structure your answer

Use a process explanation: identify relevant legislation and standards, conduct risk assessments, schedule audits, maintain registers, train staff, and review incidents.

Example answer

"I start by identifying which WHS regulations and Australian Standards apply to each site, such as AS 1851 for fire systems. I schedule regular inspections and audits, and I keep a compliance register with dates and actions. I make sure contractors provide SWMS and insurance certificates. I also run toolbox talks with staff and review any incidents to improve our controls. At my last role, we passed a WHS audit with no major findings."

5. Describe your experience with CMMS tools like IBM Maximo or SAP EAM.

Why they ask

Technical proficiency with these tools is often required. They want to know how you use them to manage work orders, assets and reporting.

How to structure your answer

Use a technical walk-through: name the systems, explain how you use them for scheduling, tracking, reporting, and how you trained others.

Example answer

"I have used IBM Maximo daily to raise and assign work orders, track asset history and generate reports on maintenance costs. I set up preventive maintenance schedules for critical equipment. I also used ServiceNow for tenant requests. I trained new team members on how to log issues and check status. In one role, I used Maximo data to identify a recurring problem with a chiller, which led to a permanent fix."

6. You are asked to reduce the facilities budget significantly without compromising safety. What do you do?

Why they ask

This scenario tests your financial management and ability to prioritise. They want to see you balance cost with risk and service.

How to structure your answer

Use a problem-solving structure: review current spend, identify non-critical areas, negotiate with suppliers, consider energy efficiency, communicate with stakeholders, and monitor impact.

Example answer

"First, I review all contracts and spending to find areas that can be trimmed without affecting safety. I might renegotiate cleaning or grounds contracts, or adjust frequencies in low-traffic areas. I look at energy efficiency projects that save money over time. I consult with tenants to understand their priorities. I make sure any cuts are documented and that safety and compliance remain fully funded. I then monitor the budget monthly to catch any issues early."