



# Guidelines Using the INSTA 800 Standard from Seven European Countries

# Preface

This handbook is created to explain to users of the INSTA 800 standard the different situations involved in buying and selling and evaluating a cleaning service. The handbook provides practical tips for preventing and resolving problems that users may face when purchasing / selling / evaluating a cleaning service using the INSTA 800 standard.

To compile this handbook 76 companies using INSTA 800 were interviewed in 7 different countries (Estonia 16, Latvia, Finland 15, Iceland 3, Sweden 15, Denmark 27).

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# What is the INSTA 800 standard?

The INSTA 800 standard provides a cleaning quality level measurement and quality control system. INSTA 800 is based on the EN 13549 standard. The standard was created by Nordic countries in the year 2000 in Denmark. The updated version of the standard was published in 2018. The standard has been translated into seven languages (English, Norwegian, Swedish, Estonian, Finnish, Icelandic, Latvian).

The INSTA 800 standard describes the application of the measurement system to determine the required quality level and to inspect the quality of the cleaning achieved.

INSTA 800 can be used in all types of buildings and areas, such as administrative buildings, hospitals, schools, nurseries, supermarkets, shops, production halls, trains, etc., regardless of cleaning methods, frequency or system.

In practice, the INSTA 800 standard is also called “Cleaning by your eyes”, which is the main idea of INSTA 800. When using this standard, cleaners (cleanliness specialists), managers and customers must have the same understanding of the required results and the acceptable (set) quality level. The model is oriented towards the results of the cleaning services, not the cleaning process itself.

The INSTA 800 standard defines the groups of cleaning objects and their assessment, it details the types of surface dirtiness, and it provides the cleaning inspection strategy and surface quality level and compliance criteria. It specifies six quality levels (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) that evaluate the results of the cleaning attained, and it identifies the exact number of tolerable discrepancies found on each of this four object group depending on the square metre area of the room. Object groups are floor, furniture and fixtures, walls and ceiling. A quality profile of a room consists of quality levels defined for the object groups. The assessment model has a basic 4% acceptable quality limit (AQL), but the customer has the ability to reduce or increase that depending on the specifics of the activity.

Service providers are given the competence to decide on the appropriate cleaning methods and how to use them correctly, and by focusing on the individual types of contaminants, they can allot their cleaning time to those objects that need it most.



- Floor
- Furniture and fixtures
- Walls
- Ceiling

## Quality level 5

Room size: up to 15m<sup>2</sup>

## Acceptable amount of soiling

Soiling group 1:

- on accessible areas 1
- on not immediately accessible areas 1

Soiling group 2: none

# Quality level – What does it mean?

The quality profile of the room determines how much dirt can be in the room after cleaning. When compiling a quality profile, the purchaser of the service decides which dirt in the room after cleaning is acceptable and which is not.

**EXAMPLE** The quality profile of an office (20m<sup>2</sup>) specifies that the quality level of all object groups must be level 3 after cleaning. Ovals indicate the maximum dirt that can be in the room after cleaning.



Object groups

- Floor
- Furniture and fixtures
- Walls
- Ceiling

Room up to 15m <sup>2</sup>	Quality level	Soiling group 1	Soiling group 2
Floor	3	● A: 5 ● NA: 6	25%
Furniture	3	● A: 5 ● NA: 6	25%
Walls	3	● A: 5 ● NA: 6	25%
Ceilings	3	● A: 5 ● NA: 6	25%

In real life, it is very rare for the quality levels of all object groups to exceed the number of permitted accumulations of soiling or surface soiling. Usually, a not-acceptable room is determined by one type of dirt per object group per A or NA. For example, the legs of all the chairs in the room are dusty or there are a lot of stains on the furniture, or there is dirt on the floor or all the taps in the shower room are with sediment.

**EXAMPLE** The buyer of a service requires that the cabinet tops and chair legs should be cleaned regularly but not every cleaning time. If during the inspection it turns out that the top of the cabinet is dusty, but the legs of the chair and everything else is clean, then the room corresponds to the quality profile. However, if the top of the cabinet and legs of the chairs are dusty, then the room is not acceptable.



Office up to 15m <sup>2</sup>	Quality level	Soiling group 1	Soiling group 2
Floor	3	A: 5 NA: 6	25%
Furniture	3	A: 5 ● NA: 6	25%
Walls	3	A: 5 NA: 6	25%
Ceilings	-	-	-

# First impressions of INSTA 800

First impressions upon implementing INSTA 800 ranged from positive to doubtful.

People who had no previous experience with INSTA 800 had mixed feelings due to a lack of knowledge about how to use the standard and how to perform the quality inspections. Some stated that the standard first appeared to be confusing, challenging, difficult to understand, heavy, a bit bureaucratic, too subtle, and too theoretical.

At first it was considered difficult and complicated, and there was doubt as to whether INSTA 800 would work at all.



**Karólína Guðmundsdóttir,**  
**The National University Hospital of Iceland**

*In the beginning there were a lot of obstacles to overcome, and it required a lot of basic work to be done before usage began. We held seminars, prepared tender documents, prepared courses and systems in three languages as well as trained people to use the standard. Language knowledge has been a major obstacle from the beginning, as no information was available on the standard in Icelandic. This obstacle was solved with a lot of work that has benefitted those who follow. In the end INSTA 800 has improved the quality of the cleaning and improved communication between service provider and service buyer.*



**Aleksander Korolkov,**  
**Tallinn City Property Department**

*Before INSTA 800, quality inspections were emotional; with INSTA 800, controls became objective for all parties and emotion was removed from the equation. The inspections became more effective as they began to become routine.*

*Service buyer and provider can have an equal and credible dialogue about cleaning quality, because INSTA 800 brings a system where both parties speak the same language.*

*Previous visual subjective quality assessment methods based on verbal quality definitions did not achieve the same level of objectiveness and reliability.*



## Benefits of using INSTA 800

INSTA 800 users have highlighted the following benefits they have gained from using the standard:

**The cleaning quality has improved** - The quality has improved and there is no need in arguing about whether and when to clean something. Protects both the service provider and the service buyer, as the interests of both parties are clear.

**Cleaning quality is measurable and documented** – Cleaning quality is documented, and there is a possibility to do follow up using the inspection reports.

**Cleaning is purity-based** - The cleaner learns to look at the quality of different object groups (looking off the floor). Cleaners have confidence that they are doing the right things.

**Focus on the result** - The quality is enhanced as the focus is on the result rather than directing the solution to the task.

**Financial benefits** - If the customer understands the right requirements, the result is usually that they get a better cleaning quality at the same or lower cleaning cost. If the supplier understands his assignment and adjusts the cleaning delivery based on the set requirements, there is a possibility of savings - without reducing the cleaning quality - over time.

### **BENEFITS FOR SERVICE BUYER**

**Less complaints** - The workload of service buyers has been reduced due to fewer complaints and less time taking care of cleaning-related issues.

**Better indoor air quality** with dust monitoring

**Property value** - Cleanliness monitoring also plays a role in preserving the value of a property.

**Other problems outside the service are solved as well** - Because information is collected systematically, problems outside the service are also solved (discovering that something needs to be repaired, room users should be prudent, special cleaning needs to be performed, etc.).



***Tuula Koskinen,  
Defence Estates Finland***

*Thanks to INSTA 800, the quality of cleaning services has been unified and improved. Service and quality are cost-effective, over-quality has been reduced and sub-quality has been raised to a sufficient level. The introduction of the INSTA 800 standard in service contracts has also increased contractor competence in quality assessment and reporting. I warmly recommend the standard to new users as it is a unified and unambiguous way of verifying the quality of service between the different parties.*

## BENEFITS FOR SERVICE PROVIDER

**Reducing the need for corrective action** - The knowhow to do the right things at the right time. For example, shortcomings can be eliminated before a customer becomes dissatisfied with the quality of cleanliness.

**Knowledge is transferred** - The knowledge of the INSTA 800 object is also transferred to other objects where there is no INSTA 800. The basic principle – cleaning creates purity, not the cleaning activity – can be applied in all rooms.

**Raising the profile of the cleaning service** - The appreciation of the customer can be seen; the expertise of the cleaning service is recognized.



**Kurmet Vasser,**  
**SOL Baltics Latvian Country Manager**

*INSTA 800 creates the foundation for a trusting partnership between customer and service provider, because it is possible to agree and describe consequences of a breach of trust. INSTA 800 usage requires an informed customer, who values cleanliness and is ready to invest time and energy for achieving it, with the aim of saving time and nerves in resolving possible disputes and misunderstandings.*

*To the cleaning supervisor, it is giving complete vision about object cleaning, results of the work and possible improvements. It is easier to instruct cleaning personnel, as expectations for results are agreed and described in the profile.*

*With INSTA 800 it is easy to control the quality of service and give feedback to cleaning personnel, as quality requirements are the same during the entire contract period and does not depend on the identity of the inspector.*

*It is easier to calculate the service price, because a customer's expectations regarding quality and content of the service are specifically described.*



# Key Factors of Succeeding

Key Factor	Recommendations
<b>Well prepared tender/contract</b> - The contract must state all the rooms to be cleaned and their description (room number, size, floor covering, purpose of the room, quality profile and frequency of cleaning). It also must state all the additional requirements, and these have to be clear to everyone. The contract/tender should contain such clauses which are essential for the performance of the contract.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There should be competency requirements for the service buyer, cleaners, cleaning manager.</li> <li>• You can use a third party to create a tender/contract.</li> <li>• The contract should be flexible – for example, review the adequacy of quality levels after 1 year of service.</li> <li>• For the first INSTA 800 experience, the minimum contract duration should be 2 years.</li> <li>• Terminate the contract with an INSTA 800 inspection.</li> <li>• Cooperation between the customer and the service provider is crucial.</li> </ul>
<b>Defining quality profiles</b> - The informed buyer must determine the quality profiles that meet the actual level of purity needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can use a third party to create a quality profile.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard-aware cleaning manager</b> - It is important that the service provider understands the principles of the standard in both theory and practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being always at the forefront of training and guidance of the cleaning staff makes a big difference.</li> <li>• Dialogue and knowledge sharing among the cleaners and managers is crucial.</li> <li>• Explore locations where INSTA 800 has been in use for a longer period of time.</li> </ul>
<b>Properly trained cleaners</b> who understand the principles of INSTA 800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cleaning manager must provide the information to the cleaner with the principle: we focus on the solution, not the problem.</li> </ul>

Key Factor	Recommendations
<b>Standard-aware service buyer</b> who knows what they want and who understands that they are buying a purity level and not a cleaning activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Success depends on the commitment of the service buyer to demand compliance with all clauses of the contract.</li> </ul>
<b>Quarterly performed quality inspections</b> to maintain constant cleaning quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first inspection should be informative: to gather information about the service and to create a specific plan for what needs to be improved.</li> <li>• Quality inspections can be performed by a third party</li> </ul>
<b>Common goal is cleanliness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparatory meeting before the start of the contract.</li> <li>• Clear boundaries on what needs to be cleaned and what not.</li> </ul>



**Frank Axelsson, CEO,  
Hygiene Diagnostics AB (Sweden)**

*When I got requests from clients to perform cleaning inspections, I realized that I needed a standard method to perform visual inspections. The key to success was training in the method. It was quick to get started once I got certified.*

*The advantages of INSTA 800 are that I can sell services and education, there is a market for this and the market is growing in Sweden. We don't have to invent a method for inspections.*

# Best practices

**The use of the INSTA 800 standard has brought out “gray areas” in cleaning** - Regular cleaning inspections systematically collect information about parts of the room that are not cleaned by anyone. If the room has user-generated dirt (dirty phones, dirty coffee cups, dusty printers, dirty wires, messy desks) that is not the cleaning company’s requirement to clean, it still leaves the impression that the room is dirty - even if the cleaning service provider has met all the requirements of the contract. It helps if the contract clearly defines the boundaries of what the cleaners need to clean and not (heights, list of items, etc.). Information shall be communicated to the users of the premises that areas not cleaned by the cleaning company need to be cleaned by the users of the room themselves.

**With INSTA 800, it is possible to optimize the ratio of the cleaning service price, cleaning quality and quality frequency** - Cleaning service buyers and providers have pointed out that over time cleaning quality improves and cleaning hours are reduced. You can get maximum value for your money

**INSTA 800 is easy to use if there is sufficient theoretical and practical awareness of the standard** - All parties must be aware of the principles of the standard, both in terms of service provision and quality inspection. Practical inspections and experience help the purchaser and service provider to reach a common understanding. Cleaning managers must have practical knowledge of INSTA 800 in order to pass on this knowledge to the cleaners. Produce simple, basic education materials and manuals.

**The time invested in starting INSTA 800-based cleaning helps save the time it normally takes to deal with cleaning problems** - In the long run, time will be saved, as both service buyers and service providers will not have to deal with minor everyday problems in cleaning. They can engage in service development.

**The quality profile must be made clear to the various parties** - It should be noted that the awareness of the standard is different (service buyer, cleaning manager, cleaner, premises user). It is recommended to use visual solutions to explain to the different parties what the room corresponding to the quality profile looks like. Cleaning staff should be instructed on the agreed quality level so that they can do the job correctly and experience success at work.

**Regular quality inspection focuses on systematic information gathering to increase cleaning efficiency** - Quality inspection is a normal part of the work process that assesses the quality of service objectively. The first quality inspection should be informative - the goal is to securely gather all the information about the service, on the basis of which it is possible to make a specific plan on how to improve the service. It helps when a third party performs quality inspections, because the third party is impartial and helps the parties to understand each other better.

**Good planning helps to carry out inspections in less time** - The key factors in good planning are a well-prepared contract and quality profiles that meet the actual need for purity, clarification of inspection principles, timing of inspection, calibration. Planning can be assisted by a third party who has cleaning knowledge and can make recommendations to save time. The buyer and service provider should identify all anomalies that may affect performance of the service. Cooperation between all parties is crucial and it is important that they work together towards a common goal - purity.

**The quality inspection report clearly reveals the main non-compliances in the cleaning** - For example, the dispensers are dirty at the bottom, the edges of the door are dirty and the top of the cabinet are dusty. Based on the analysis of the results of the report, it is possible to make clear conclusions for further development. It is easy, fast and environmentally friendly to carry out inspections using electronic solutions.

**The standard can unambiguously define the difference between the current situation and the desired cleanliness** - With clear data it is possible to calculate the resource plan (how much time it takes to reach the desired level and who pays for such a service).

**Third party involvement** - Execution of controls or preparation of tender/contract documents by an independent third party can be helpful. The third party has no vested interest in favouring buyer or provider. Purchasers of the service have stated that a third party helps to ensure that the inspections comply with the standard, in which case there are fewer disputes based on opinion.



**Kermo Vinnikov,  
Estonian Road Administration**

*Our practice was that before the start of the contract, training was provided to the service buyer by a third party to clarify the standard. In addition, a third party was involved in the first inspections to encourage both parties.*

*I think it is important that all parties understand the quality profile in the same way. It is important that the cleaner knows what needs to be cleaned and that the user of the premises knows which surfaces / items cleaning are not covered by the cleaning contract.*

*Communication between all parties is crucial.*



**Marie Signe Nielsen,  
Servicekorpset Køge kommune – Nursinghomes in  
Denmark**

*I had a great desire to get a comprehensive overview of the quality of our work performed - using INSTA 800 gave us the opportunity to do so. It gave us an overview. It gave us a common language in the department.*

*For us, the key has been the professionalism and commitment of the manager and staff - such projects cannot succeed if there is not a high degree of involvement present. Always be at the forefront of training and guidance of the staff.*

*In connection with the introduction of INSTA 800, we have not had any financial benefits and yet we have invested in training the staff and we have a low sickness absence as a result.*

*It has been a challenge to make customers understand that they no longer receive cleaning on a fixed weekday but as needed in relation to the agreed quality. It has been necessary to convince employees that cleaning is more than floor washing - it has also been good to keep the pot on the boil so that the employees do not fall back to the old habits.*

*We follow up on the results of the inspection, and we guide the employee if there are method errors and the supervisor is sparring with the employee in relation to the execution and planning of the work.*



**Ari Kouvonen,  
Almega Service companies and former ISS (Sweden)**

*After the introduction of INSTA 800, we saw after evaluation of the effects that we delivered a more even cleaning quality. By receiving the results of the quality inspections, we improved the processes that caused a failed cleaning. We also adjusted “overcleaning”, something that we could not charge for.*



# Misinterpretation of INSTA 800

**No use of INSTA 800 in a contract** - The INSTA 800 quality requirements are set in the procurement, but they do not involve quality inspections, and no one really understands what the level really means. The first time you set a level 3, it will not satisfy, then the next time you will require level 4 and then level 5, and then you will be disappointed with INSTA 800 - the standard does not help. This practice favours the emergence of so-called “twin morals” - procurement is one thing and reality is another.

**LESSON:** All the terms and conditions put in the contract must be enforced. Only include terms and conditions that are realistic, unambiguous, and necessary to achieve a clean result.

**Quality inspections are performed only when the customer is not satisfied** - The client only wants to perform quality controls if they are not satisfied with the cleaning result. Quality controls at any other time seem like a waste of money.

**LESSON:** INSTA 800's goal is to ensure consistent cleaning quality, and regular quarterly inspection is essential to maintain quality.

**Attempts to make “own INSTA 800”** – Scheduling fewer quality inspections and deciding in less time that cleaning does not meet the conditions. Such tactics are usually used by the buyer of the service and have only one interest: to prove that the cleaning quality does not meet the requirements. Such behavior has a detrimental effect on the service provider and generally entails financial penalties.

**LESSON:** If you procure according to INSTA 800, it must be strictly followed 100%. During the quality inspections, the information about cleaning shortages are collected systematically. Collected information must be analyzed, and it has to be determined by which date the shortcomings must be remedied. It is important that both parties want the same goal – purity – and are willing to work towards it.

**The inspection is terminated when the number of non-accepted areas is “full”** - Often a large area is left uninspected and no information is collected.

**LESSON:** Even if the inspection is already not accepted, it is unreasonable to stop inspecting. The aim of an inspection is to collect information in every level (what rooms or buildings were dirty and which object groups had shortcomings). It is important to state, preferably in words, the root causes of the non-acceptance, so that everyone can understand equally what the problems were. Otherwise, it is often not clear to cleaning supervisors what needs to be done or changed to achieve compliance.

# Quality inspections

It is essential to document the quality inspection, and today it is possible to record it on paper or digitally. Digital information gives more opportunity to analyze the results and compare the results to previous inspection results. In addition, the digital solution is more environmentally friendly, as a portion of paperwork is usually left unfilled; digital is more reliable because there are practically no human errors, and it is possible to add photos to each inspected room, which helps to prove and illustrate any shortcomings in cleanliness, and receiving inspection results is many times faster.

## **The results of a quality inspection are usually used:**

- To plan and guide the cleaning activities and eliminate the shortcomings
- To analyze what are the biggest shortcomings in cleaning
- To plan how to train the cleaners (what knowledge needs to be updated)
- To provide feedback on service delivery
- To help in the preparation of the subsequent contract
- To discipline the users of the rooms
- To review and adjust the quality levels and cleaning frequency of the rooms.

**Do not work too long in each control unit**, limit the time it takes to clean. Limit the time to 4 hours, as it is difficult to stay focused, and it is normal to inspect 10 rooms per hour.



**Anu Arukaev,**  
**Estonian Centre for Defence Investment**

*Our practice is for quality inspections to be performed by a third party who uses software to randomly select rooms, perform inspection, and generate reports.*

*A third party can help provide solutions to the challenges of providing a cleaning service.*

*With a large number of control areas (80 and more) it is wise to control at the same time with 2-3 groups.*

Country	Purchase standard from	Training companies	Certification body	Certified	Trained
<b>Sweden</b> Since 2000	<a href="#">Svenska institutet för Standarder</a>	<a href="#">Borago</a> ; <a href="#">Hygiene Diagnostic</a> ; <a href="#">Städarkitekten</a>	<a href="#">Visera</a>		
<b>Denmark</b> Since 2000	<a href="#">Danish Standard</a>	Public Education AMU; <a href="#">DNV-GL</a> ; <a href="#">Glad Consulting</a> ; Andresen Control	<a href="#">DNV-GL</a> ; <a href="#">SINTEF</a>	Level 3: 157 persons Level 4: 48 persons	
<b>Norway</b> Since 2000	<a href="#">Standards Norway</a>	<a href="#">Bygg &amp; Facility Consult A/S</a> ; <a href="#">Svein Taraldsen Consult AS</a> ; <a href="#">Ren-Consult AS</a>	<a href="#">DNV-GL</a> ; <a href="#">SINTEF</a>	Level 3: 500 persons Level 4: 300 persons	
<b>Estonia</b> Since 2012	<a href="#">Estonian Centre of Standardisation</a>	<a href="#">Puhastusekspert OÜ</a>	-	-	Level 3: 230 persons Level 4: 30 persons
<b>Finland</b> Since 2012	<a href="#">Suomen Standardisoimisliitto SFS ry</a>	<a href="#">ATOP tietö Oy</a> , <a href="#">Ramboll Oy</a> , <a href="#">Tampereen siivousväline Oy</a>	<a href="#">Kiwa Inspecta sertifointi Oy</a>	Level 3: 49 persons Level 4: 85 persons	Level 3: 205 persons Level 4: 158 persons
<b>Iceland</b> Since 2016	<a href="#">Icelandic Standards</a>	Andresen Control from Denmark	<a href="#">DNV-GL</a>	Level 3: 40-50 persons Level 4: 10-13 persons	Level 3: 60 persons
<b>Latvia</b> Since 2017	<a href="#">Latvian Standard</a>	<a href="#">Puhastusekspert OÜ</a>	-	-	Level 3: 70 persons