

STOREFRONT WINDOW CLEANING

BUSINESS STARTUP GUIDE

PREMIUM 2026 EDITION

CLEAR
VIEWS
STRONGER
BUSINESSES
BRIGHTER
COMMUNITIES

Turn Clean Windows Into a Profitable Business

Step-by-step guidance to start, grow, and scale a professional storefront window cleaning business anywhere in the United States.



PROFESSIONAL
RESULTS



HAPPIER
CUSTOMERS



FLEXIBLE
LIFESTYLE



Recurring Storefront Routes

STEADY INCOME
POTENTIAL



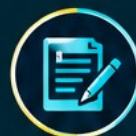
Equipment & Supplies

WHAT YOU NEED
TO GET STARTED



Pricing & Packages

MAXIMIZE
PROFITABILITY



Client Contracts & Agreements

PROTECT YOUR
BUSINESS



Route Planning & Density

MORE JOBS
LESS TRAVEL



Safety & Compliance

GROUND-LEVEL
FOCUSED

HIGHER-LEVEL WORK
REQUIRES ADDITIONAL
SAFETY CONTROLS
AND FALL-PROTECTION
CONSIDERATIONS

PREMIUM GUIDE

Before You Begin

The strongest starter version of window cleaning is not the biggest house or the tallest glass. It is a repeatable route of ground-level storefronts that can be cleaned safely, quickly, and on a recurring schedule.

NATIONWIDE RULE

Business licensing, sales tax, wastewater rules, ladder/fall rules, commercial auto requirements, and insurance exclusions vary by location and job type. Verify the rules that apply before accepting work.

- ☐ Start with ground-level recurring storefronts.
- ☐ Price by stop and route economics, not by pane count alone.
- ☐ Add residential detail work only after the basic route is profitable.
- ☐ Add higher-access work only after training, insurance, and site controls are in place.
- ☐ Use recurring contracts and route density to stabilize revenue.

CHAPTER 1

The Business You Are Actually Building

This is a route business disguised as a cleaning business.

Into a Profitable Business



The best early customer is often a small storefront that wants clean glass every month without managing a complicated vendor.

- Storefront work can recur monthly or on another fixed cadence.
- Dense routes reduce windshield time and increase paid cleaning time.
- Residential work can raise ticket size but usually requires more setup, detailing, screens, tracks, and scheduling.
- Commercial accounts become more valuable when several nearby locations can be serviced in one trip.

CHAPTER 2

Build the Service Ladder

Start with the safest repeatable work and earn the right to add complexity.

BUILD THE ROUTE BEFORE THE HEIGHT



Start with the safest recurring work. Add height only when the route, training, and insurance justify it.

CHAPTER 3

Equipment and Startup Stack

You do not need a truck full of equipment to start ground-level storefront work.



A compact, organized kit reduces setup time and makes recurring stops faster.

Start now	Add later
Professional squeegees and channels	Water-fed pole system
Applicator / scrubber	Pure-water filtration
Bucket / belt / towels	Additional ladders or access equipment
Scraper with safe-use procedure	Commercial vehicle shelving
Extension pole	Dedicated route van

SCRAPER CAUTION

Improper scraping can scratch certain glass and coatings. Test methods, follow manufacturer guidance, and avoid assuming every surface can be scraped the same way.

CHAPTER 4

Storefront Route Workflow

A recurring stop should feel almost boring: park, protect the area, clean, inspect, document, and move.

- ☐ Confirm access and service scope.

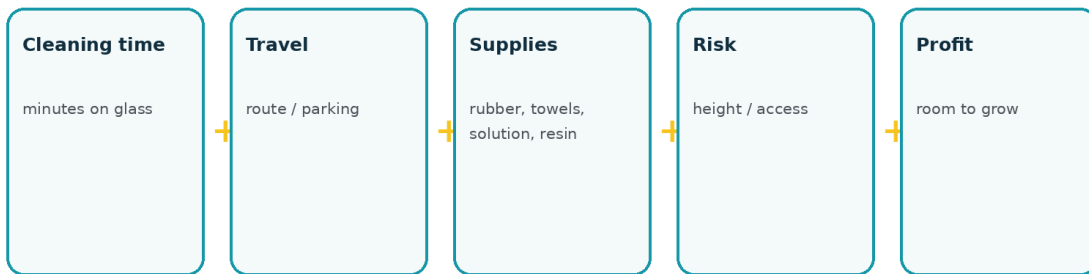
- ☐ Protect pedestrian areas and keep tools controlled.
- ☐ Remove loose soil before detailing edges and glass.
- ☐ Inspect from multiple angles before leaving.
- ☐ Record completion and any glass damage already present.
- ☐ Invoice on the agreed recurring schedule.

CHAPTER 5

Pricing and Route Economics

The right price covers cleaning time, travel, supplies, risk, overhead, and profit.

PRICE THE STOP - NOT JUST THE GLASS



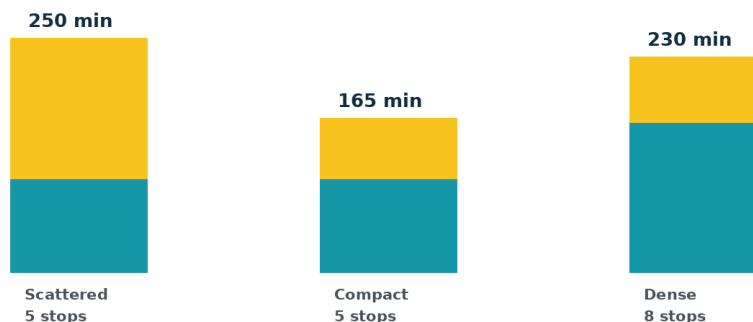
Flat route price must cover all five.

ILLUSTRATIVE ROUTE DENSITY

Example only - replace every number with your own route times, price, labor, fuel, and overhead.

GOLD = travel / dead time

TEAL = paid cleaning time



ILLUSTRATIVE ONLY

The graphics teach the math. They are not suggested prices or productivity guarantees.

CHAPTER 6

Commercial Contracts and Recurring Service

The recurring agreement is the asset.

Define in writing

- ☐ Exterior only or interior + exterior
- ☐ Service frequency
- ☐ Service window / access
- ☐ Included doors, partitions, mirrors, frames, tracks, screens
- ☐ Hard-water or restoration work exclusions
- ☐ Price and payment terms
- ☐ Weather reschedule rules
- ☐ Cancellation / pause terms
- ☐ Damage reporting process

KEEP IT SIMPLE

A one-page service agreement can be enough for small storefront accounts if the scope and exclusions are clear.

CHAPTER 7

Residential Detail Work

Residential work pays differently because setup and detail time are higher.



Residential detail work often includes more edge work, tracks, screens, interior access, and customer-specific scheduling.

- ☐ Walk the property before quoting when the scope is unclear.
- ☐ Separate standard cleaning from mineral removal or restoration.
- ☐ State whether screens, tracks, skylights, French panes, and interior partitions are included.
- ☐ Protect floors and furnishings during interior work.
- ☐ Use a minimum service charge so small jobs still cover travel and setup.

CHAPTER 8

Height, Ladder, and Fall Safety

The economics change the moment the work leaves the ground.

HEIGHT-WORK DECISION GATE



A declined height job is cheaper than an uninsured fall.

- ☐ Prefer ground-based methods where practical.
- ☐ Inspect ladders and access equipment before use.
- ☐ Do not work from unstable surfaces or improvised supports.
- ☐ Account for traffic, weather, overhead hazards, and public exposure.
- ☐ Confirm insurance coverage for the actual height and access method before accepting the job.
- ☐ Use qualified training and applicable fall-protection procedures for elevated work.

CHAPTER 9

Water, Chemicals, and Runoff

Professional results do not require careless chemical use.

- ☐ Use the minimum chemical strength needed for the soil.
- ☐ Follow product labels and safety data where applicable.
- ☐ Avoid allowing detergents or contaminated wash water to enter storm drains where local rules prohibit it.
- ☐ Keep pure-water and chemical equipment labeled and separated.
- ☐ Do not mix chemicals unless the manufacturer specifically permits it.

CHAPTER 10

Sales: Build the Route

The storefront itself is the lead list.

- ☐ Choose one walkable commercial area.
- ☐ Identify frontages with obvious need.
- ☐ Introduce the service to the manager or owner during a quiet period.
- ☐ Offer a simple recurring option instead of a long menu.
- ☐ Use before-and-after photos only with permission.
- ☐ Ask existing commercial clients about neighboring locations or related businesses.

CHAPTER 11

Scheduling and Route Density

Growth is not more miles. Growth is more paid stops per route hour.

- ☐ Assign geographic service days.
- ☐ Group nearby accounts together.
- ☐ Avoid one-off low-price work far outside the route.
- ☐ Track drive time, cleaning time, and total revenue by route.
- ☐ Raise minimums or decline work that breaks route economics.

CHAPTER 12

Quality Control and Customer Retention

Recurring customers stay when the service is predictable.

- ☐ Use the same completion checklist each visit.
- ☐ Inspect edges, corners, door glass, and obvious streaks before leaving.
- ☐ Report pre-existing damage instead of silently working around it.
- ☐ Correct misses quickly.
- ☐ Keep invoices and service records organized.
- ☐ Ask for reviews after several successful visits, not before trust is earned.

CHAPTER 13

Your First 90 Days

Build a route before you build a fleet.

Days 1-30

- ☐ Verify local business requirements and insurance.
- ☐ Buy the ground-level kit.

- ☐ Walk one commercial area.
- ☐ Close the first recurring storefronts.

Days 31-60

- ☐ Refine route pricing.
- ☐ Build a standard service agreement.
- ☐ Track time per stop.
- ☐ Add only nearby accounts.

Days 61-90

- ☐ Build toward a dense recurring route.
- ☐ Add residential detail only when requested.
- ☐ Decide whether pure-water equipment is justified.
- ☐ Decline elevated work until training and coverage are ready.

CHAPTER 14

Workbook and Field Sheets

Use these pages on the route. The open space is intentional.

Storefront account sheet

Business: _____

Address: _____

Contact: _____

Frequency: _____

Exterior / interior: _____

Doors / partitions: _____

Access notes: _____

Service window: _____

Price: _____

Payment terms: _____

Weather rule: _____

Special glass / coating notes: _____

Route sheet

Route date: _____

Stop order: _____

Travel minutes: _____

Cleaning minutes: _____

Amount invoiced: _____

Issue / follow-up: _____

Sources & Annual Verification Checklist

Recheck rules and insurance whenever you add a new city, chemical, access method, employee, vehicle, or height category.

- Internal source: VSG_Window_Cleaning_Business_Model_2026.docx.
- U.S. Small Business Administration - state and local licenses and permits.
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration - ladder, walking-working surface, and fall-protection resources.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and local stormwater authorities - wastewater / storm-drain guidance where applicable.
- ☐ Local business licensing / registration
- ☐ Sales-tax treatment
- ☐ General liability and commercial auto coverage
- ☐ Height / ladder / fall exclusions
- ☐ Employee safety obligations
- ☐ Wastewater / storm-drain rules
- ☐ Chemical labels and SDS access
- ☐ Current equipment and supply costs
- ☐ Current route pricing and drive-time assumptions

FINAL QUALITY RULE

The premium version of this business is not the tallest job. It is the safest, densest, most repeatable route you can service consistently.