

## The Worst and Well Rested

Explaining to inquiring minds about one's career choice as a Crime Scene Cleaner can often lead to very common questions such as,

“What's the worst thing you've every seen?” or “How can you do this type of work?”

The truth is that there is important context to consider when asking a cleaner the worst thing they have ever seen. The circumstance surrounding trauma, the amount of biological material present, sifting through personal items, or even the amount of work involved. These and many other factors could affect the cleaner's true answer. There will always be multiple scenes that stick with somebody, or remind technicians of their own mortality, extended empathy, or frustration. However, significance does not always equate to the “worst.” What if instead of the worst job, cleaners were asked whether or not they'd experienced a change in perspective afterwards? What about a job that garnered a hug through tears upon completion, or one that required overcoming a fear?

Maintaining healthy boundaries throughout tough circumstances are what can make or break a sustainable career in this field when considering job significance. It is not uncommon for there to be a high turnover rate in the industry due overworked employees burning out or falling off. Self-care, managing jobs correctly, and understanding California labor laws are crucial. Doing everything possible to help families while sacrificing one's own health and safety is unacceptable. Crime Scene Cleaners cannot perform this type of work with empathy alone. Boundaries must be in place regarding the families being served, and the company employing the technician.

Technicians are typically on call in the remediation industry due to the nature of emergency response. Sleeping five to eight hours as regularly as possible between odd shifts or long jobs makes a huge difference in performance capability. Mandated meal breaks, regular breaks, and staying hydrated are also necessary. Taking a minimum of one day out of seven to rest is protected in California, and encouraged.

With rest in mind, being able to determine the need for immediate response or scheduling becomes essential. Making sure to have as much information as possible can help determine the best approach for both crime scene cleaners and customers. A well-rested cleaner will always perform better and be less likely to make mistakes than one pushing through exhaustion.

Driving is also a significant part of the work day as a Crime Scene Cleaner. Reaper Clean, the local Fresno based biohazard remediation company, can service up to two hours in any direction or further depending on the type of emergency. Packaging a with at least three days' worth of clothing and toiletries is standard. And being on the road for work can also have an effect on work life balance if not managed correctly.

Cleaning up any scene can emotionally affect even the most seasoned technicians in the field. To remain healthy and be able to assist others, support is crucial. Employers should have emergency contacts listed, monthly check ins, and a secure space at work to talk through job experiences. Creating comradery and building a strong support system amongst teammates is essential for employee health. Management that offers and encourages therapy, time off for hobbies, or other means of advocacy for

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their employees can prevent or lessen vicarious trauma and stress this way. Reaper Clean advocates for the health and safety of all crime scene cleaners, so that they can continue helping families and answering questions about the career that they love.

For more information about Reaper Clean, go to [www.reaperclean.com](http://www.reaperclean.com), email [onthescene@reaperclean.com](mailto:onthescene@reaperclean.com), or follow on Facebook, Instagram, or Tiktok.