

An idea for safe operating rooms in hospitals

For over 18 years it has been providing top quality comprehensive services in the sphere of air conditioning, sanitary and electrical installations. It has been developing smoothly; it has been raising qualifications and gaining more and more experience confirmed with references and certificates. The above refers to "SAR PW Sp. z o.o." Sp. k. which has decided to prepare a special offer for hospitals.

MACIEJ PIŁAT

Nobody needs to be told about how poor the condition is with respect to safe functioning of technical infrastructure in Polish health institutions and about the low technological advancement at our hospitals. Suffice to say that we are light years behind EU countries. The distance is best visible when we look at the existing technical solutions in ventilation and air conditioning installations that are responsible for correct and safe functioning of operating rooms. - "The condition can be only compared to polish roads", says Andrzej Różycki, founder of "SAR PW Sp. z o.o." Sp. k. Every day the health and lives of patients are at stake in operating theatres. For people who are not directly related to hospitals, operating theatres are almost "holy" places with the red line and sliding doors delimiting septic rooms from aseptic ones is a "wonderful" barrier protecting the area from external hazards. Nothing could be more misleading. Neither the doors nor the line protect those rooms against the hazard of infection. It is only with appropriate design, performance, professional maintenance and knowledgeable use of the operating room, subject to precise and simple requirements concerning cleanliness and comfort parameters in the operating rooms that will ensure safe comfortable functioning of operating theatres.

RESULT CRITERION

The contractor who will agree to design and construct an air conditioning system for an operating room should realise the specific requirements and hold adequate knowledge and experience. The most important requirements apply to air purity class in the operating room, air flow stability by the operating table, pressure differences between the operating room and the entire operating block, temperature, humidity and noise level to be ensured by an air conditioning system responsible for the processes as well as operational costs and reliability of the installation. Thus there is no doubt that from the viewpoint of the hospital it will be crucial for the proper functioning of the air conditioning system at the operating room to prepare precise terms of reference to select an appropriate designer and contractor. - "A responsible one that is such who will realise that the work will be accepted only when the expected results are satisfied related as specified in the contract", clarifies Różycki. This sounds logical. Unfortunately, in daily life most often this is not the case. That is mainly due to the lowest price criterion applied in the public procurement procedures and to unreliable contractors. - Usually it is as follows: A beautifully looking operating room at a hospital, built for lots of money.

But what the sense if it cannot be used as the designer has incorrectly selected the parameters of the air conditioning system responsible for ensuring the required cleanliness parameters, temperature or noise comfort or the contractor has purchased equipment of inferior quality, made the installation non hermetic, forgot to provide automatic devices without which the correct functioning of the operating block is impossible - we keep seeing such errors now and again”, says the boss of “SAR PW Sp. z o.o.” Sp. k. which over its 18 years of operation has successfully installed a few dozen air conditioning systems for operating and post-operating room in Poland. So what should hospitals do so that the money spent by them would guarantee the intended effects? - “Incorporate precisely defined, simple and understandable parameters as the definition of quality definition in contracts with designers and contractors”, says Różycki. - The criteria when satisfied will provide hospitals with the result being a clean operating room and its adequate functionality. The parameters guarantee safety to patients and the personnel – and SAR can help identify and describe the parameters. We will support you to formulate correctly and on the basis of international standards and other regulations (unfortunately in Poland we do not have any regulations concerning parameterised cleanliness requirements of operating rooms) provisions in the contract between the investor and the contractor concerning achievement and maintenance of cleanliness parameters and temperature comfort as well as enforce the provisions during final inspection and operation.

“Our experience is based on many years of collaboration with the Warsaw University of Technology as well as our active participation in the drafting and implementation process of the standard pr EN-ISO 14644-1, regulating the aspects of clean rooms”, says Andrzej Różycki, responsible for those issues, who is a member of the Technical Committee KT 161 for Interior Air Quality, acting within the working structures of the Polish Standardisation Committee.

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PAYBACK IN FOUR YEARS

The solution proposed by “SAR PW Sp. z o.o.” Sp. k., combined with the lowest price criterion at selection of the contractor to support quality, is aimed at eliminating unfair contractors from proceedings and ensure that the contracting parties enjoy completely functional and safe operating rooms. - “The price criterion in public procurement will always apply. This is unavoidable. However, if we combine it with a quality criterion, we will gain a lot”, ensures Roman Grzybowski, head of maintenance at SAR. “As a result, before filing price bids contractors will carefully calculate the price as they realise that they will remain accountable for measurable parameters specified in the contract”, adds Różycki. Representatives of “SAR PW Sp. z o.o.” Sp. k. estimate that a quality criterion included in the contract will increase the cost of the entire investment by no more than 10-15%. With efficient and effective functioning of the operating rooms, the costs will be paid back in four years.





GERMAN TEMPLATE

Another criterion affecting selection of an appropriate contractor is experience. Before signing a contract with the contractor, the contracting authority should check if the contractor has experience in installing air conditioning systems at other hospitals which provided for a quality criterion. - If it has performed such contract at least once, it will know what it means. "The contractor knows that it must commission an efficient and safe installation", assures Andrzej Różycki. It is less comfortable when the contracting authority fails to verify the experience of potential contractors. What then? - A contractor will win who will place the lowest bid. It will perform a low quality design for a low price. And basing on such low quality design, the actual installation work will be of poor quality. The hospital will be kept happy until the moment when it turns out that the operating room does not function. A good solution to such situations would be to look at the solutions that prevail in the public procurement market in Germany. There, the construction process begins with designing phase and ends with operational phase. The logic is that the contractor who performed the investment remains liable for its correct functioning for the next several years. The

QUALITY WARRANTY CERTIFICATE

contracting authority which in its terms of reference fails to clearly specify the quality criterion, may verify potential contractors for the certificates they hold like ISO certificates. If they hold such certificates, they gain reliability", assures Roman Grzybowski, head of maintenance at "SAR PW Sp. z o.o." Sp. k. which since 2004 has boasted its Quality Assurance System documented with the ISO 9001:2000 (BV) certificate and since 2009 – the ISO 9001:2008 (BV) certificate. Obtaining a certificate is a long-term process during which the company is audited many times by independent certifying institutions.

WILLINGNESS AND COLLABORATION

However, in order for the procedure providing for the quality criterion as proposed by "SAR PW Sp. z o.o." Sp. k. to be performed successfully, correct collaboration will be required between the procurement department of the hospital and its technical division. If it functions correctly, the contracting authority usually gets a functional and efficient operating room.

And if not?

- Interests diverge since the public procurement department is interested in having the tender procedure run smoothly and does not anticipate the effect in the form of quality. That is why close collaboration of the two departments is so important and necessary. If such collaboration does not exist, there is a risk of irregularities that may adversely affect the infrastructure for which the technical department is responsible”, says the boss of “SAR PW Sp. z o.o.” Sp. k., whose current contract portfolio includes about 40% of public contracts.

COMPREHENSIVE OFFER

If a hospital wishes to obtain an adequate effect and its public procurement department is open to comments from the technical department and it is interested in the final outcome, SAR may enter the stage and present all of its possibilities. - “It is to such contracting authorities that we address our offer. We are able to and we wish to be advisers, consultants. We wish to share our experience even free of charge. “At this stage of development of our company, we can avoid the luxury”, declares the founder of “SAR PW Sp. z o.o.” Sp. k., employing 73 staff, whose offer is now used by e.g. two most modern hospitals in Warsaw.

- “We want to reach hospitals with professional information on how they should safeguard their investments, how to spend the money they have at their disposal so that they buy exactly what they need, we want to help identify requirements and how they can be enforced”, adds Andrzej Różycki who is also the chief technical consultant of “SAR PW Sp. z o.o.” Sp. k. “The Company can operate to support the hospital but also designers and contractors.

- If the entire investment process – from designing to completion – is performed under our supervision, the final acceptance will be a formality. “If the contractor complies with our instructions, we provide a warranty that the operating room will function safely for patients and will not cause any claims by patients which will protect the hospital from long-term suits for damages”, declares Różycki whose company performs maintenance services of comfortable and precise air conditioning systems in over 300 buildings with total cubage of over 2 000 000 m² and in over 50 server rooms.

WHY HOSPITALS?

- Because it was at hospitals that we have learned most. At the beginning of operations by our company it was in hospitals that we learned about most difficult sanitary installations. After years we have accumulated abundant experience as a result of which I was awarded the license of building expert in installations concerning networks, installations and devices in the sphere of: ventilation, air conditioning, including special air conditioning installations for clean rooms. We hold professional know-how and financial potential and we have decided to repay the debt of gratitude to hospitals” says Andrzej Różycki. One of the purposes to establish SAR PW Sp. z o.o. which is the general partner of the general partnership, was to combine market oriented operations with social policies. However, apart from satisfaction the company may also count on measurable benefits resulting from collaboration with hospitals. If the company protects the interests of the contracting authority from the very beginning, through the designing and construction phases, it may count on receiving maintenance service contracts after the project is completed.

VALIDATION AS A SOURCE OF PROFIT

Hospitals that decide to spend their funds on operating rooms that meet the cleanliness quality criteria can additionally be provided with some funds. They only need to take a validation attempt. If they receive a confirmation that they meet quality standards, they can request insurance companies to reduce premiums since their technical infrastructure is safe and the operating rooms clean and therefore their use will generate less risk of any post-operative complications. The National Health Fund (NFZ) may play a very important role in promoting functional operating rooms at hospitals. - “The idea is to call attention of the NFZ to those hospitals that are provided with operating rooms meeting quality criteria. If the Fund also begins to apply the criterion to be manifested in increased funding to safe hospitals that would be a breakthrough in the sphere of clean operating rooms in Poland. I assure you that it will be patients who will win in the end’ closes the boss of “SAR PW Sp. z o.o.” Sp. k.