

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): CLEANING & DISINFECTING WHEN SOMEONE IS SICK



CLEANING AND DISINFECTION OF THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that the number of COVID-19 cases will increase exponentially during the next two weeks, and there may be situations at home or work where you need to decontaminate an area or a vehicle that has recently been occupied by someone who is contagious.

This safety bulletin addresses the cleaning and disinfection of work areas that are suspected of being contaminated with novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The primary source of information contained here is from the [CDC's Interim Recommendations for U.S. Households with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#).

SINCE INDIVIDUALS MAY BE CONTAGIOUS WITHOUT SHOWING SYMPTOMS, THESE RECOMMENDATIONS MAY BE ALSO USED AS A PREVENTATIVE MEASURE.

Background

There is much to learn about COVID-19. Based on what is currently known about the virus and about similar coronaviruses, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (within about 6 feet). This type of transmission occurs via respiratory droplets, but disease transmission via infectious aerosols is currently uncertain. Transmission of COVID-19 to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented. Transmission of coronavirus occurs much more commonly through respiratory droplets than through fomites (any inanimate object such as a door handle or ATM). Current evidence suggests that COVID-19 may remain viable from hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses.

It is unknown how long the air inside a room occupied by someone with confirmed COVID-19 remains potentially infectious. Taking measures to improve ventilation in an area or room where someone was ill or suspected to be ill with COVID-19 will help shorten the time it takes respiratory droplets to be removed from the air.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): CLEANING & DISINFECTING WHEN SOMEONE IS SICK



Purpose

This guidance provides recommendations on the cleaning and disinfection of areas that persons with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 have occupied. It is aimed at limiting the survival of the virus.

Cleaning vs. Disinfecting

Cleaning refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. Cleaning does not kill germs. Instead, it lowers their numbers by removing them which lowers the risk of spreading infection.

Disinfecting refers to using chemicals, for example, EPA-registered disinfectants, to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

General Recommendations for Routine Cleaning and Disinfection

Frequently touched surfaces such as tables, counters, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, and sinks should be routinely cleaned with household cleaners and EPA-registered disinfectants by following label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Hard (Non-porous) Surfaces

Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. If reusable gloves are used, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other purposes. Consult the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfection products used. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.

Dirty surfaces should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

[This website](#) offers a list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products for the correct concentration, application method, and contact time.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): CLEANING & DISINFECTING WHEN SOMEONE IS SICK



A household bleach solution of at least 1,000 ppm sodium hypochlorite can be used, if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application, ensuring a contact time of at least 1 minute and allowing proper ventilation during and after application. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. Remember to wear gloves.

Prepare the diluted bleach solution by mixing:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) household bleach (5-6%) per gallon of water
- or*
- 4 teaspoons household bleach per quart of water

Soft (Porous) Surfaces

For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination, if present, and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning, launder items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Otherwise, use products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 and that are suitable for porous surfaces.

Electronics

For electronics such as cell phone, tablet, touch screen, remote control, headphones, mouse and keyboard, remove visible contamination, if present. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products. Consider using wipeable protective covers for electronics. If no manufacturer's guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens. Thoroughly dry surfaces to avoid pooling of liquids.

ADDITIONAL MEASURES FOR HOMES

Clean hands often

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds.
 - Always wash immediately after removing gloves and after contact with a sick person or their belongings.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): CLEANING & DISINFECTING WHEN SOMEONE IS SICK



- Hand sanitizer: If soap and water are not readily available and hands are not visibly dirty, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water prior to using sanitizer.
- Additional key times to clean hands include:
 - After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - After using the restroom
 - Before eating or preparing food
 - After contact with animals or pets
 - Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance (e.g. a child)
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Doing Laundry

For clothing, towels, linens and other items

- Wear disposable gloves.
- Wash hands with soap and water as soon as you remove the gloves.
- Do not shake dirty laundry.
- Launder items according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- Dirty laundry from a sick person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above for surfaces.

Bedroom and Bathroom

Keep a separate bedroom and bathroom for sick person if possible.

- The sick person should stay separated from other people in the home as much as possible.
- If you have a separate bedroom and bathroom: Reduce cleaning to as-needed (e.g. soiled items and surfaces) to minimize the amount of contact with the sick person.
 - Caregivers can provide personal cleaning supplies to the sick person (if appropriate).
Supplies include tissues, paper towels, cleaners, and [EPA-registered disinfectants](#).
- If shared bathroom: Clean and disinfect after each use by the sick person. If this is not possible, the caregiver should wait as long as possible before cleaning and disinfecting. The toilet bowl may be disinfected by pouring in chlorine into the bowl and allowing it to sit 15 minutes before flushing. The toilet seat, lid, and handle may be disinfected with a disinfectant wipe, which should be placed in the trash when done.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19): CLEANING & DISINFECTING WHEN SOMEONE IS SICK



Food

- Stay separated: The sick person should eat (or be fed) in their own room if possible.
- Wash dishes and utensils using gloves, hot water, and soap: Handle any non-disposable used food service items with gloves and wash with hot water or in a dishwasher. Clean and disinfect hands after handling used food service items.

Trash

- If possible, dedicate a lined trash can for the sick person. Use gloves when removing garbage bags, and handling and disposing of trash. Tie the neck of the trash bag before placing into the trash bin. If the bag contains home healthcare waste, place the bag in a second bag and tie the neck of the second trash bag before placing into the trash bin. Clean and disinfect hands afterwards.

These recommendations will be updated if additional information becomes available. Following these recommendations will reduce the risk of encountering COVID-19 and will help protect you and everyone around you.

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