

## COVID-19

# Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility

Everyday Steps, Steps When Someone is Sick, and Considerations for Employers

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# How to clean and disinfect

## 1. Develop Your Plan

### **DETERMINE WHAT NEEDS TO BE CLEANED.**

Areas unoccupied for 7 or more days need only routine cleaning. Maintain existing cleaning practices for outdoor areas.

### **DETERMINE HOW AREAS WILL BE DISINFECTED.**

Consider the type of surface and how often the surface is touched. Prioritize disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.

### **CONSIDER THE RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED.**

Keep in mind the availability of cleaning products and personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for cleaners and disinfectants.

## 2. Implement

### **CLEAN VISIBLY DIRTY SURFACES WITH SOAP AND WATER prior to disinfection.**

### **USE THE APPROPRIATE CLEANING OR DISINFECTANT PRODUCT.**

Use an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved disinfectant against COVID-19 and read the label to make sure it meets your needs.

### **ALWAYS FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS ON THE LABEL.**

The label will include safety information and application instructions. Keep disinfectants out of the reach of children.

## 3. Maintain and Revise

### **CONTINUE ROUTINE CLEANING AND DISINFECTION.**

Continue or revise your plan based on appropriate disinfectant and PPE availability. Dirty surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. Routinely disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily.



## Clean

**MAINTAIN SAFE PRACTICES** such as frequent handwashing, wearing masks, and staying home if you are sick.

**CONTINUE PRACTICES THAT REDUCE THE POTENTIAL FOR EXPOSURE.**

Maintain social distancing, staying six feet away from others. Reduce sharing of common spaces and frequently touched objects.

- **Wear disposable gloves** to clean and disinfect and discard after use or use reusable gloves that are dedicated only for cleaning and disinfecting. Always **wash hands** after removing gloves.
- **Clean any dirty surfaces using soap and water first, then use disinfectant.**
- Cleaning with soap and water **reduces the number of germs, dirt, and impurities** on the surface. **Disinfecting kills any remaining germs** on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection.
  - **Practice routine cleaning** and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces. More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use.
  - Surfaces and objects in public places, such as shopping carts, point of sale keypads, pens, counters, vending machines, and ATMs should be cleaned and disinfected before each use or as much as possible.
  - **Other high touch surfaces include:** Tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks.



## Disinfect

- **Disinfect with a disinfectant on [EPA List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)** [↗](#). Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many products recommend:
  - Keeping surface wet with disinfectant for a period of time (see product label).
  - Precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good **ventilation** while using the product.

**Use chemical disinfectants safely!** Always read and follow the directions on the label of cleaning and disinfection products to ensure safe and effective use.

- Wear gloves and consider glasses or goggles for potential splash hazards to eyes
- Ensure adequate ventilation (for example, open windows)
- Use only the amount recommended on the label
- Use water at room temperature for dilution (unless stated otherwise on the label)
- Label diluted cleaning solutions
- Store and use chemicals out of the reach of children and pets
- Do not mix products or chemicals
- Do not eat, drink, breathe, or inject cleaning and disinfection products into your body or apply directly to your skin as they can cause serious harm
- Do not wipe or bathe pets with any cleaning and disinfection products.

See [EPA's Six Steps for Safe and Effective Disinfectant Use](#).

Special considerations should be made for people with asthma. Some cleaning and disinfection products can trigger asthma. [Learn more about reducing your chance of an asthma attack while disinfecting to prevent COVID-19.](#)

- If products on [EPA List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) are not available, bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface and will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
  - Most household bleach contains 5%–9% sodium hypochlorite. Do not use a bleach product if the percentage is not in this range or is not specified, such as some types of laundry bleach or splash-less bleach as these are not appropriate for disinfection.
  - **Follow the directions on the bleach bottle for preparing a diluted bleach solution.** If your bottle does not have directions, you can make a bleach solution for disinfecting by mixing:
    - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach per gallon of room temperature water OR
    - 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of room temperature water
  - Follow the manufacturer's application instructions for the surface. If instructions are not available, leave the diluted bleach solution on the surface for at least 1 minute before removing or wiping. This is known as the "contact time" for disinfection. The surface should remain visibly wet during the contact time.
  - Ensure proper [ventilation](#) during and after application (for example, open windows).
  - Never mix household bleach (or any disinfectants) with any other cleaners or disinfectants. This can cause vapors that may be very dangerous to breathe in.
  - Make a new diluted bleach solution daily. Bleach solutions will not be as effective after being mixed with water for over 24 hours.



## Soft (porous) surfaces

For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpet, rugs, and drapes

- **Clean the surface using soap and water** or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces.
- **Launder items** (if possible) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.


OR

- Disinfect with a household disinfectant on [EPA List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)  approved for use on porous surfaces
- **Vacuum as usual.**



## Electronics

For electronics, such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines

- Consider putting a **wipeable cover** on electronics, which make cleaning and disinfecting easier.
- **Follow manufacturer's instructions and recommendations** for cleaning the electronic item.
- For electronic surfaces that can be cleaned or disinfected, use a product on [EPA List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) . Many of the products for electronics contain alcohol because it dries quickly.



## Laundry

For clothing, towels, linens and other items that go in the laundry:

- To minimize the possibility of dispersing the virus through the air, do not shake dirty laundry.
- **Wear disposable gloves** when handling dirty laundry from a person who is sick.
- Launder items according to the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, **use the warmest appropriate water setting** and dry items completely.
- Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and **disinfect clothes hampers** according to guidance above for surfaces.
- **Wash hands** after handling dirty laundry.



## Cleaning and disinfecting your building or facility when someone is sick or has a COVID-19 diagnosis

- **Close off areas** used by the person who is sick.
- **Open outside doors and windows** and use fans or other [engineering controls](#) to increase air circulation in the area. **Wait 24 hours** before you clean or disinfect. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.
- Clean and disinfect the immediate workspace used **by the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19**, such as the surfaces in their office or cubicle. If common areas such as bathrooms or shared items have already been routinely cleaned and disinfected, there is no need for additional action.
- [Vacuum the space if needed](#). Use a vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter and bags, if available.
- Do not vacuum a room or space that has people in it. Wait until the room or space is empty to vacuum, such as at night, for common spaces, or during the day for private rooms.
  - Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect. For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floors or rugs, clean the surface with detergents or cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces, according to the textile's label. After cleaning, disinfect with an appropriate disinfectant on [EPA List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) [↗](#). Soft and porous materials, like carpet, are generally not as easy to disinfect as hard and non-porous surfaces. EPA has listed a limited number of products approved for disinfection for use on soft and porous materials on List N. Follow the disinfectant manufacturer's safety instructions (such as wearing gloves and ensuring adequate [ventilation](#)), for concentration level, application method and contact time. Allow sufficient drying time if vacuum is not intended for wet surfaces.
  - While vacuuming, temporarily turn off in-room, window-mounted, or on-wall recirculation HVAC to avoid contamination of the HVAC units.
  - Do NOT deactivate central HVAC systems. These systems tend to provide better filtration capabilities and introduce outdoor air into the areas that they serve.
- Once area has been **appropriately disinfected, it can be opened for use**.
  - If **more than 7 days** since the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary. Continue routine cleaning and disinfection. This includes everyday practices that businesses and communities normally use to maintain a healthy environment.



## Cleaning and disinfecting outdoor areas

- Outdoor areas generally only require **normal routine cleaning**.
- Spraying disinfectants in outdoor areas, such as sidewalks, roads, and groundcover, is not an efficient use of supplies and is not proven to reduce risk of COVID-19.
- High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars, play structures, and railings should be cleaned routinely. The targeted use of disinfectants can be done effectively, efficiently, and safely on outdoor hard surfaces and objects frequently touched by multiple people; make sure disinfectant has thoroughly dried before allowing children to play.
- Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces (wood play structures, benches, tables) or groundcovers (mulch, sand) is not recommended, as the material is difficult to clean.
- Certain outdoor areas and facilities, such as [bars and restaurants](#), may have additional requirements.



## When cleaning

- When cleaning
  - **Regular cleaning staff** can clean and disinfect community spaces.
    - Ensure they are trained on appropriate use of cleaning and disinfection chemicals.
  - **Wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.**
    - Additional personal protective equipment (PPE) might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
    - Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area.
  - **Wash your hands often** with soap and water for 20 seconds.
    - Wash your hands immediately after removing gloves and after contact with a person who is sick.
  - Follow normal preventive actions while at work and home, including washing hands often for at least 20 seconds and avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands. **It is especially important to wash hands:**
    - After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing.
    - Before and after touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
    - After using the restroom.
    - Before and after entering or leaving a public place.
    - Before and after touching your mask.
    - After changing a diaper.
    - Before eating or preparing food.
    - After touching animals or pets.
    - After caring for an ill person.

**Hand sanitizer:** If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

- **Always read and follow the directions on the label** to ensure safe and effective use.
- Keep hand sanitizers away from fire or flame
- For children under six years of age, hand sanitizer should be used with adult supervision
- Always store hand sanitizer out of reach of children and pets

See [FDA's Tips for Safe Sanitizer Use](#) and [CDC's Hand Sanitizer Use Considerations](#)





## Additional considerations for employers

- **Educate workers** performing cleaning, laundry, and trash pick-up to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19.
- **Develop policies for worker protection and provide training** to all cleaning staff on site prior to providing cleaning tasks.
  - Training should include when to use PPE, what PPE is necessary, how to properly don (put on), use, and doff (take off) PPE, and how to properly dispose of PPE.
- Ensure workers are trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace in accordance with OSHA's Hazard Communication standard ([29 CFR 1910.1200](#) ).
- **Comply with OSHA's standards** on Bloodborne Pathogens ([29 CFR 1910.1030](#) ), including proper disposal of regulated waste, and PPE ([29 CFR 1910.132](#) ).



## Alternative disinfection methods

- CDC only recommends use of the [EPA List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) against the virus that causes COVID-19.
- The efficacies of [alternative disinfection methods](#) , such as ultrasonic waves, high intensity UV radiation, and LED blue light against the virus that causes COVID-19 are not known. EPA does not routinely review the safety or efficacy of pesticidal devices, such as UV lights, LED lights, or ultrasonic devices.
- CDC does not recommend the use of sanitizing tunnels. Currently, there is no evidence that sanitizing tunnels are effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19. Chemicals used in sanitizing tunnels could cause skin, eye, or respiratory irritation or injury.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for fogging, fumigation, and wide-area or electrostatic spraying; and make sure that the product used is intended for this type of application by consulting [EPA List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) .



## For facilities that house people overnight

- Follow CDC's guidance for [colleges and universities](#). Work with state and local health officials to determine the best way to isolate people who are sick and if temporary housing is needed.
- For guidance on cleaning and disinfecting the bedroom/bathroom for someone who is sick, review CDC's guidance on [disinfecting your home if someone is sick](#).

## More information

[Transport Vehicles](#)

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[Building Ventilation](#)

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