

Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidance on Routine Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities

This guidance describes best practices during the COVID-19 pandemic for the routine cleaning and disinfection of **non-healthcare community facilities that do not house persons overnight** (e.g., schools, daycare centers, businesses, community centers, and offices). For guidance on how to clean and disinfect if a person suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in a facility, see *Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.

How COVID-19 Spreads

- The main way COVID-19 spreads is **person-to-person** from close contact (less than 6 feet away).
- It is also possible to catch COVID-19 by touching surfaces or objects contaminated with the virus, and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes. However, this is less common than person-to-person spread, and the risk is much lower.
- Practicing good hand hygiene (frequently washing your hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer) and avoiding touching your mouth, nose, or eyes with unwashed hands can decrease your risk of catching COVID-19 from surfaces.
- **Cleaning and disinfection of environmental surfaces and objects can also reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.**

Cleaning vs. Disinfection: What's the Difference?

- **Cleaning** is the removal of dirt and germs from surfaces. Cleaning is done with soap and water or detergents. Normal routine cleaning removes most virus particles from surfaces and objects.
- **Disinfection** is the use of chemicals to kill any germs that remain on a surface after cleaning.
- Cleaning and disinfection can be a two-step process (first cleaning, then disinfection), or a one step process (if an all-in-one cleaning and disinfection product is used).

Approach to Cleaning and Disinfection

- **In most situations, routine cleaning of surfaces once a day is adequate to prevent the spread of COVID-19 from surfaces.**
 - Prioritize cleaning high touch surfaces.
 - Examples of high-touch surfaces include: pens, counters, shopping carts, keyboards, elevator buttons, light switches, handles, stair rails, desks, faucets, sinks, phones, doors, and doorknobs.
 - High touch surfaces should be cleaned **at least once a day**.
- **NOTE:** Cleaning **PLUS** disinfection are necessary when a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 has been in a space within the past 24 hours. For more information, see *Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
- You may choose to clean more frequently or to routinely disinfect (in addition to cleaning) in shared spaces if:
 - the space is a high traffic area
OR
 - the space is occupied by certain populations, such as:
 - people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID
 - young children or others who may not be diligent about mask wearing, hand hygiene, or covering coughs and sneezes

- **If you determine that regular disinfection is needed:**
 - If your disinfectant product label does not specify that it can be used for both cleaning and disinfection, clean visibly dirty surfaces with soap or detergent before disinfection.
 - Refer to the list of disinfectants that are effective against the virus that causes COVID-19 on the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website: [epa.gov/coronavirus/about-list-n-disinfectants-coronavirus-covid-19-0](https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/about-list-n-disinfectants-coronavirus-covid-19-0).
 - When EPA-approved disinfectants are not available, diluted household bleach can be used if appropriate for the surface. For detailed information about preparing and using bleach solutions see: [cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/hygiene-handwashing-diapering/household-cleaning-sanitizing.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/emergency/hygiene-handwashing-diapering/household-cleaning-sanitizing.html).

Safe Cleaning and Disinfection Practices

- Gloves must be worn for all tasks in the routine cleaning and disinfection process. Additional PPE may be required for (e.g., safety glasses or goggles) depending on the product used and whether a splash risk exists.
- Clean hands often, including immediately after removing gloves.
- Follow the application instructions on the product label.
- If disinfecting, keep the surface wet with disinfectant for the full amount of time recommended on the product label.
- Use only the amount recommended on the label.
- If diluting with water is indicated for use, use water at room temperature (unless stated otherwise on the label).
- Label diluted cleaning or disinfectant solutions.
- Do not mix products or chemicals.
- Store and use chemicals out of the reach of children and pets.
- Maintain good ventilation when using cleaning and disinfection products.
- Do not eat, drink, breathe, or inject cleaning and disinfection products into your body or apply directly to your skin. They can cause serious harm.
- Do not wipe or bathe people or pets with any surface cleaning and disinfection products.

Employer Considerations

- Train staff about appropriate cleaning and disinfection procedures, chemical hazards, and the proper use of PPE (i.e., how to safely put on and remove any needed PPE).
- Ensure any needed cleaning and disinfection supplies are readily available for use within the facility.
- Provide staff with the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) that may be needed to perform cleaning and disinfection.
- Additional setting specific guidance is available at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.

Material-Specific Considerations

- **Soft Surfaces** (e.g., carpeted floor, rugs, drapes):
 - Remove visible contamination (e.g., vacuum), as needed prior to cleaning and disinfection. Use products appropriate for use on porous surfaces.
 - If items can be laundered, then launder the items according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
- **Laundry** (such as clothing, towels, and linens):
 - Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.

- Wash hands after handling dirty laundry.
- **Electronics** (e.g., tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, ATM machines):
 - Consider use of wipeable covers for electronics, to make cleaning and disinfecting easier.
 - Follow manufacturer's instructions and recommendations for cleaning the electronic device.
 - For electronic surfaces that need to be disinfected, use a product on EPA List N that meets manufacturer's recommendations. Many disinfection products for electronics contain alcohol because it dries quickly.
- **Outdoor Areas**
 - Spraying cleaning products or disinfectants in outdoor areas – such as on sidewalks, roads, or groundcover – is not necessary, effective, or recommended.
 - High-touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars, play structures, and railings, should be cleaned regularly.
 - Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces (such as wood play structures, benches, tables) or groundcovers (such as mulch and sand) is not recommended.

Alternative Disinfection Methods

- The effectiveness of alternative disinfection methods, such as ultrasonic waves, high intensity UV radiation, and LED blue light against the virus that causes COVID-19 has not been fully established.
- In most cases, fogging, fumigation, and wide-area or electrostatic spraying are not recommended as a primary method of surface disinfection. These methods also have associated safety risks to be considered.

Additional Cleaning and Disinfection Resources

- *Cleaning and Disinfecting Best Practices During the COVID-19 Pandemic* at [epa.gov/sites/production/files/2021-04/documents/cleaning-disinfecting-one-pager.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2021-04/documents/cleaning-disinfecting-one-pager.pdf)
- *Six Steps for Safe and Effective Disinfectant Use* at [epa.gov/coronavirus/six-steps-safe-effective-disinfectant-use](https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/six-steps-safe-effective-disinfectant-use)

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as the outbreak evolves. Please visit coronavirus.dc.gov regularly for the most current information.