COVID-19: Interim Cleaning Guidelines

The cleaning advice for the COVID-19 is likely to change as more becomes known about the virus. Local health authorities may advise current cleaning recommendations that should be followed.

Routine Cleaning - General

The following guidelines apply to **all potentially infectious incidents**:

- Increase the frequency of cleaning of high traffic areas, frequently touched surfaces and shared objects. During and after an outbreak, continue with routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.
- Cleaning staff should be up to date with routine vaccinations, and should wear the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) when cleaning as a routine precaution.
- Cleaning staff should pay strict attention to personal hygiene (avoid touching their face, thoroughly wash their hands).
- If cleaning bodily fluids (e.g. vomit, feces), cleaning staff must be appropriately trained, and wear appropriate PPE (e.g. gloves, gowns, masks and eye protection, foot protection) **See 'PPE for Cleaning Personnel' below**.
- EPA-registered cleaning and disinfection solutions should be used according to the manufacturer's instructions. **See 'Special Cleaning' below.**
- Curtains, towels, bed linens – should be washed and dried according to manufacturer's instructions; cleaning staff should wash their hands after handling these items; **see 'Laundry Handling' below.**
- If practical, prevent entry of other employees and visitors to any room that a known infectious person has been in until two hours after they have left and the room has been cleaned.

Specific to COVID-19

Transmission of COVID-19

Authorities are continuing to investigate the exact mode of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19 illness. Current knowledge about how the virus is spread is mostly based on what is known about similar coronaviruses.

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person via respiratory droplets produced when an infected person sneezes or coughs. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Others can get the disease by touching contaminated objects and then touching their face – droplets can enter the nose, eyes or mouth.

COVID-19 survival in the environment

The exact length of time the COVID-19 virus can survive in the environment is not yet known. In general, the survival of respiratory viruses will depend on a number of factors - including the type of surface,

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exposure to sunlight, temperature, humidity, and type of cleaning product used[1]. Different coronaviruses, such as the SAR-CoV-1 virus and the MERS-CoV virus, vary in the amount of time they can survive in the environment. The European CDC states the SARS-CoV virus "is estimated to survive for several days in the environment" and the MERS-CoV virus can survive for longer than "48 hours at an average room temperature (20°C [/ 68°F]) on different surfaces".[2]

Public Health England advises that the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surface is likely to have decreased significantly by 72 hours.[3]

Individuals could potentially become infected when they inadvertently transfer the virus from those contaminated objects/surfaces to their own mouth, eyes or nose with their hands.

Environmental measures

Environmental measures aim at reducing transmission of infection and include the routine cleaning of frequently used surfaces and objects, minimizing shared objects, and good ventilation.

Frequently touched surfaces may include desks, phones, keyboards, doorknobs and toilets. Shared objects should be kept to a minimum including such things as drinking glasses, eating utensils, towels and linen.[4]

- Whenever possible, employees should not to use the phones, desks, workspaces, tools and equipment of their colleagues.
- Disposable wipes should be made available for employees to wipe down frequently touched surfaces before each use e.g. door knobs, desks, remotes, other shared work tools.[5]

Good air ventilation is important in rooms where people regularly gather[6]. The US CDC recommends :*"Consider improving the engineering controls using the building ventilation system. This may include some or all of the following activities:*

- *Increase ventilation rates.*

- *Increase the percentage of outdoor air that circulates into the system."*[7]

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[1] PHE (2020): COVID-19: Cleaning in non-healthcare settings. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings

[2] ECDC (2020): Guidelines for the use of non-pharmaceutical measures to delay and mitigate the impact of 2019-nCoV. Retrieved from https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/guidelines-use-non-pharmaceutical-measures-delay-and-mitigate-impact-2019-ncov

[3] PHE (2020): COVID-19: Cleaning in non-healthcare settings. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings

[4] ECDC (2020): Guidelines for the use of non-pharmaceutical measures to delay and mitigate the impact of 2019-nCoV. Retrieved from https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/guidelines-use-non-pharmaceutical-measures-delay-and-mitigate-impact-2019-ncov

[5] CDC (2020): Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

[6] ECDC (2020): Guidelines for the use of non-pharmaceutical measures to delay and mitigate the impact of 2019-nCoV. Retrieved from https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/guidelines-use-non-pharmaceutical-measures-delay-and-mitigate-impact-2019-ncov

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Special Cleaning

Surfaces which might be contaminated with the COVID-19 virus should be cleaned with water and neutral detergent, followed by a dilute household bleach solution. For surfaces that cannot be cleaned with bleach, a 70% ethanol solution can be used. According to the US CDC, *"most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective."*[8] A list of EPA-approved products for use against the virus is available in the link below[9]. Manufacturer's instructions should be followed for products including concentration, application and contact time, etc.[10]

https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

Authorities differ in their cleaning advice for example, CDC advise to open windows and wait at least 24 hours, if possible, before cleaning and disinfecting a room after a sick person has left. [11] Public Health England says to wait 72 hours. [12]

Several authorities provide guidelines on cleaning workplaces and other non-healthcare settings some are listed below. At a minimum, guidance from your local authorities should be followed:

- Centre for Health Protection Hong Kong:
  https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/nid_guideline_workplace_eng.pdf
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control:
  https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/interim-guidance-environmental-cleaning-non-healthcare-facilities-exposed-2019
- Singapore National Environmental Agency: https://www.nea.gov.sg/our-services/public-cleanliness/environmental-cleaning-guidelines/guidelines-for-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection
- Public Health England: COVID-19: decontamination in non-healthcare settings
  https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings
- CDC COVID-19 Disinfecting Your Facility if Someone is Sick:
  https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/disinfecting-building-facility.html
- CDC COVID-19 Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

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[7] CDC (2020). Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

[8] CDC (2020): Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

[9] EPA (2020): List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2. Retrieved from https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2.

[10] CDC (2020): Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html

[11] CDC (2020). Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

[12] Public Health England (2020). Guidance COVID-19: decontamination in non-healthcare settings. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings

- CDC COVID-19 Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

Laundry Handling

Laundry should be washed according to detergent manufacturer's instructions at the warmest specified temperature. The U.S. CDC advises:

- *"Do not shake dirty laundry; this minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.*

- *Wash 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. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.*

- *Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces."[13].*

PPE for Cleaning Personnel

Authorities also vary in their advice regarding PPE requirements. The World Health Organization (WHO) has published interim guidance for PPE rationale in relation to setting, personnel, and type of activity (see WHO Rational use of personal protect equipment for coronavirus disease (COVID-19) https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/infection-prevention-and-control). In the context of COVID-19, they advise cleaning staff to use the following PPE. Cleaning staff must be properly trained in the use of PPE, including correct sequence of "donning" (putting on) and "doffing" (taking off) the items.

- Surgical mask
- Gown
- Heavy duty gloves
- Eye protection (for protection from splashing of bodily fluids or cleaning chemicals)
- Boots or closed work shoes[14]

The US CDC have published "Interim Recommendations for US Community Facilities with Suspected/Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019" https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html . They recommend cleaning staff wear:

- Gloves
- Gown
- "Additional PPE might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash."[15]

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[13] CDC (2020). Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html
[14] WHO (2020): Rational use of personal protective equipment for coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Interim guidance 19 March 2020. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/infection-prevention-and-control

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<u>**Document Information**</u>

Version: 2.2

Last modified: March   23, 2020

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[15] CDC (2020) Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations.
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

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