

COVID-19 Cleaning & Disinfection Guidance: Non-Healthcare Settings

The virus that causes COVID-19 can land on surfaces. In most situations, the [risk of infection from touching a surface is low](#) but it is possible for people to become infected if they touch those surfaces and then touch their nose, mouth, or eyes. The most reliable way to prevent infection from surfaces is to [regularly wash hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer](#). Cleaning and disinfecting surfaces can also reduce the risk of infection.

This guidance provides instructions for cleaning and disinfecting common spaces and frequently touched surfaces in response to COVID-19. Always follow standard practices and appropriate regulations specific to your type of facility for minimum standards for cleaning and disinfection. This guidance is indicated for buildings in community settings and is *not* intended for [healthcare settings](#).

Guidance for homes

Guidance for businesses and other public facilities

When to Clean and When to Disinfect

- ⇒ Cleaning with products containing soap or detergent reduces germs on surfaces by removing contaminants and may also weaken or damage some of the virus particles, which decreases risk of infection from surfaces.
- ⇒ When no people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 are known to have been in a space, [cleaning once a day is usually enough](#) to sufficiently remove virus that may be on surfaces and help maintain a healthy facility. Place special focus on high-touch surfaces such as doorknobs, tables, handles, light switches, and countertops.
 -  Clean other surfaces when they are visibly dirty or as needed. Clean them more frequently if people in your household are [more likely to get very sick](#) from COVID-19. You might also choose to disinfect.
- ⇒ Disinfecting (using [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)'s List N](#)) kills any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection.
- ⇒ You may want to either clean more frequently or choose to disinfect (in addition to cleaning) in shared spaces if certain conditions apply that can increase the risk of infection from touching surfaces:
 - High transmission of COVID-19 in your community,
 - Low number of people wearing masks,
 - Infrequent hand hygiene, or
 - The space is occupied by certain populations, such as people at [increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#)
- ⇒ Reduce contamination of surfaces
 -  Ask unvaccinated visitors to wear masks.
 -  Ask all visitors to wear masks.

-  Follow [guidance for fully vaccinated people](#) before inviting visitors to your home.
-  Isolate people who are sick with COVID-19.
-  Have everyone wash hands often, especially upon arrival or when returning from outside activities.

If there has been a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in your home or facility within the last 24 hours, you should clean AND disinfect the space.

Routine Cleaning

Develop Your Plan

Determine What Needs to Be Cleaned

- ⇒ Consider the type of surface and how often the surface is touched. Generally, the more people who touch a surface, the higher the risk. Prioritize cleaning high-touch surfaces.
 - **Soft surfaces such as carpeted floor, 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.
 - If you need to disinfect, use an EPA-registered household disinfectant. [These disinfectants](#) meet EPA's criteria for use against COVID-19.
 - Vacuum as usual.
 - **Electronics such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, remote controls, and ATM machines**
 - Consider putting a wipeable cover on electronics.
 - Follow manufacturer's instruction for cleaning and disinfecting.
 - If no guidance, use alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 60% alcohol. Dry surface thoroughly.
 - **Laundry such as clothing, towels, linens, and other items**
 - Launder items according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
 - Wear disposable gloves and a [mask](#) when handling dirty laundry from a person who is sick.
 - Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people's items.
 - Do not shake dirty laundry.
 - Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance for surfaces.
 - Remove gloves, and wash hands right away.
 - **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.

Determine How Often to Clean

- ⇒ High-touch surfaces should be cleaned at least once a day.
- ⇒ More frequent cleaning might be needed when the space is occupied by young children and others who may not consistently wear masks, wash hands, or cover coughs and sneezes.
- ⇒ If the space is a high traffic area or is occupied by certain populations, such as [people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19](#), you may choose to clean more frequently.

Determine if Regular Disinfection is Needed

In most situations, regular cleaning (at least once a day) is enough to sufficiently remove virus that may be on surfaces. However, if certain conditions apply, you may choose to disinfect after cleaning.

Consider the Resources and Equipment Needed

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

Implement

Clean High-Touch Surfaces

Clean high-touch surfaces at least once a day or as often as determined is necessary. Examples of high-touch surfaces include: pens, counters, shopping carts, tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, stair rails, elevator buttons, desks, keyboards, phones, toilets, faucets, and sinks.

Protect Yourself or Your Cleaning Staff

- ⇒ Ensure cleaning staff are trained on proper use of cleaning (and disinfecting, if applicable) products.
- ⇒ Wear [gloves](#) for all tasks in the cleaning process.
- ⇒ [Wash your hands](#) with soap and water for 20 seconds after cleaning. Be sure to wash your hands immediately after removing gloves.
 - If hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.
 - If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, and wash with soap and water as soon as you can.
- ⇒ 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.](#)

Disinfect Safely When Needed

If you determine that regular disinfection may be 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.
- ⇒ Use a disinfectant product from the [EPA List N](#) that is effective against COVID-19. Check that the [EPA Registration number](#) on the product matches the registration number in the List N search tool.
 - If products on EPA List N: Disinfectants for Coronavirus (COVID-19) are not available, [bleach solutions](#) can be used if appropriate for the surface.
- ⇒ **Always follow the directions on the label** to ensure safe and effective use of the product. The label will include safety information and application instructions. Keep disinfectants out of the reach of children. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet with a disinfectant for a certain period (see product label).
- ⇒ **Always take necessary safety precautions.**
 - Ensure adequate [ventilation](#) while using the product.
 - Wear [gloves](#). Gloves should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area. Additional PPE, such as glasses or goggles, might be required depending on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
- ⇒ **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.
 - 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.
 - 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. They can cause serious harm.
- Do not wipe or bathe people or pets with any surface cleaning and disinfection products.

Alternative Disinfection Methods

- ⇒ The effectiveness of [alternative surface disinfection](#), such as ultrasonic waves, high intensity UV radiation, and LED blue light against the virus that causes COVID-19 has not been fully established.
- ⇒ KDHE 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.
- ⇒ In most cases, fogging, fumigation, and wide-area or electrostatic spraying is not recommended as a primary method of surface disinfection and has [several safety risks to consider](#).

Cleaning and Disinfecting When Someone is Sick

If there has been a sick person or someone who tested positive for COVID-19 in your home or facility within the last 24 hours, you should clean and disinfect the spaces they occupied.

Before Cleaning and Disinfecting

- ⇒ Close off areas used by the person who is sick and do not use those areas until after cleaning and disinfecting.
- ⇒ Wait as long as possible (at least several hours) before you clean and disinfect.

While Cleaning and Disinfecting

- ⇒ Open doors and windows and use fans or HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) settings to [increase air circulation in the area](#).
- ⇒ Use products from [EPA List N](#) and always follow the directions on the product label.
 - Keep disinfectants out of the reach of children. Many products recommend keeping the surface wet with a disinfectant for a certain period of time (see product label).
- ⇒ [Wear a mask](#) and gloves while cleaning and disinfecting.
- ⇒ Focus on the immediate areas occupied by the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 unless they have already been cleaned and disinfected.
- ⇒ Vacuum the space if needed. Use a vacuum equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter and bags, if available.
 - While vacuuming, temporarily turn off in-room, window-mounted, or on-wall recirculation heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems to avoid contamination of HVAC units.

- Do NOT deactivate central HVAC systems. These systems provide better filtration capabilities and introduce outdoor air into the areas that they serve.
- ⇒ It is safe to wash dirty laundry from a person who is sick with COVID-19 with other people's items, if needed.
- ⇒ Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfectant products, including storing such products securely and using PPE needed for the cleaning and disinfection products.
- ⇒ Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to wash your hands immediately after removing gloves. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, always use soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- ⇒ Ensure adequate [ventilation](#) while using any disinfectant.

How long should I wait before cleaning?

- ⇒ **If less than 24 hours have passed** since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, clean and disinfect the space.
- ⇒ **If more than 24 hours have passed** since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, cleaning is enough. You may choose to also disinfect depending on [certain conditions](#) or everyday practices required by your business or facility.
- ⇒ **If more than 3 days have passed** since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, no additional cleaning (beyond regular cleaning practices) is needed.

Special Considerations for Cleaning and Disinfecting Bedrooms and Bathrooms 

- ⇒ Keep a separate bedroom and bathroom for a person who is sick (if possible).
- ⇒ **If the sick person is able to clean**
 - Provide dedicated cleaning and disinfecting supplies to the person who is sick.
 - Supplies include tissues, paper towels, and cleaners.
 - In shared spaces, the person who is sick should clean and disinfect surfaces and items after each use.
- ⇒ **If the sick person cannot clean**
 - Put on a mask and ask the sick person to put on a mask before entering the room.
 - Wear gloves.
 - Only clean and disinfect the area around the person who is sick when needed (when the area is soiled) to limit your contact with the person who is sick.
 - Open outside doors and windows, and use fans and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) settings to [increase air circulation](#).
- ⇒ After the person who was sick no longer needs to be separated
 - Wear a mask when you enter the room to clean.
 - Wait as long as possible (at least several hours) before you clean and disinfect.

Additional Considerations for Employers



- ⇒ Educate workers performing cleaning, laundry, and trash pick-up to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19.
- ⇒ Provide instructions on what to do if they develop [symptoms](#) within 14 days after their last possible exposure to the virus.
- ⇒ 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](#)).

Additional Resources

1. [Cleaning, Disinfection, and Hand Hygiene in Schools – A Toolkit for School Administrators](#); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (April 16, 2021).
2. [Safety Precautions When Using Electrostatic Sprayers, Foggers, Misters, or Vaporizers for Surface Disinfection During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (April 14, 2021).
3. [Ventilation in Buildings](#); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (March 23, 2021).
4. [Ventilation in Schools and Childcare Programs](#); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (February 26, 2021).

Sources

1. [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (April 5, 2021).
2. [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Home: Every Day and When Someone is Sick](#); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (April 5, 2021).
3. [Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Ventilation: Plan, Prepare, and Respond](#); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (April 19, 2021).

