



# Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection for COVID-19 For Houses of Worship

March 12, 2020

*To help prevent spread of COVID-19, procedures and supplies should be in place to encourage proper hand and respiratory hygiene as well as routine cleaning and disinfection of high-risk locations. This guidance is provided for any local or state public or private facility so that owners, operators and other individuals can incorporate these procedures into their facility protocols.*

## Background:

In December 2019, a new respiratory disease called Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was detected in China. COVID-19 is caused by a virus (SARS-CoV-2) that is part of a large family of viruses called coronaviruses.

## Hand Hygiene:

Signage with handwashing procedures should be posted in prominent locations promoting hand hygiene.

- Regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds should be done:
  - Before and after eating.
  - After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing.
  - After using the restroom.
  - Before handling food.
  - After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated.
  - After using shared equipment and supplies like electronic equipment such as keyboards, mice and phones.

If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers by children should always be supervised by adults.

## Respiratory Hygiene:

- Covering coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of elbow.
- Disposing of soiled tissues immediately after use.

## What steps should be taken to clean and disinfect against COVID-19?

### Now:

All settings should continue performing routine cleaning. High-risk locations (see below) warrant cleaning and disinfection on a regular schedule.

### If an individual with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 was symptomatic while in a facility:

Clean and disinfect throughout the area.

## **Routine Cleaning:**

As part of standard infection control practices, routine cleaning should be ongoing, and time should be allocated for individuals to routinely clean. Surfaces touched most frequently should be prioritized for routine cleaning because soiled and frequently touched surfaces can be reservoirs for germs and an exposure pathway for transmission to people through contact with these surfaces.

Examples of priority areas for routine cleaning include:

- High contact surfaces that are touched by many different people, such as light switches, handrails and doorknobs/handles.
- Dust- and wet-mopping or auto-scrubbing floors.
- Vacuuming of entryways and high traffic areas.
- Removing trash.
- Cleaning restrooms.
- Wiping heat and air conditioner vents.
- Spot cleaning walls.
- Spot cleaning carpets.
- Dusting horizontal surfaces and light fixtures.
- Cleaning spills.
- Regular cleaning and laundering of linens.

## **Identify and routinely clean and disinfect high-risk locations even before a confirmed case of COVID-19 occurs.**

Examples of high-risk locations include:

### First Aid Station / Health Office:

- Clean and disinfect health cots regularly (after each use)
- Cover treatment tables and use pillow protectors
- Discard or launder coverings after each use

### Restrooms

- Clean and disinfect all restroom surfaces, fixtures, door knobs, push plates, and switches (at least once daily).

## **Examples of frequently touched surfaces:**

- Desks and chairs;
- Counters, tables and chairs;
- Door handles and push plates;
- Handrails;
- Kitchen and bathroom faucets;
- Appliance surfaces;
- Light switches;
- Handles on equipment (e.g., carts);
- Remote controls;
- Shared telephones;
- Shared computers, keyboards and mice
- Shared electronics and phones
- Shared computer keyboards and mice.

**Note:** Computer keyboards are difficult to clean due to the spaces between keys and the sensitivity of its hardware to liquids. When shared, they may contribute to indirect transmission. Locations with community use computers should provide posted signs regarding proper hand hygiene before and after using the computers to minimize disease transmission. Also, consider using keyboard covers to protect the hardware against spills and facilitate cleaning.

### Dining Areas

- Clean and disinfect counters, tables, and chairs regularly (at least once daily).

### Other Frequently Touched Surfaces

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces on a periodic schedule as operational considerations allow, which may range from at least daily to up to 72 hours.

### **Cleaning and Disinfection:**

Cleaning removes germs, dirt and impurities from surfaces or objects. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects.

Individuals do not need to wear respiratory protection while cleaning or disinfecting, but should use personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves) as recommended on product labels. Carefully read and follow all label instructions for safe and effective use.

**Step 1: Cleaning:** Always clean surfaces prior to use of disinfectants in order to reduce soil and remove germs. Dirt and other materials on surfaces can reduce the effectiveness of disinfectants. Clean surfaces using water and soap or detergent to reduce soil and remove germs. For combination products that can both clean and disinfect, always follow the instructions on the specific product label to ensure effective use. In New York State, all state agencies and state authorities are required to use green cleaning products. For additional information on the laws regarding the use of green cleaning products, see the [Policies, Guidelines and Report](#) section of NY's Green Cleaning Program website.

**Step 2: Disinfection:** Cleaning of soiled areas must be completed prior to disinfection to ensure the effectiveness of the disinfectant product. Use the DEC [list of products](#) registered in New York State identified as effective against COVID-19. This list corresponds those identified by the EPA.

If these products are unavailable, disinfect surfaces using an EPA- and DEC\*-registered disinfectant labeled to be effective against rhinovirus and/or human coronavirus. If these commercial products are unavailable, it is also acceptable to use a fresh 2% chlorine bleach solution (approximately 1 tablespoon of bleach in 1 quart of water). Prepare the bleach solution daily or as needed.

- Label directions must be followed when using disinfectants to ensure the target viruses are effectively killed. This includes adequate contact times (i.e., the amount of time a disinfectant should remain on surfaces to be effective), which may vary between five and ten minutes after application. Disinfectants that come in a wipe form will also list effective contact times on their label.
- For disinfectants that come in concentrated forms, it is important to carefully follow instructions for making the diluted concentration needed to effectively kill the target virus. This information can be found on the product label.

**Step 3: Disposal:** Place all used gloves and other disposable items in a bag that can be tied closed before disposing of them with other waste. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds immediately after removing gloves or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly soiled.

**Procedures and Training:**

**If a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 was symptomatic while in a facility, perform cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces throughout the area.** Cleaning and disinfection should be conducted by individuals who have been trained to use products in a safe and effective manner. Training should be ongoing to ensure procedures for safe and effective use of all products are followed. Training assures that individuals are reminded to read and follow use and safety instructions on product labels. It should also identify the location of all personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves) that should be used.

\*NYSDEC registration will not be listed on disinfection product labels. Information about disinfection product registration with NYSDEC can be found at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/nyspad/products>. If you have any questions about NYSDEC pesticide registration, please call the NYSDEC Bureau of Pesticide Management at 518-402-8748.

**More information:**

New York State Department of Health's COVID-19 Webpage:  
<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Webpage:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>