



COVID-19 environmental cleaning for non-healthcare settings (e.g. homes and workplaces)

This document provides information on cleaning for non-healthcare settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This includes settings such as homes, offices, workplaces, public areas, government buildings, reception areas, hotels, schools, childcares, shops, buses, trains, taxis and cars.

General Cleaning Principles

Routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces using appropriate detergent/disinfectant solutions or wipes is effective at minimising the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Particular attention should be paid to horizontal surfaces such as tables and frequently touched surfaces such as hand rails, door handles, elevator buttons, computer keyboards and mice, and telephones.

It is recommended that the frequency of cleaning in all areas be increased. This is especially important in high traffic areas and areas accessed by the public.

Carpets should be regularly vacuumed - ideally with a vacuum cleaner fitted with a HEPA filter.

Disposable cleaning mops and cloths should be used, and these should be changed regularly. If unable to use disposable mops and cloths, then reusable mops and cloths are to be cleaned and disinfected regularly. All cleaning equipment (including mop heads) should be stored clean and dry.

Dishes and Cutlery

Dishes and cutlery are to be cleaned in a commercial or domestic dishwasher using appropriate dishwasher detergents. If dishwashers are unavailable, consider using disposable dishes and cutlery (in out of home settings). Reusable dishes and cutlery must be cleaned using hot water and appropriate hand dishwashing detergent. Care should be taken to ensure all items are thoroughly cleaned. Dishes and cutlery should be stored clean and dry in a cupboard or covered to prevent potential contamination from sneezes or coughs. Staff handling dishes and cutlery should ensure they have performed effective hand washing using soap and water for 40-60 seconds before handling.

Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Cleaning Staff

The risk to cleaning staff in non-healthcare settings is lower than the risk to cleaning staff working in environments where there may be sick people who are coughing or sneezing or having other respiratory symptoms. There is no need for cleaning staff to wear surgical masks or gowns when cleaning.

Cleaning staff in non-healthcare settings should be advised to:

- Avoid touching your face especially mouth, eyes and nose when cleaning
- Wear disposable gloves whilst cleaning
- If handling bleach solutions, protective eyewear should be worn to avoid splashing in eyes
- Perform effective hand washing using soap and water for 40-60 seconds after cleaning task

Appropriate Cleaning Products

Cleaning products should be chosen for appropriateness for the surface to be cleaned. In general, combined detergent/disinfectant solutions or wipes should be chosen for hard surfaces. Some cleaning products such as bleach can damage fabrics, stainless steel and other surfaces. Cleaning products should have virucidal (virus killing) properties. Look for the following words or descriptions when selecting cleaning products:

Detergents

- Acidic, neutral or alkaline. For most general cleaning tasks, a neutral detergent with pH between 6 and 8 should be used.

Disinfectants

- Alcohol wipes with 70-90% alcohol (ethyl alcohol or isopropyl alcohol)
- Chlorine and chlorine compounds- i.e. sodium hypochlorite (household bleach), sodium dichloroisocyanurate (NaDCC) and calcium hypochlorite (bleaching powder)
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Quaternary ammonium compounds (alkyl dimethyl benzyl ammonium chlorides)
- Phenolic disinfectants

If using a bleach solution look for products which give you a 1000ppm (0.1%) bleach solution either neat or when diluted with water.

Many proprietary brands of cleaning products contain the above ingredients and will be suitable for cleaning and disinfection of non-healthcare areas.

Remember to never mix different cleaning products as in some instances toxic gases can be generated.

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