

CLEANING & SANITIZING CONSIDERATIONS AFTER A COVID-19 CASE

PROPER CLEANING AND SANITIZING RESPONSE

The CDC and multiple health agencies continue to recommend that employers and those with confirmed COVID-19 cases properly clean and sanitize surfaces that could have been contaminated with the COVID-19 virus. It is important to maintain proper safety measures and not introduce additional health and safety hazards when conducting cleaning and disinfection procedures.

The EPA has created a list of approved disinfectants titled “List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2” for use against COVID-19. There are currently over 280 approved disinfectants. This list of approved disinfectants can be found here:

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

These are the recommend products for sanitizing, consider these prior to relying primarily on bleach and/or alcohol-based solutions. They tend to be easier to handle with reduced risk to users and the public while still being effective.



CORONAVIRUS – HOW LONG DOES THE VIRUS LIVE?

Coronavirus is spread through contaminated water droplets on surfaces that people encounter after an infected person has been in the area. Preliminary research conducted by the Center for Disease Control has shown that COVID-19 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces.

Depending on the surface, COVID-19 can live outside the body for up to 72 hours:

- **Wood and Cardboard:** Up to 24 hours
- **Stainless Steel and Plastic:** Up to 72 hours
- **Fabric:** It is unclear, but it is suspected to live less than 24 hours
- **Airborne:** In aerosol form COVID-19 can be suspended for up to three hours

CDC GUIDELINES FOR CLEANING

General Surfacing Cleaning:

1. Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. If reusable gloves are used, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 only. Consult the manufacturer’s instructions for cleaning and disinfecting products used. Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed.
2. If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection or a combination cleaning/disinfecting product should be used.
3. For disinfection, there are various options to choose from based on the surface and equipment to be disinfected. The options include using EPA-registered household disinfectants (found on List N) diluted household bleach solutions, and alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol.

Preferred Option: Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims found on List N are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.). Consider using approved products that list hydrogen peroxide or ammonium compound solutions, commonly called “Quats” (quaternary ammonia compounds) as the active ingredient.

Secondary Option: If unable to source one of the preferred options, diluted bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application, sodium hypochlorite can be dangerous, so use proper PPE and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date as the potency of bleach diminishes over time.

- Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- 4. For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:
 - If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely
 - Use products with the EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims that are suitable for porous surfaces

Clothing, towels, linens and other items that go in the laundry:

1. Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from an ill person and then discard after each use. If using reusable gloves, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other household purposes. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.
2. If no gloves are used when handling dirty laundry, be sure to wash hands afterwards.
3. If possible, do not shake dirty laundry. This will minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.
4. Launder 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 from an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
5. Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above for surfaces. If possible, consider placing a bag liner that is either disposable (can be thrown away) or can be laundered.

Chemical & cleaning considerations:

1. Do not spray chemical directly on all surfaces, instead wet a rag or cloth and wipe the surfaces that are vertical, have liquid sensitive internal parts or are electrical.
2. Follow manufacturer's guidelines on how long to leave the surface wet with the disinfectant; referred to as contact time or dwell time on the label.
3. Follow-up on the safety and wellbeing of those employees involved in disinfection, especially if using large amounts of alcohol-based products or bleach. These can both be respiratory and skin irritants.
4. If using alcohol-based products for cleaning be aware of how you dispose of the rags soaked in alcohol. This can be a fire hazard and potentially hazardous waste.



Thank you for visiting our COVID-19 Resource Center. We are committed to identifying, developing and updating resources to help the manufacturing community respond to the coronavirus pandemic. If you need more information, please email: covidresponse@uscompliance.com. Thank you for your support and we look forward to working through this challenge together!