



SAFETY & CASUALTY LOSS CONTROL

# Coronavirus Workplace Considerations



In the past week or so, with the continued spread of the coronavirus, we have all been experiencing non-routine tasks at work. While a lot of emphasis has been placed on working from home, many businesses must still function and produce their products as best they can.

## **Working Alone or Performing Non-Routine Tasks**

Manpower has been impacted by state mandates limiting the number of employees allowed on work premises at a time, as well as by illnesses. A number of employees are performing functions with fewer coworkers around and completing tasks that they either don't normally do or haven't done in a long time.

Here are a few safety considerations to review as your business continues to function with a modified workforce.

- Do I have a new or transferred employee safety checklist?
- Do I have a job hazard analysis?
- Does this job have PPE requirements?
- Do I have the required knowledge or training to perform this job function?
- Do I understand the safety hazards of this new function?
- Do I understand the emergency procedures?
- Emergency evacuation
- Badge and key access
- Shelter in place
- Chemical spills
- Fire extinguisher locations
- How do I handle an injury on the job?
- Who do I report unsafe conditions to?
- Is there a buddy/check-in program if working alone?
- What do I do if I see an unsafe act or condition?



## Preparing for When Employees Return

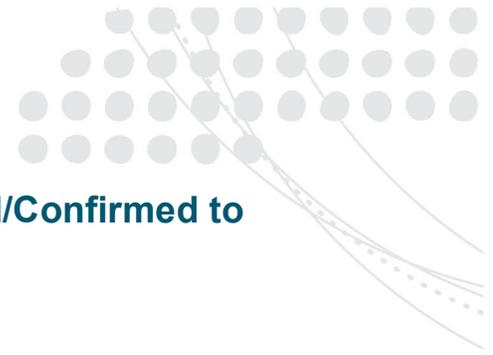
There are several factors that affect how long the coronavirus can remain infectious. Some of those factors include temperature, humidity, the strain of virus and the surface that it is on. ***The general guideline is that it can remain infectious from two hours to nine days based on variable factors.*** Dr. Jay Butler, the Deputy Director of Infectious disease at the CDC, states the virus could remain alive from minutes to days. There are a variety of cleaning companies that can assist you in cleaning your work locations. Some of them are even using electrostatic cleaning methods.

Below is an excerpt from the CDC website on their recommendation for cleaning and disinfecting work areas and a link to their website.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

## Definitions

- *Community facilities* (e.g., schools, daycares centers, businesses) comprise most non-healthcare settings that are visited by the general public outside of a household.
- *Cleaning* refers to the removal of dirt and impurities, including germs, from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs. But by removing the germs, it decreases their number and therefore any risk of spreading infection.
- *Disinfecting* works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs. But killing germs remaining on a surface after cleaning further reduces any risk of spreading infection.



## Cleaning and Disinfection After Persons Suspected/Confirmed to Have COVID-19 Have Been in the Facility

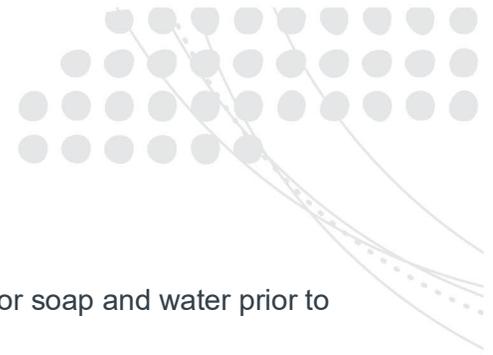
### Timing and location of cleaning and disinfection of surfaces

#### At a school, daycare center, office, or other facility that does not house people overnight:

- It is recommended to close off areas used by the ill persons and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas (e.g., offices, bathrooms, and common areas) used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.

#### At a facility that does house people overnight:

- Follow Interim Guidance for [US Institutions of Higher Education](#) on working with state and local health officials to isolate ill persons and provide temporary housing as needed.
- It is recommended to **close off areas used by the ill persons and wait as long as practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection** to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. **Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.** If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- In areas where ill persons are being housed in isolation, follow [Interim Guidance for Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection for U.S. Households with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019](#). This includes **focusing on cleaning and disinfecting common areas where staff/others providing services may come into contact with ill persons but reducing cleaning and disinfection of bedrooms/bathrooms used by ill persons to as needed.**
- In areas where ill persons have visited or used, continue routine cleaning and disinfection as in this guidance.



## How to Clean and Disinfect

### Surfaces

- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
  - Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface.
  - Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation.
  - Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date.
  - Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

### Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3<sup>rd</sup> cup) bleach per gallon of water or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
- [Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims](#) 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.).
- 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 the items can be laundered, launder items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and then dry items completely.
- Otherwise, use products with the EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims (examples see CDC website) that are suitable for porous surfaces

## Linens, Clothing, and Other Items That Go in the Laundry

- 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.

*The information and concepts provided throughout this document are not intended to express legal opinion as to the nature of coverage. They are intended to provide a basic understanding of coverages but do not alter any policy conditions. Always refer to your policy(s) for specific coverages, limitations, and restrictions. Any information and concepts outlined are solely for internal evaluation.*



## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Hand Hygiene

- **Cleaning staff should wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.**
  - Gloves and gowns should be compatible with the disinfectant products being used.
  - Additional PPE might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
  - Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area. Be sure to **clean hands** after removing gloves.
- Gloves should be removed after cleaning a room or area occupied by ill persons. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- Cleaning staff should immediately report breaches in PPE (e.g., tear in gloves) or any potential exposures to their supervisor.
- **Cleaning staff and others should clean hands often**, including immediately after removing gloves and after contact with an ill person, by washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%-95% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.
- Follow normal preventive actions while at work and home, including cleaning hands and avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Additional key times to clean hands include:
    - After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
    - After using the restroom
    - Before eating or preparing food
    - After contact with animals or pets
    - Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance (e.g., a child)



## Additional Considerations for Employers

- Employers should work with their local and state health departments to ensure appropriate local protocols and guidelines, such as updated/additional guidance for cleaning and disinfection, are followed, including for identification of new potential cases of COVID-19.
- Employers should educate staff and workers performing cleaning, laundry, and trash pick-up activities to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19 and provide instructions on what to do if they develop symptoms within 14 days after their last possible exposure to the virus. At a minimum, any staff should immediately notify their supervisor and the local health department if they develop symptoms of COVID-19. The health department will provide guidance on what actions need to be taken. When working with your local health department check their available hours.
- Employers should 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.
- Employers must 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 1910.1200external icon](#)).
- Employers must comply with OSHA's standards on Bloodborne Pathogens ([29 CFR 1910.1030external icon](#)), including proper disposal of regulated waste, and PPE ([29 CFR 1910.132external icon](#)).



Contact your Hylant Representative if you have questions or need support managing risks for your business.