



COVID-19 Response Cleaning / Disinfecting Q&A

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Source: [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC](https://www.cdc.gov)

Q: How do we properly treat an area/construction job site when it has had potential or confirmed exposure to an individual with COVID-19?

A: The following resources are from the CDC and are available on the [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) website for review and additional resources:

Timing and location of cleaning and disinfection of surfaces

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.

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



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other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

- Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd 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 at [this link](#)) that are suitable for porous surfaces

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.



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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



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- 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](#). Employers must comply with [OSHA's standards on Bloodborne Pathogens](#), including proper disposal of regulated waste, and [PPE](#).