

Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces during COVID-19



This document provides guidance on cleaning and disinfecting of public settings, including schools, universities, public libraries, museums, public transit, communal residences and workplaces.

What you should know

- › Surfaces frequently touched with hands are most likely to be contaminated. These include doorknobs, handrails, elevator buttons, light switches, cabinet handles, faucet handles, tables, countertops and electronics.
- › We don't know exactly how long the virus causing COVID-19 lives on different surfaces. However, evidence suggests it can live on objects and surfaces from a few hours to days, depending on the type of surface.

Choose a product that cleans and disinfects

- › When cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, choose products that clean and disinfect all at once (e.g., premixed store-bought disinfectant cleaning solutions and/or wipes when available).
 - Cleaning with soap (or detergent) and water lowers the number of germs on surfaces. Cleaners don't necessarily kill germs, but cleaning can remove germs and lower their numbers. This can play a role in reducing the risk of spreading infection.

- Disinfecting products kill germs on surfaces using chemicals.
- › Use only **approved hard-surface disinfectants** that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms the disinfectant product is approved and safe for use in Canada. If an approved disinfectant isn't available due to supply issues, use a **diluted bleach solution**.

Create a cleaning and disinfecting procedure

Business owners and operators of community settings should develop or **review protocols and procedures for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces**. They should:

- › be aware of occupational **health and safety requirements**
- › know and meet the requirements under the **Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)** about hazardous products in the workplace
- › have or establish processes for cleaning and disinfecting the site, including precautions for if an employee or visitor develops **COVID-19 symptoms**

This will help determine where improvements or additional cleaning and disinfecting may be needed.



The following directions will help prevent the spread of infection.

- › Clean surfaces before using disinfectant.
- › Read and follow manufacturer's instructions for **safe use of cleaning and disinfection products** (e.g., wear gloves, use in well-ventilated area, allow enough contact time for disinfectant to kill germs based on the product being used).
- › If using gloves, wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after removing gloves. If soap and water aren't available, use an **alcohol-based hand sanitizer** containing at least 60% alcohol.
- › Damp cleaning methods (damp clean cloths and wet mops) are preferred over dry methods (dusting and sweeping). Damp methods of cleaning are less likely to distribute virus droplets into the air.
- › Put used disposable cleaning items (e.g., mop heads, cloths) in a lined garbage bin before disposing of them with regular waste. Reusable cleaning items can be washed using regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C).
- › In addition to routine cleaning and disinfecting, surfaces that are frequently touched with hands should be cleaned and disinfected more often, as well as when visibly dirty.
- › Shared spaces such as kitchens and bathrooms should also be cleaned and disinfected more often.
- › Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning regularly-used electronics like keyboards, tablets and smartboards. If electronics can withstand the use of liquids, disinfect them with 70% alcohol, like alcohol prep wipes.

We can all do our part in preventing the spread of COVID-19. For more information, visit

Canada.ca/coronavirus
or contact 1-833-784-4397