

Workplace Cleaning & Disinfecting Guide

Cleaning V Disinfecting

Cleaning and disinfecting are two different processes:

Cleaning means physically removing germs, dirt and organic matter from surfaces.

Disinfecting means using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. It's important to clean before disinfecting because organic matter and dirt can reduce the ability of disinfectants to kill germs.

A combination of cleaning and disinfection will be most effective in removing the COVID-19 virus. Cleaning reduces the soil load on the surface, allowing the disinfectant to work and kill the COVID-19 virus. Disinfectant may not kill the virus if the surface has not been cleaned with a detergent first.

Cleaning product

Use a sustainable cleaner which is readily available. One or more of the following cleaners can be used.

Types of cleaners

- Detergent, either as a solution that can be mixed with water, or as wipes.
- A 2-in-1 detergent and disinfectant solution.
- Wipes are great for routine cleaning

Disinfectant

The disinfectant used should be one for which the manufacturer claims antiviral activity, meaning it can kill the virus (such as chlorine-based disinfectants, hospital-grade disinfectants, or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol (for example, methylated spirits).

Household bleach is an effective disinfectant and comes in a variety of strengths. The concentration of active ingredient can be found on the product label.

Quaternary ammonium compounds, such as benzalkonium chloride and related compounds, have a dual detergent and disinfection property and can be suitable alternatives.

Preparing the disinfectant solution

- Gloves should be worn when handling and preparing disinfectant solutions.
- Protective eye wear should be worn in case of splashing.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for appropriate dilution and use. Table 1 below provides dilution instructions when using bleach solutions.
- Bleach solution should be made up daily.

Disinfectant is NOT SUITABLE on fabric surfaces as it only works with extended contact time with the surface.

Recipes to achieve a 1000 ppm (0.1%) bleach solution

Original strength of bleach		Disinfectant recipe		Volume in standard 10L bucket
%	Parts per million	Parts of bleach	Parts of water	
1	10,000	1	9	1000ml
2	20,000	1	19	500ml
3	30,000	1	29	333ml
4	40,000	1	39	250ml
5	50,000	1	49	200ml

Also consider installing hand sanitiser dispensers in meeting rooms, lunchrooms and high pedestrian traffic areas such as reception areas.

How often to clean

Workplaces should clean surfaces at least daily with special attention given to multi touch surfaces, however this will depend on the likelihood of contaminated material being present at the workplace.

For example, in a busy retail environment with many customers and others entering a workplace each day, more frequent disinfection is recommended to prevent the spread of COVID-19. By contrast, for a small work crew operating the same item of plant each day with little interaction with other people, routine disinfection in addition to daily cleaning may not be reasonably practicable.

Ideally, although not always practicable, multi touch surfaces should be disinfected between uses.

Common multi touch surfaces

- Counter tops
- Phones
- Eftpos machines
- Computer mice and keyboards
- Door handles
- Light switches
- Desks
- Toilets
- Taps
- TV remotes
- Kitchen surfaces and cupboard handles
- Shared plant and equipment.

You do not have to clean or disinfect something which has NOT been contaminated with potentially infectious material.

How to clean

Use the following steps to clean an environment:

1. Wear gloves when cleaning. Gloves should be discarded after each clean. If it is necessary to use reusable gloves, gloves should only be used for COVID-19 related cleaning and should not be used for other purposes or shared between workers. Wash reusable gloves with detergent and water after use and leave to dry. Clean hands immediately after removing gloves using soap and water or hand sanitiser.
2. Thoroughly clean surfaces using detergent and water. Always clean from the cleanest surfaces to the dirtiest surfaces. This stops the transfer of germs to cleaner surfaces and allows you to physically remove and dispose of the largest possible amount of germs.
3. If you need to use a disinfectant, clean the surface first using detergent then apply a disinfectant or use a combined detergent and disinfectant (see next section). A disinfectant will not kill germs if the surface has not been cleaned first. Apply disinfectant to surfaces using disposable paper towel or a disposable cloth. If non-disposable cloths are used, ensure they are laundered and dried before reusing.
4. Allow the disinfectant to remain on the surface for the period of time required to kill the virus (contact time) as specified by the manufacturer. If no time is specified, leave for 10 minutes.

Infected worker

If a person who has been at your workplace is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, you must thoroughly clean and disinfect all areas of suspected contamination.

- Clean and disinfect all areas (for example, offices, bathrooms and common areas) that were used by the suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Close off the affected area before cleaning and disinfection. Open outside doors and windows if possible, to increase air circulation and then commence cleaning and disinfection.
- Clean and disinfect hard surfaces using either: a physical clean using detergent and water followed by a clean with 1,000 ppm bleach solution (2-step clean), for example, household bleach or hospital-grade bleach solutions that are readily available from retail stores. Bleach solutions should be made fresh daily.
- A physical clean using a combined detergent and 1,000 ppm bleach solution (2-in-1 clean) made up daily from a concentrated solution (refer to the Department of Health website for more information on achieving the correct bleach solution).
- Once cleaning and disinfection is complete, place disposable cloths, PPE and covers in a plastic rubbish bag, place it inside another rubbish bag (double-bagging) and dispose of the bag in the general waste.
- There is no need to close down an entire workplace, while cleaning and disinfection takes place, particularly if the person infected, or suspected to be infected, has only visited parts of the workplace. However, the cleaning and disinfection must occur before any workers return to affected areas.

Whether you need to suspend operations in your workplace will depend on factors such as the size of the workplace, nature of work, number of people, and suspected areas of contamination in your workplace.

PPE

Where possible use disposable PPE.

Reusable (Washable) PPE should be washed in a regular cycle wash using the warmest possible setting with normal washing detergent. Avoid shaking out the items before placing in the washing machine.

Wear disposable gloves to handle used cloths, PPE and covers. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after removing the gloves.

Regularly wash the hamper in which used PPE is stored while it is waiting to be laundered. If the hamper is not washable, use a disposable lining, and replace regularly.

Reusable (Non-washable) PPE such as eye protection, should be wiped clean with a detergent solution first, then wiped over with a disinfectant, and left to air dry. Smearing or residues might result, and this can be cleaned off by using more detergent solution and rinsing clean only after the disinfectant has dried.

Clean your hands using soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or where this is not possible, hand sanitiser of with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the active ingredient before putting on and after removing PPE.

Cleaning equipment including mop heads and cloths should be laundered using hot water and completely dried before re-use. Cleaning equipment such as buckets should be emptied and cleaned with a new batch of disinfectant and allowed to dry completely before re-use.

Types of surfaces

Hard surfaces

In most circumstances, cleaning with detergent and water is sufficient.

Disinfectants containing $\geq 70\%$ alcohol, quaternary ammonium compounds, chlorine bleach or oxygen bleach are suitable for use on hard surfaces. These will be labelled as 'disinfectant' on the packaging.

Soft or porous surfaces

For soft or porous surfaces like fabric or leather, seek advice from the manufacturer of the item to be cleaned about which products can be safely used.

Detergent can generally be used to clean fabric surfaces. If more thorough cleaning is needed, fabric surfaces may be steam cleaned. Leather will have special cleaning requirements.

If soft or porous surfaces require regular cleaning, such as seats in offices, or in vehicles, it may be more effective to use a removable washable cover or a disposable cover and replace these as regularly as you would clean the surfaces.

Cleaners

Those cleaning should:

- Avoid touching their face, especially their mouth, nose, and eyes.
- Wear water-proof disposable gloves and a surgical mask as well as eye protection or a face shield while cleaning. The surgical mask and eye protection act as barriers to people inadvertently touching their face with contaminated hands and fingers, whether gloved or not.
- Use an alcohol-based sanitiser before putting on and after removing gloves and before and after removing the surgical mask and eye protection.