

COVID-19 Questions



The CDC and the EPA suggest a 3-step process for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, homes, etc.

(1) Develop your Plan: determine what needs to be cleaned, determine how areas will be disinfected, and consider the resources and equipment needed;

(2) Implement: clean visibly dirty surfaces with soap and water, use the appropriate cleaning or disinfectant product, and always follow the directions on the label; and

(3) Maintain and Revise: continue routine cleaning and disinfection, maintain safe practices, and continue practices that reduce the potential for exposure.

Making Your Plan to Clean and Disinfect

- Cleaning with soap and water removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. It lowers the risk of spreading infection.
- Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces, which further lowers the risk of spreading infection.

Frequent disinfection of surfaces and objects touched by multiple people is important.

EPA has compiled a [list of disinfectant products that can be used](#) to reduce risk of COVID-19.

When these EPA approved disinfectants are not available, alternative disinfectants can be used (ex. 1/3 cup of bleach added to 1 gallon of water, or 70% alcohol solutions). Water should be room temperature, unless otherwise stated on bottle.

- Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.
- Check label to make sure bleach is intended for disinfection and has a sodium hypochlorite concentration of 5-6%.
- Ensure product is not past expiration date.

Use disinfectants **safely**

- Do not mix bleach or other cleaning and disinfection products together.



- Always wear gloves appropriate for the chemicals being used when cleaning and disinfecting. Additional personal protective equipment may be needed based on setting and product.
- Ensure good ventilation.
- Do not use more than the amount recommended on the label.
- Store and use disinfectants in a responsible manner according to the label.
- Keep all disinfectants out of the reach of children and pets.
- Never eat, drink, breathe or inject these products into your body or apply directly to your skin as they can cause serious harm.



Practice Routine Cleaning and Disinfecting on frequently touched surfaces (ex. tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc.).

If someone is sick in your building/facility, wait 24 hours, or as long as possible, before cleaning or disinfecting. Clean and disinfect all areas used by person who is sick.

Practice social distancing, wear facial coverings, and follow proper prevention hygiene, such as washing your hands frequently and using alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.



Employers/Supervisors

If you oversee staff in a workplace, your plan should include considerations about the safety of custodial staff and other people responsible for cleaning or disinfecting. These people are at increased risk of being exposed to the virus and to any toxic effects of the cleaning chemicals.

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Email questions to COVID19@orangecountync.gov

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These staff should wear appropriate PPE for cleaning and disinfecting. To protect your staff and to ensure that the products are used effectively, staff should be instructed on how to apply the disinfectants according to the label. For more information on concerns related to cleaning staff, visit the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's website on **Control and Prevention**.



Early information suggests that COVID-19 can survive on certain types of surfaces, such as plastic and stainless steel, for 2-3 days. However, because the transmissibility of COVID-19 from contaminated environmental surfaces and objects is still not fully understood, employers should carefully evaluate whether or not work areas occupied by people suspected to have the virus may have been contaminated and whether or not they need to be decontaminated in response.

Require sick employees to stay home.

Provide employees access to soap and clean running water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol at their worksites, which may include inside a vehicle.

When possible:

- Stagger shifts, start times, and break times to reduce the number of people in work and break areas at once.
- Rearrange workstations/locations so that employees can stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- Remove or rearrange chairs and tables in employee break rooms to support social distancing.
- Use text messages, phone and email and personal mobile phone to communicate instead of face-to-face contact.
- Cancel or postpone in-person meetings and training whenever possible. If you must meet, spread out to a distance of 6 feet or more between attendees.
- If possible, limit people traveling in vehicles to one per vehicle



Develop policies for worker protection and training according to OSHA standards (e.g., **hazard communication, personal protective equipment**, etc.) for employees prior to conducting disinfection work tasks, particularly if new chemicals are introduced in the workplace to use.

Have flexible sick and leave policies and practices and encourage liberal use. Also consider drafting non-punitive emergency sick leave policies if sick leave is not offered to some or all employees.



Employers should NOT require a positive COVID-19 test result or a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick to validate their illness, qualify for sick leave, or to return to work.

Some who are self-employed and lack childcare have also been taking their children with them to work while they clean. Whenever possible, do not have children clean or touch potentially infected surfaces or frequently touched/used surfaces. If children do help in any way then they should follow the same safety measures as adults, including wearing appropriate PPE (should be fitting).

Other Helpful links:

[Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)

[Guidance for Cleaning & Disinfecting: Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)

[Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers Responding to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\), May 2020](#)

[Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Healthcare Settings](#)

[Occupational Safety and Health Administration: Control and Prevention](#)

[Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)

[Ten Steps All Workplaces Can Take to Reduce Risk of Exposure to Coronavirus](#)

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