



Infection control advice for COVID-19 environmental cleaning in non-healthcare settings (home and workplace)

This document provides information on cleaning for non-healthcare settings during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This includes settings such as homes, offices, workplaces, public areas, government buildings, reception areas, schools, childcare centres and shops. These cleaning principles can be used for routine cleaning and cleaning when there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace.

General cleaning principles

Routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces using appropriate detergent/disinfectant solutions or wipes is effective at minimising the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Particular attention should be paid to shared workspaces, restrooms, staff changing rooms, horizontal surfaces such as tables, chairs and frequently touched surfaces such as hand rails, door handles, elevator buttons, computer keyboard and mouse, and telephones.

It is recommended that the frequency of cleaning in all areas is increased. This is especially important in high traffic areas and areas accessed by the public.

Carpets should be regularly vacuumed - ideally with a vacuum cleaner fitted with a HEPA filter.

It is preferable to use disposable cleaning mops and cloths and these should be changed regularly. If unable to use disposable mops and cloths, then reusable mops and cloths are to be cleaned and disinfected regularly e.g. some removable mop heads and cloths can undergo a wash cycle in the washing machine and then be allowed to air dry. All cleaning equipment (including mop heads) should be stored clean and dry.

Dishes and cutlery

Dishes and cutlery are to be cleaned in a commercial or domestic dishwasher using appropriate dishwasher detergent. If a dishwasher is not available, reusable dishes and cutlery must be cleaned using hot water and appropriate dishwashing detergent. Care should be taken to ensure all items are thoroughly cleaned. Dishes and cutlery should be stored clean and dry in a cupboard or covered to prevent potential contamination from sneezes or coughs. Prior to and after handling dishes and cutlery, all people are to ensure they practice good hand hygiene (wash with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser for at least 20 seconds).

Personal protective equipment (PPE) for cleaning staff

The risk to cleaning staff in non-healthcare settings is lower than the risk to cleaning staff working in environments where there may be sick people. There is no need for cleaning staff to wear surgical masks or gowns when cleaning.

Cleaning staff in non-healthcare settings should be advised to:

- use any chemicals in accordance with the manufacturer's instruction.
- avoid touching their face especially mouth, eyes and nose when cleaning.
- wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the cleaning products they are using e.g. disposable gloves while cleaning.
- if handling bleach or other disinfectant solutions, protective eyewear should be worn to avoid eye splashes. This is also in accordance with workplace safety and health (WSH) requirements.
- perform hand hygiene after removing disposable gloves on completion of cleaning tasks.

Appropriate cleaning products

Cleaning products should be chosen that are approved for the surface to be cleaned. In general, combined detergent/disinfectant solutions or wipes are acceptable for hard surfaces. Some products such as bleach can damage fabrics, stainless steel and other surfaces.

Safety data sheets (SDS) are to be available for all chemicals utilised in the workplace.

For most general cleaning tasks, a neutral detergent with pH between 6 and 8 should be used.

The use of combined detergent / disinfectant wipes is acceptable, or solutions can be prepared fresh each day.

If using a bleach solution look for products which give you a 1000ppm (0.1%) bleach solution either neat or when diluted with water.

Always follow the manufacturer instructions if any detergent or disinfectant products require mixing with water or dissolving prior to use.

Remember to never mix different cleaning products as in some instances toxic gases can be generated.

Avoid 'topping up' detergent or disinfectant containers as this can lead to contamination of the containers. WSH procedures must also be followed.

If a product requires decanting from a larger to a smaller container, ensure:

- The detergent/disinfectant SDS is available and current.
- Appropriate PPE is worn to avoid detergent/disinfectant splashes.
- Containers must be washed thoroughly with warm water and detergent and air dried prior to reuse.

Further information regarding environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for COVID-19 can be found at:

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-employers>

<https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-about-routine-environmental-cleaning-and-disinfection-in-the-community>

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/general-industry-information/cleaning>

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