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Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

[Archived] Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings

This document provides guidance on cleaning and disinfection of public settings, including schools, transit, colleges/universities, retail locations and other workplaces in Ontario. For more information, please contact your local public health unit.

What you should know

- Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19.
- Although touching contaminated surfaces is not the main way COVID-19 is spread, cleaning your hands is important after handling surfaces and objects that are not or cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g., porous objects).
- Use disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms it is approved for use in Canada. Household bleach may not have a DIN, but is an effective disinfectant.
- Check the expiry date and safety instructions of products you use and always follow manufacturer's instructions.

Establish a cleaning schedule

- Identify surfaces, objects and equipment that need routine cleaning as well as disinfection.
- Indoor surfaces that are frequently touched should be cleaned and disinfected at least once per day and when visibly dirty.
- Examples include doorknobs, elevator buttons, light switches, toilet handles, counters, hand rails, touch screen surfaces and keypads.
- In addition to routine cleaning, check for any specific cleaning and disinfection protocols for your setting.



Select products

Cleaners

- Break down grease and remove organic material from the surface.
- Used separately before using disinfectants.
- Can be purchased with cleaner and disinfectant combined in a single product.

Disinfectants

- Have chemicals that kill most germs.
- Applied after the surfaces have been cleaned.
- Have a drug identification number (DIN), excluding bleach.

Disinfectant Wipes

- Have combined cleaners and disinfectants in one solution.
- May become dry due to fast drying properties. Should be discarded if they become dry.
- Not recommended for heavily soiled surfaces.

Prepare products for use

- Where possible, use ready for use, pre-mixed solutions.
- Never mix different chemical products together.
- Read and follow manufacturer's instructions to:
 - properly prepare solution
 - allow adequate contact time (time the surface remains wet) for disinfectant to kill germs (see product label)
 - wear gloves when handling cleaning products including wipes
 - wear any other personal protective equipment recommended by the manufacturer

Use bleach safely

- Bleach is not a cleaning agent. Surfaces must be clean in order for bleach to disinfect.
- Only dilute bleach by adding water, not other chemicals. Bleach usually comes as 5.25% or ~50,000 parts per million (ppm) sodium hypochlorite. For more information on how to dilute bleach (e.g., to 100 ppm or 0.01%), see the Public Health Ontario's [Chlorine Dilution Calculator](#).
- Store bleach solutions in closed, labeled containers, away from heat and light. Dilute bleach with water just before use as it loses potency within 24 hours.

The information in this document is current as of July 30, 2021