Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings

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.

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

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