COLUMBIA|PREPAREDNESS

Fact Sheet #19

Updated CDC Cleaning and Disinfection Protocols

COVID-19, the illness caused by infection with SARS-CoV-2, is a respiratory virus that is transmitted primarily via person-to-person passage of respiratory droplets and aerosols. As the COVID-19 pandemic has persisted, evidence-based science has increasingly indicated that transmission of COVID-19 via fomite – objects or surfaces potentially contaminated with the virus – is uncommon. Frequent, thorough handwashing or use of alcohol-based sanitizer remains the most effective method of reducing transmission via this route.

In accordance with this growing evidence, the CDC updated its cleaning and disinfection guidance for spaces that have been occupied by a person known or suspected (per CDC) to be positive for COVID-19*. Based on this updated guidance, it remains essential that University personnel continue to practice prescribed hygiene protocols, including daily cleaning of personal, high-touch surfaces. Additional information about the new CDC guidance appears below. * - *These Guidelines do not apply to fitness centers, health care settings, or hospitals.*

Important Definitions:

Cleaning – The use of products containing soap or detergent to reduce germs on surfaces by removing contaminants. This includes the use of various wipes, paper towels and spray cleansers and other typical "household" practices. Cleaning may also weaken or damage some virus particles, which decreases risk of infection from surfaces.

Disinfection – The use of products which appear on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s list of agents approved for the use against SARS-CoV-2. Disinfection requires following all label instructions while using an approved product, including proper application methods and adherence to required contact time. Compared to cleaning, disinfection kills any remaining germs on surfaces, which further reduces any risk of spreading infection.

The most important takeaway from the new CDC guidance are the changes to the occupancy-based timing for disinfection and cleaning. Earlier in the pandemic, out of an abundance of caution, disinfection was considered necessary in spaces occupied by a positive case up to 7 days after occupancy. Effective April 5, 2021, CDC no longer considers enhanced cleaning to be necessary beyond 72-hours post-occupancy by a positive case. Further, "cleaning" only is now indicated for the time period between 24-72-hours post-occupancy, with "disinfection" only required if a case has been in the space up to 24-hours prior.

If less than 24 hours have passed since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, clean and disinfect the space. Alternatively, close the space until >24 hours have passed, and then;

Once more than 24 hours have passed since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, cleaning is enough. You may choose to also disinfect depending on certain conditions or everyday practices required by your facility.

If more than 3 days have passed since the person who is sick or diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the space, no additional cleaning (beyond regular cleaning practices) is needed.

(Adapted from - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)

If a COVID-positive individual is identified in an office, laboratory or other administrative space, the University's TestTrace team will determine the relevant occupancy information which will inform whether cleaning, disinfection, or both, will be indicated.