

# COVID-19: FAQs related to General Guidelines for Cleaning and Disinfecting for CUIMC Facilities Custodial Staff

## ◆ How can the SARS-CoV-2 human coronavirus (COVID-19) be transmitted?

Human coronaviruses are transmitted by droplets from saliva, mucus, or sputum typically spread from a cough, sneeze or talking, which is why maintaining social distance is essential. Viruses may remain infectious on inanimate surfaces from few hours or up to several days which may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment). People can come in contact with contaminated surfaces with their hands and may transfer virus to themselves by then touching their face. “High touch” surfaces have the highest potential of transmitting the virus and should be the focus of daily cleaning practices. [\*According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\), the risk of COVID-19 exposure to cleaning staff during routine cleaning activities is inherently low \[1\].\*](#)

## ◆ What cleaning and disinfecting routine should I follow?

COVID-19 is now actively widespread via community transmission in NYC. To reduce the spread of the virus, **frequent** cleaning of common areas and “**high touch**” surfaces is required. “**High touch**” surfaces include residence hall common areas, locker rooms, restrooms, elevator buttons, light switches, handrails, faucets, doorknobs, tabletops, public phones, public keyboards, etc.

## ◆ How should I prepare myself for cleaning and disinfecting activities?

Personal Protective Equipment must be worn and EPA-approved disinfectants used during all cleaning activities.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for general cleaning:** Staff should wear disposable gloves, work uniform (must be laundered regularly) or coveralls, and eye protection such as safety glasses, goggles or face-shield. PPE should be worn for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash. CDC is also recommending a face covering should be worn by everyone in public settings, where social distancing is difficult to maintain.

**Cleaning chemicals effective against COVID-19:** Clean all surfaces with detergent or soapy water if visibly dirty. “**High touch**” surfaces mentioned above should also be disinfected with an EPA-approved disinfectant included in “List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2” [2]. The following common cleaning products are included in EPA’s List N. Always review manufacturer product use recommendations, including concentration, application method and contact time.

**Hard or Non-Porous Surfaces can be disinfected by wiping with an EPA-approved disinfectant.** The following are some common chemicals used for disinfection:

- ◇ **Quaternary ammonium compounds** like CloroxPro™ Clorox Total 360® Disinfecting Cleaner<sup>1</sup> with **5 minute** contact time
- ◇ **Hydrogen Peroxide** like Clorox Commercial Solutions® Hydrogen Peroxide Cleaner Disinfectant with **1 minute** contact time
- 10% freshly prepared bleach solution** with **1 minute** contact time of  
**Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:** 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water

**Soft or Porous Surfaces** such as carpeted floor, rugs, drapes, fabric chairs etc, can be cleaned by first removing visible contamination, if present, followed by cleaning with chemical/treatment suitable for the specific material. If the items can be laundered, consider laundering items in accordance with the **manufacturer’s instructions**.

**Electronic Surfaces** such as digital screens, electronic panels, keyboards, ATM machines etc, can be disinfected with wipes or sprays containing at least **70% alcohol** or **other EPA-approved disinfectant approved for electronics**. **Ensure adequate** contact time to ensure thorough disinfection and then dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids. It is recommended that towels be sprayed first prior to wiping, in order to avoid directly spraying on surfaces and potentially aerosolizing the virus.

## ◆ What should I do if I have to clean an area where a COVID-19 positive individual spent time?

If a space has been visited by a **suspected/confirmed COVID-19 positive individual**, close off spaces visited by the ill persons **and wait at least 24 hours** or **as long as practical** before beginning cleaning and disinfection. Open windows and doors to the outside, if available, to allow fresh air to circulate. After 24 hours, follow the above cleaning procedures with the addition of a disposable gown over your uniform. [\*If more than 7 days passed since the person with suspected/confirmed COVID-19 was in the space, additional cleaning and disinfection is likely not necessary \[1\], so general cleaning of space\(s\) can proceed as stated above.\*](#)

## ◆ How often should I wash my hands?

Frequent hand washing with soap and water is essential to preventing the spread of COVID-19 and all other pathogens. Wash hands before putting on PPE, after removing PPE and anytime you come in contact with “**high touch**” surfaces with your hands. Always wash hands for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water is not immediately available, use **hand sanitizer** that contains at least **60% alcohol** until you are able to wash your hands with soap and water. When removing PPE, be careful not to transfer contaminants from your gloves to your skin or clothes.

[1] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

[2] <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>