COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidance

FOR INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for cleaning and disinfection in institutes of higher education. This guidance is based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for schools, workplaces, and community locations.

Resource

How COVID-19 spreads

The virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly spread by respiratory droplets. When someone infected with COVID-19 coughs or sneezes, respiratory droplets that contain the virus are expelled and can be breathed in by someone nearby. Although the virus cannot enter the body through the skin, the respiratory droplets carrying the virus can get into your airways or mucous membranes of your eyes, nose, or mouth to infect you. The virus can also be spread if you touch a surface contaminated with virus and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, although this is not the primary way the virus spreads.

Guidance for cleaning and disinfecting

Routine cleaning and disinfecting is key to maintaining a safe environment for faculty, students, and staff.

- **Cleaning removes** dirt and most germs and is usually done with soap and water.

- **Disinfecting kills** most germs, depending on the type of chemical, and only when the chemical product is used as directed on the label.

Routine cleaning and disinfecting

Clean and disinfect at least daily (or more, depending on use patterns) frequently touched surfaces and objects, which include:

- Door knobs and handles
- Stair rails
- Classroom desks and chairs
- Lunchroom tables and chairs
- Countertops
- Handrails
- Light switches
- Push buttons on vending machines and elevators
- Shared remote controls
• Shared telephones
• Shared desktops
• Shared computer keyboards and mice

Note: Computer keyboards are difficult to clean. Shared computers should have signs posted instructing proper hand hygiene before and after using them to minimize disease transmission. To facilitate cleaning, consider using covers that protect the keys but enable use of the keys.

It is not necessary to routinely apply disinfectants to surfaces that are not high-touch or high-risk (e.g., floors, bookcases, tops of filing cabinets). Soft surfaces such as carpets, rugs, and drapes can be cleaned using soap and water or a cleaner appropriate for the material.

When a student, faculty, or staff member becomes ill with suspect COVID-19 on campus

General precautions for common spaces (classrooms, offices, public spaces)

When someone on campus develops any symptoms of illness consistent with COVID-19 (e.g., fever, cough, or shortness of breath):
• Send the person home or back to their dorm room, apartment, home, or other accommodation.
• Ensure the person has easy access to hygiene supplies, including facial tissues and alcohol-based hand rub in case an individual becomes ill in a public space.

General precautions for cleaning staff

As long as routine cleaning and disinfecting have taken place regularly, additional cleaning and disinfecting is likely not necessary. The following are general precautions for cleaning staff given that community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring:
• While cleaning, and until a person can wash hands after cleaning, staff should not touch their face.
• Cleaning staff should wear uniforms (or designated work clothes) and disposable gloves when cleaning and handling trash. Cleaning staff should change clothes at the end of a shift. It may be helpful for them to keep a change of clothes at work.
• Clothing worn while cleaning should be placed in a plastic bag until they can be laundered. Laundering should be done as soon as possible and can be done safely at home.
• Cleaning staff should thoroughly wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after gloves are removed.
▪ Staff who are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting should be trained to use disinfectants safely and effectively and to safely clean up potentially infectious materials and body fluids – blood, vomit, feces, and urine.


General precautions for maintenance staff working in a dorm room of a student with suspect or confirmed COVID-19

▪ Delay maintenance that isn’t urgent until the student is no longer infectious.

▪ If they are able, have the ill student isolate in a room while facilities staff do maintenance (suite-style room where student is able to isolate in a bedroom, or room where door can be closed).

▪ If a student is not able to be isolated, have him or her wear a mask (could use a cloth mask) and isolate them in a different area while work is conducted.

▪ Wear gloves and wash hands after work is done.

▪ Change and launder clothing worn in a work area at the end of the day.

Resource
For more detailed information for staff, see Frequently Asked Questions About COVID-19 for Facilities Service and Cleaning Staff (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/cleanfaq.html).

Cleaning and disinfecting products

▪ Use soap and water or another detergent to clean dirty items. Then, use a disinfectant.

▪ Use an EPA-registered household disinfectant and follow the manufacturer’s instructions to ensure safe and effective use of the product. Many products recommend:
  ▪ Keeping the surface wet for a period of time (see the product label).
  ▪ Wearing gloves and ensuring good ventilation during use of the product.

▪ Use diluted household bleach solutions if appropriate for the surface. However:
  ▪ Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date.
  ▪ Follow manufacturer’s instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
    ▪ Use eye protection or have immediate access to an eye-wash station.
    ▪ Leave solution on a surface for at least 1 minute.
To make a bleach solution, mix:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) of bleach per gallon of water OR
- 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of water

Make only enough diluted bleach solution that can be used in 24 hours. After that, the solution may not be effective.

Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol can also be used for cleaning.