



Enhanced Environmental Cleaning And Disinfection Advisory During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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This document is to be used to communicate best practices for cleaning and disinfecting on campus and current processes in place. It can be used as a resource to inform and apply best practices for virus control for all areas.

Enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfection (abbreviated to “**enhanced cleaning**”) of workplaces has been identified as high importance in the fight against COVID-19 disease spread. It is the cleaning and disinfection procedures done routinely with a focus on the frequent disinfection of high touch point items that may serve as a reservoir for disease transmission. [Enhanced cleaning is to be performed at least 2-3 times daily in order to be effective, especially in high traffic/shared areas.](#) The more frequent enhanced cleaning performed, the more likelihood of stopping the spread of the virus. Enhanced cleaning goes beyond [normal routine cleaning](#), which is the cleaning and disinfection procedures that occur on a regularly scheduled basis.

Cleaning vs. Disinfecting

Cleaning: Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

Disinfecting: kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

How COVID-19 is Transmitted:

- COVID-19 symptomatic persons are causing the majority of transmission. This is why it is important to stay home if you are sick.
- Person-to-person transmission is mostly occurring via infectious respiratory droplets:
 - large respiratory droplets containing the virus from an infected person’s cough/sneeze/vivid talking can enter a person’s eyes, nose or mouth.
 - A person touches a surface or an object that is contaminated with the virus then proceeds to touch their eyes, nose and mouth.



The Importance of Enhanced Cleaning:

- High touch points are surfaces frequently touched with hands that are most likely to be contaminated. These include doorknobs, handrails, elevator buttons, light switches, cabinet handles, faucet handles, tables, countertops and electronics. Items that are shared among multiple individuals are also considered high touch points ([link](#)).
- COVID-19 lives on surfaces and evidence suggests it naturally dies on objects and surfaces within a few hours to 2-3 days. ([link](#))
- The virus is easily inactivated by using simple disinfectants such as store-bought disinfectants, and alternatively diluted bleach solution prepared daily. ([link](#))

The Objective of Enhanced Cleaning:

- To frequently disinfect high touch point items that could potentially contain COVID-19, ultimately reducing the spread of the virus.

NOTE: Enhanced cleaning alone cannot reduce the spread of the virus. Staying home if you are sick, practicing personal hygiene, and keeping 2-metre physical distance from others are still important measures to follow. ([link](#))

Selecting and Using the Appropriate Disinfectant:

- Use approved hard-surface disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). Other supplies needed are:
 - Appropriate cleaning supplies (disposable towels/rags, brushes, etc)
 - Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment such as gloves and protective eyewear
- Read and follow manufacturer's instructions for safe use of cleaning and disinfection products (e.g. wear gloves, use in well-ventilated area, allow enough contact time for disinfectant to kill germs based on the product being used). Always follow the directions on the label.
- Avoid mixing chemical products.
- Label all diluted cleaning solutions and store them in a safe place according to manufacturer's instruction.
- All guidance is taken from:
 - Centre for Disease Control/Environmental Protection Agency: [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes\(PDF\)](#). April 2020.
 - Public Health Agency of Canada: [Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces during COVID-19](#). October 5 2020.
 - European Centre for Disease Control: [Disinfection of environments in healthcare and non-healthcare settings potentially contaminated with SARS-CoV-2](#). March 2020.



Items/Areas That Must Be Disinfected When Enhanced Cleaning:

- Common high touch point items in public/shared areas, especially areas with high traffic. The following items must be disinfected at least 2-3 times daily. Some examples are, but not limited to:

Doorknobs/handles	Elevator Buttons	Handrails
Faucet handles	Vending machine buttons	Toilet/Urinal flush handles
Touch screens	Soap dispenser buttons	Push plates
Counters	Buttons on electronics	Communal tables
Light Switches	Drink fountain buttons	Cabinet/Fridge handles
Microwaves	Mailboxes/Assignment Boxes	

- Equipment, items, and tools that are shared between Individuals. It is recommended that the following items not be shared if possible, however, if shared then the items must be disinfected before and after each use. Some examples are, but not limited to:

Computer and mouse	Photocopiers/faxes	Phones
Centrifuges	Pipettes	Lab instruments
Point-of-Sale keypads	Vehicle steering wheel and gear shift	
Microwaves	Drills,hammers, screwdrivers, etc	
Sports equipment	Material handling equipment (carts, trucks, etc.)	

- High priority areas that **must be included** in enhanced cleaning are places with high foot traffic and/or frequently visited by multiple Individuals:

Stairwells	Kitchens/Kitchenettes	Lunchrooms
Classrooms	Washrooms	Areas of congregation

Common high touch point items mentioned above that are located in within high priority areas must be included in enhanced cleaning.

- Low priority items/areas that must be part of **normal routine cleaning** but **not prioritized** for enhanced cleaning:

Low traffic areas/rooms	Non-touch points (e.g. windows, glass)	Personal or individual use items not shared
Areas/rooms that are closed/not in use	Outdoor Areas	



General Guidance On Cleaning and Disinfecting:

- General Steps:
 1. Gather supplies needed
 2. Put on required PPE (ensure not to touch your face)
 3. If the surface is soiled, clean first with soap and water
 4. Apply disinfectant according to manufacturer's instructions
 5. Discard disposable cleaning items
 6. Remove and discard/store PPE appropriately ([video example](#)). Wash your hands
- Enhanced cleaning must be performed at least 2-3 times daily. The more frequently enhanced cleaning performed, the more likelihood of stopping the spread of the virus.
- Use damp cleaning methods such as damp clean cloths, and/or a wet mop. Do not dust or sweep the surface to be disinfected since it can distribute virus droplets into the air.
- Visibly soiled surfaces must undergo cleaning with soap and water before applying the disinfectant.
- Contaminated disposable cleaning items (e.g. mop heads, cloths) must be placed in a lined garbage bin before disposing of them with regular waste. Reusable cleaning items can be washed using regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C).
- Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer after removing gloves. Change gloves frequently while cleaning and disinfecting.
- Consider putting wipeable covers on electronics.
- Consider placing an activity log sheet in the area to let persons know how frequent the area undergoes enhanced cleaning.
- Outdoor areas only require normal routine cleaning unless it is a high touch point located outside.
- Sidewalks and roads are not to be disinfected. Spread of COVID-19 from these surfaces is very low and disinfection is not effective.
- All guidance taken from:
 - Centre for Disease Control/Environmental Protection Agency: [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes\(PDF\)](#). April 2020.
 - Public Health Agency of Canada: [Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces during COVID-19](#). October 5 2020.



- European Centre for Disease Control: [Disinfection of environments in healthcare and non-healthcare settings potentially contaminated with SARS-CoV-2](#). March 2020.

Enhanced Cleaning Responsibilities:

Everyone plays a vital role in performing enhanced cleaning of their areas in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

A. Custodial Staff is responsible for:

- Performing enhanced cleaning public/shared areas.
- Determining the schedule and priority of normal routine cleaning duties in order to dedicate time and resources for enhanced cleaning. This includes potentially postponing or voiding service requests that do not pertain to enhanced cleaning in public/shared areas. ○ Taking immediate action on service requests for enhanced cleaning in specific areas from the Director of Risk Management and/or the Health and Safety Officer. (such requests **are not** to come from the general community)
- Working with the Health and Safety Officer to receive direction on COVID-19 specific cleaning. ○ Following their Pandemic and Critical Staffing Plans and providing the most updated plans to:
 - Associate Vice-President, Facilities and Ancillary Services, Durham College, and
 - Director, Office of Campus Infrastructure and Sustainability, Ontario Tech.

B. Departments/Functional Units/Lab Groups are responsible for:

- Performing enhanced cleaning in areas that Custodial Staff normally do not enter without a service request. (e.g. laboratories, secured areas, etc.)
- Performing enhanced cleaning of equipment, items, and tools that are shared between persons within the Group. ○ Creating an enhanced cleaning procedure and schedule that can be followed by the Group members. These procedures should be referenced in your return to work plans. ○ Providing appropriate disinfectants and PPE for individuals in the group to use to perform enhanced cleaning.

C. Individuals are responsible for:

- Cleaning and disinfecting of their personal and/or individual use items such as computer mouse, keyboards, phones, etc. ○ Understanding, following, and if possible participating in, the enhanced cleaning procedures and schedule that their Group implements. ○ Taking precautionary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (personal hygiene, 2-metre distancing, avoid sharing these personal and/or individual use items etc.).



Enhanced Cleaning Service Requests:

- If there is a requirement for additional enhanced cleaning in any specific area, Risk Management or Health & Safety will initiate a service request.
- **Individuals are not enter a service ticket for any type of enhanced cleaning** – instead, concerns must be brought forward to H&S directly or through the use of the online [Hazard Reporting Form](#).

Has The Area Been Unoccupied For The Last 3 Days?

If the area has been unoccupied for 3 days or more, it **does not require enhanced cleaning** (beyond regular cleaning practices) to reopen the area. This is because the virus that causes COVID-19 has not been shown to survive on surfaces longer than this time under real world conditions. ([link](#))

COVID-19 Specific Cleaning

- **If there is a confirmed outbreak or COVID-19 case who was on campus:** any cleaning related to COVID-19 areas will be requested by Risk Management or Health & Safety as identified through a risk assessment with support from Public Health.
- An outbreak is defined as having 1 confirmed positive case plus 1 confirmed symptomatic.
- If there is an outbreak, Public Health will work with the institutions to complete the risk assessment and determine next steps. An outbreak does not equate to an automatic closure of campus space.
- Please refer to guidance document on COVID-19 Report Actions for more information.

If The Office has Been Visited by a COVID-19 Infected Individual:

1. The space will be **immediately identified** upon learning of the COVID-19 concern.
2. **Is the office a shared space?** If yes, the Supervisor will be asked to temporarily relocate the individuals who use the space.
3. **Can the room be closed for 3 days?** If yes, the Supervisor to keep office closed with no one allowed to enter for 3 days. After 3 days has passed, normal routine cleaning is to resume and individuals who use the space may return. ([link](#))
4. **If the room cannot be closed for 3 days:** a 24-hour waiting period will be in place to ensure aerosols in the area settle ([link](#)). Health and Safety will coordinate the enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of the area by Custodial Service. Custodial services **must confirm** with the Supervisor who will be responsible for the enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of the equipment, items, and tools that are shared.



Enhanced Cleaning Timeline

Normal routine cleaning will resume back to its regular schedule once PHAC declares the pandemic over.

Questions?

Please feel free to contact:

- Ontario Tech: healthandsafety@ontariotechu.ca
- Durham College: healthandsafety@durhamcollege.ca

Resources:

- Centre for Disease Control: [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#). June 15 2021.
- Centre for Disease Control/Environmental Protection Agency: [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes\(PDF\)](#). April 28 2020.
- Centre for Disease Control: [How To Clean and Disinfect Schools To Help Slow the Spread of Flu](#). July 31 2018.
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- Delgado Naranjo J, Villate Navarro JI, Sota Busselo M, Martinez Ruiz A, Hernández Hernández JM, Torres Garmendia MP, et al. [Control of a clonal outbreak of multidrugresistant Acinetobacter baumannii in a hospital of the Basque country after the introduction of environmental cleaning led by the systematic sampling from environmental objects](#). Interdiscip Perspect Infect Dis. 2013;2013:582831.
- European Centre for Disease Control: [Disinfection of environments in healthcare and non-healthcare settings potentially contaminated with SARS-CoV-2](#). March 2020.
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- Public Health Agency of Canada: [Canadian Biosafety Standards- SARS-CoV-2 -Biosafety Advisory](#). November 26 2020
- Public Health Agency of Canada: [Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces during COVID-19](#). October 5 2020.
- Public Health Agency of Canada: [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\): Summary of assumptions](#). April 13 2020.
- Public Health Agency of Canada: [COVID-19 Disinfectants, sanitizers, cleaners and soaps](#). October 2 2020.
- Public Health Agency of Canada: [COVID-19: Main modes of transmission](#). June 9 2021.
- Public Health Ontario: [Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections in All Health Care Settings](#), 3rd Edition. April 2018.