

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) General Disinfection Guidance for Commercial or Residential Buildings

This guidance is provided “as is” for informational purposes only. The New York City (NYC) Health Department does not provide any warranties of any kind regarding the information contained within.

This document provides landlords, managers and cleaning/facilities staff of commercial or residential buildings with cleaning and disinfection guidance. Building operators should ensure staff take extra effort with daily cleaning practices as New York City responds to COVID-19. It may be updated as the situation is rapidly changing, and new information becomes available. Check the NYC Health Department and CDC’s webpages for the latest updates: nyc.gov/health/coronavirus and cdc.gov/coronavirus.

2019 Novel Coronavirus

Health officials are still learning about the spread and severity of a novel (new) coronavirus. The infection, called COVID-19, can be spread from person to person. However, the health risk to non-healthcare workers is considered low based on the current information. This may change with time.

Separate Facts from Fear and Guard Against Stigma

A lot of information about coronavirus on social media and even in some news reports is not based on facts. Building operators can help prevent the stigmatization or targeting of one group of people by proactively sharing the messages found in this document. The outbreak is absolutely no excuse to spread racism and discrimination. Building operators should encourage staff to stay informed, be aware and take care of each other. For more information, visit nyc.gov/coronavirus.

General Disinfection Guidance

Building operators and staff should follow these guidelines:

- Staff should wear and use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment, such as gloves, according to existing policies and procedures, as well as following label directions for cleaning products.
- No evidence suggests that building waste needs any additional disinfection. Frequent hand washing, gloves and use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer by staff handling waste can support good personal hygiene practices.
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- Have soap and paper towels in bathrooms at all times. Additionally, custodian and facilities staff should ensure that all handwashing sinks are in a state of good repair.
- Consider having alcohol-based hand sanitizer in common areas, including but not limited to bathrooms, laundry rooms, gyms and playrooms, at all times.
- Pay special attention to cleaning frequently touched surfaces in common areas. Frequently contacted items, such as drinking fountains, faucet handles, door hardware, push plates and light switches, and elevator buttons are to be wiped down regularly with cleaners.
- Use regular cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., Clorox, Purell, and Peroxide products). A full list of cleaners can be found here: <https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf>.
 - Cleaning and disinfectant products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are recommended for use against COVID-19. These products can be identified by the following claim: “[Product name] has demonstrated effectiveness against viruses similar

to COVID-19 on hard non-porous surfaces. Therefore, this product can be used against COVID-19 when used in accordance with the directions for use against [name of supporting virus] on hard, non-porous surfaces.”

- This claim or a similar claim will be made only through the following communications: technical literature distributed exclusively to health care facilities, physicians, nurses and public health officials, “1-800” consumer information services, social media sites and company websites (non-label related). Specific claims for “COVID-19” **will not** appear on the product or master label. If there are no available EPA-registered products that have an approved emerging viral pathogen claim for COVID-19, products with label claims against human coronaviruses should be used according to label instructions.
- See [additional information about EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims](#).
- No special ventilation precautions are recommended for residential or commercial buildings. The spread of COVID-19 or coronaviruses from person-to-person over long distances, such as through HVAC systems, has not been shown. Check working windows and both supply and exhaust ventilation systems for proper operation per usual procedures.

Guidance When Entering Tenant Homes

Encourage staff who need to enter a home, for repairs or other reasons, to do the following:

- Ask these two questions before entering the home:
 1. Has anyone in the home had fever, cough and/or shortness of breath?
 2. In the 14 days before the visit, has anyone in the home traveled outside the United States or recently had contact with a person suspected or confirmed to be infected with COVID-19?

IF YES TO INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL, check to see if travel country is on the CDC’s affected geographic areas of widespread/sustained community transmission:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>
- If the tenant says yes to both questions and the visit can be postponed, politely ask tenant for their availability to re-schedule in 14 days or when they or the household member are feeling better.
- If the tenant says yes to both questions and the visit cannot be postponed, staff can politely ask that the sick individual(s) do the following:
 - Where possible, remain in a separate room with the door closed.
 - If a separate room is not available, maintain at least a 6-foot distance from the staff person at all times until they have left the home, AND wear a face mask if available.
- Consider carrying an alcohol-based hand sanitizer for periodic hand hygiene during visit.
- After visit, staff should wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, if soap and water are not available.

General Infection Prevention Strategies

Good personal hygiene practices remain the best method for preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Building operators should encourage staff and tenants to do the following to prevent infection:

- Stay home if sick. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve, not their hands.
- Wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water are not available.

- Avoid touching their faces, especially with unwashed hands.
- Get the flu shot. Although the flu shot will not protect from COVID-19, it will help prevent the flu which has similar symptoms to this coronavirus.

About Face Masks

The NYC Health Department does not recommend the routine use of face masks if you are not sick. Face masks are not needed for general or routine tasks by staff – even those who frequently interact with the public. Remember that people wear face masks for many reasons, including seasonal allergies, pollution or to protect others from a common cold. Some staff may also use face masks or N95 respirators per their organization’s protocol for reasons unrelated to the COVID-19 outbreak. If so, staff should use face masks or N95 respirators as usual. No COVID-19 specific precautions are recommended for interactions with the general public, including people showing no symptoms who visited affected parts of the world.

Information about Medical Care for Staff, Tenants and Residents

- Staff and tenants with symptoms (fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath) should stay home, call their doctor and tell them about any travel history.
- If staff do not have a doctor or health insurance, they can visit an NYC Health + Hospitals facility. To find health care: nychealthandhospitals.org/hospitals or call 311.
- Hospital staff will not ask about immigration status.
- Receiving health care is not a public benefit by the public charge rule.
- Strict laws protect patient confidentiality.