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

Cleaning and Disinfection

What is the difference between cleaning and disinfecting?

*Cleaning*with soap and water removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. It lowers the risk of spreading infection. *Disinfecting* kills germs on surfaces. By killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

Is it safe to vacuum in a school, business, or community facility after someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 has been present?

The risk of transmitting or spreading SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, during vacuuming is unknown. At this time, there are no reported cases of COVID-19 associated with vacuuming. If vacuuming is necessary or required in a school, business, or community facility that was used by a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, first follow the CDC recommendations for [Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html#Cleaning) that apply, which includes a wait time of 24 hours, or as long as practical.

After cleaning and disinfection, the following recommendations may help reduce the risk to workers and other individuals when vacuuming:

* Consider removing smaller rugs or carpets from the area completely, so there is less that needs to be vacuumed.
* Use a vacuum equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter, if available.
* Do not vacuum a room or space that has people in it. Wait until the room or space is empty to vacuum, such as at night, for common spaces, or during the day for private rooms.
* Consider temporarily turning off room fans and the central HVAC system that services the room or space, so that particles that escape from vacuuming will not circulate throughout the facility.

What is routine cleaning? How frequently should facilities be cleaned to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19?

Routine cleaning is the everyday cleaning practices that businesses and communities normally use to maintain a healthy environment. Surfaces frequently touched by multiple people, such as door handles, bathroom surfaces, and handrails, should be cleaned with soap and water or another detergent at least daily when facilities are in use. More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use. For example, certain surfaces and objects in public spaces, such as shopping carts and point of sale keypads, should be cleaned and disinfected before each use. Cleaning *removes*dirt and impurities, including germs, from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs, but it reduces the number of germs on a surface.

Is cleaning alone effective against the virus that causes COVID-19?

Cleaning does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection. If a surface may have gotten the virus on it from a person with or suspected to have COVID-19, the surface should be cleaned and disinfected. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces.

Who should clean and disinfect community spaces?

Regular cleaning staff can clean and disinfect community spaces. Cleaning staff should be trained on appropriate use of cleaning and disinfection chemicals and provided with the personal protective equipment (PPE) required for the chemicals used.

How long do companies need to close for disinfection after an exposure? How long before other workers can come back to work?

Companies do not necessarily need to close after a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 has been in a company facility. The area(s) used or visited by the ill person should be closed for 24 hours or as long as possible. Open outside doors and windows as much as possible ensuring that doing so does not pose a safety risk to children using the facility (i.e. make sure that children are not able to enter the closed off area through any windows or doors). and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the area. Once the area has been [appropriately disinfected](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html), it can be opened for use. Workers without close contact with the person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 can return to work immediately after disinfection is completed.

How effective are alternative disinfection methods, such as ultrasonic waves, high intensity UV radiation, and LED blue light?

The efficacy of these disinfection methods against the virus that causes COVID-19 is not known. EPA only recommends use of the[surface disinfectants identified on List Nexternal icon](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2) against the virus that causes COVID-19. EPA does not routinely review the safety or efficacy of pesticidal devices, such as UV lights, LED lights, or ultrasonic devices. Therefore, EPA cannot confirm whether, or under what circumstances, such products might be effective against the spread of COVID-19.

Should outdoor playgrounds, like those at schools or in parks, be cleaned and disinfected to prevent COVID-19?

Outdoor areas generally require normal routine cleaning and do not require disinfection. Spraying disinfectant on outdoor playgrounds is not an efficient use of disinfectant supplies and has not been proven to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to the public. You should maintain existing cleaning and hygiene practices for outdoor areas. If practical, high touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings, should be cleaned routinely. Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces (e.g., play structures, benches, tables) or groundcovers (e.g., mulch, sand) is not recommended.

Can sanitizing tunnels be used at building entrances or exits to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

Should sidewalks and roads be disinfected to prevent COVID-19?

Community Mitigation

What is community mitigation?

Community mitigation activities are actions that people and communities can take to slow the spread of infectious diseases, including COVID-19. Community mitigation is especially important before a vaccine or drug becomes widely available.

What are community mitigation actions for COVID-19?

Some community mitigation actions may include:

* [Washing](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html) hands often
* Avoiding close contact with people who are sick, and practicing [social distancing](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html)
* Covering mouth and nose with a [cloth face cover](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html) when around others
* Covering coughs and sneezes
* Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces daily