

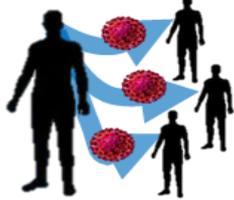
COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) and Cleaners

The 2019 novel coronavirus or SARS-CoV-2 is a new respiratory virus that has not been identified before; and thus people have no immunity to it. The virus causes diseases of varying severities ranging from mild (e.g. similar to common cold) to severe (e.g. pneumonia). Current evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces or frequently touched objects, followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in households, businesses and community settings.

Important: the risk when cleaning is not as high as the risk when one is in close contact with a sick person who may be coughing and sneezing. However, employers and employees should still take measures to protect themselves and others.

HOW DOES ONE GET THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)?

TRANSMISSION



- ▶▶ Person-to-person contact such as shaking hands or touching
- ▶▶ Touching contaminated surfaces then touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- ▶▶ Likely spread via respiratory droplets within a distance of one to two meters (1-2m) through coughing or sneezing.
- ▶▶ Estimated incubation period (time between exposure and appearance of the first symptoms) is between 2-14 days.

HOW IS COVID-19 DIAGNOSED?

If your healthcare provider suspects you may have COVID-19, then a laboratory test would be required. Specimens collected may include combined nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal swabs, sputum, tracheal aspirate or broncho-alveolar lavage. The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) has detailed information and guidelines for collecting, handling, and transporting clinical specimens from patients under investigation (PUI) to their laboratory.

COMMON SYMPTOMS



Cough



Fever



Shortness of breath



Sore throat



Headache

Other symptoms include:
Body aches and pains
Weakness or fatigue
Severe respiratory distress

Protect yourself and loved ones from coronavirus.

Wash your **hands** regularly with **soap and water** or use an **alcohol-based hand rub**.

Cover your mouth and nose while **sneezing or coughing**.

Avoid close contact with anyone who has a cold or flu-like symptoms.

If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing, **seek medical care early**.



WHAT IF THERE IS CONFIRMED CASE AT WORK?

- ▶▶ Immediately inform health officials in your company to determine course of action.
- ▶▶ Cooperate with the contact tracing officers. They will assess who has to be placed on quarantine.
- ▶▶ Inform co-workers of their possible exposure to COVID-19 but maintain confidentiality.
- ▶▶ Immediately vacate and cordon-off the section of the workplace premises where the confirmed case worked.
- ▶▶ Carry out a thorough cleaning and disinfection of the workplace premises.

CLEANING SERVICES EMPLOYERS SHOULD:

- ▶ Review, update and implement policies, procedures and emergency operation plans that address COVID-19.
- ▶ Develop communication plans for sharing credible information (e.g. notice boards, and updates on business communicate especially for staff working in remote sites).
- ▶ Ensure that cleaning staff are trained on updated information.
- ▶ Have HR policies to account for unique sick leave such as self-quarantine (14 days), travel, etc.
- ▶ Encourage staff to stay at home when sick.
- ▶ Identify exposure risks for workers (e.g. frequently touched surfaces, sputum or other bodily fluids on surfaces) and implement appropriate control measures.
- ▶ Provide resources for staff e.g. personal protective equipment like disposable gloves and overalls and appropriate disinfectants.
- ▶ Advise staff before travelling to check the latest update on the destination

CLEANING RECOMMENDATIONS:

Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces daily in common areas (e.g. tables, hard-backed chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remotes, handles, desks, toilets, sinks).

How to clean and disinfect surfaces?

- ▶ For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common household disinfectants should be effective.
- ▶ Damp-mop floors instead of dry-mopping them.
- ▶ In cases of contamination of soft surfaces like rugs and carpeted floors, use appropriate cleaners for these while wearing protective gear and immediately

For more information, contact

NICD: 080 002 9999

NIOH: info@nioh.ac.za

www.nicd.ac.za or www.nioh.ac.za

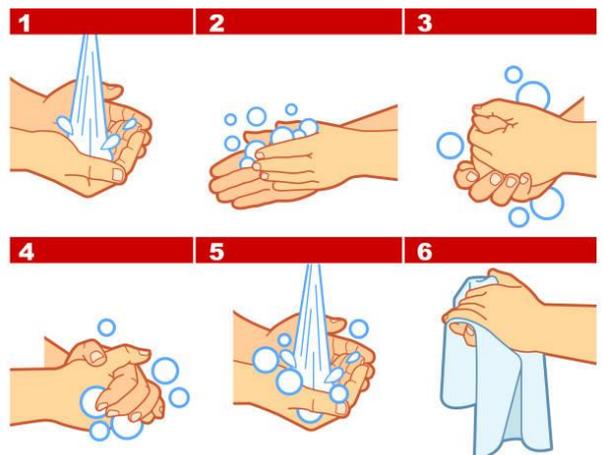
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Division of the National Health Laboratory Service

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CLEANERS SHOULD:

- ▶ Avoid touching their face, especially their mouth, nose and eyes when cleaning.
- ▶ Wear impermeable disposable gloves, when cleaning.
- ▶ Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed with soap and water for about 20 seconds.
- ▶ Use alcohol-based hand rub before putting on and after removing gloves if unable to wash hands.
- ▶ Wear gloves when handling and preparing bleach solutions.
- ▶ If no gloves are used, wash hands immediately afterwards.
- ▶ Remember to check with your employer for any new information on COVID-19.

How to wash your hands?



IMPORTANT NOTE: This fact sheet has been developed for industries and domestic cleaners.

Laboratory cleaners are not required to clean laboratory work surfaces or benchtops or clean up spills containing hazardous biological agents.

Cleaners in Health Care Facilities (hospitals and clinics) must follow a more comprehensive cleaning protocol designed specifically for them.

