

# Interim Guidance for Cleaning/Disinfection and Reporting for COVID-19 within Transportation Settings

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## **Background:**

In December 2019, a new respiratory disease called Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was detected in China. COVID-19 is caused by a virus (SARS-CoV-2) that is part of a large family of viruses called coronaviruses. To help prevent spread of COVID-19, transportation providers should ensure staff continue to perform routine cleaning and may consider high-risk areas where additional cleaning and disinfection is warranted on a regular schedule.

## **Routine Cleaning:**

Soiled and frequently touched surfaces can be reservoirs for pathogens, resulting in a continued transmission to people. Therefore, for pathogenic microorganisms that can transmit disease through indirect contact (transmission through contaminated surfaces), extra attention should be paid to surfaces that are touched most often by different individuals.

**As part of standard infection control practices in public transportation settings, routine cleaning should be continued.**

## **Routine cleaning of transportation settings include:**

- Cleaning high contact surfaces that are touched by many different people, such as light switches, handrails and doorknobs/handles;
- Dust- and wet-mopping or auto-scrubbing floors;
- Vacuuming of entryways and high traffic areas;
- Removing trash;
- Cleaning restrooms;
- Wiping heat and air conditioner vents;
- Spot cleaning walls;
- Spot cleaning carpets;
- Dusting horizontal surfaces and light fixtures; and
- Cleaning spills.

## **What steps should Public Transportation Settings in NYS take for COVID-19?**

### **Now:**

Transportation providers should direct staff to continue performing routine cleaning. High-risk locations warrant cleaning and disinfection on a regular schedule.

### **If an individual with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 was symptomatic in a specifically identified transportation- setting:**

Cleaning and disinfection throughout the area should be completed.

**Specific high-risk locations within transportation areas warrant cleaning and disinfection before a confirmed case of COVID-19 occurs in a specific public transportation setting.**

Examples of these locations may include:

Food Service Areas

- Clean and disinfect food service areas, including counters, tables, and chairs regularly (at least once daily)

Other Frequently Touched Surfaces

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces on a periodic schedule as operational considerations allow, which may range from at least daily to up to 72 hours.

**Cleaning and Disinfection:**

Cleaning removes germs, dirt and impurities from surfaces or objects, while disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects. **If a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 was symptomatic while in a specifically identified transportation setting (such as a vehicle), staff should perform cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched areas throughout the area.**

**Step 1: Cleaning:** Always clean surfaces prior to use of disinfectants in order to reduce soil and remove germs. Dirt and other materials on surfaces can reduce the effectiveness of disinfectants. For combination products that can both clean and disinfect, always follow the instructions on the specific product label to ensure effective use.

**Step 2: Disinfection:** Cleaning of soiled areas must be completed prior to disinfection to ensure the effectiveness of the disinfectant product. If EPA- and DEC\*-registered products specifically labeled for SARS-CoV-2 are not available, disinfect surfaces using a disinfectant labeled to be effective against rhinovirus and/or human coronavirus. If such products are unavailable, it is also acceptable to use a fresh 2% chlorine bleach solution (approximately 1 tablespoon of bleach in 1 quart of water). Prepare the bleach solution daily or as needed. EPA- and DEC\*- registered disinfectants specifically labeled as effective against SARS- CoV-2 may become commercially available at a future time and once available, those products should be used for targeted disinfection of frequently touched surfaces.

- Label directions must be followed when using disinfectants to ensure the target viruses are effectively killed. This includes adequate contact times (i.e., the amount of time a disinfectant should remain on surfaces to be effective), which may vary between five and ten minutes after application. Disinfectants that come in a wipe form will also list effective contact times on their label.
- For disinfectants that come in concentrated forms, it is important to carefully follow instructions for making the diluted concentration needed to effectively kill the target virus. This information can be found on the product label.

**Examples of frequently touched areas within transportation:**

- Seats and handrails;
- Turnstiles and fare boxes;
- Door handles and push plates;
- Chairs and Tables;
- Bathroom faucets;
- Light switches;
- Handles on equipment (e.g., wheelchairs, hand carts);
- Buttons on vending machines and elevators;
- Desks and counters;
- Shared telephones;
- Shared desktops; and
- Shared computer keyboards and mice.

**Note:** Computer keyboards are difficult to clean due to the spaces between keys and the sensitivity of its hardware to liquids. When shared, they may contribute to indirect transmission. Locations with community use computers should provide posted signs regarding proper hand hygiene before and after using the computers to minimize disease transmission. Also, consider using keyboard covers to protect the hardware against spills and facilitate cleaning.

Cleaning and disinfecting should be conducted by staff who have been trained to use products in a safe and effective manner. Staff should be reminded to ensure procedures for safe and effective use of all products are followed. Staff do not need to wear respiratory protection while cleaning. Safety instructions are listed on product labels and include the personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves) that should be used. Place all used gloves in a bag that can be tied closed before disposing of them with other waste. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds immediately after removing gloves or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly soiled.

\*NYSDEC registration will not be listed on disinfection product labels. Information about disinfection product registration with NYSDEC can be found at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/nyspad/products>. If you have any questions about NYSDEC pesticide registration, please call the NYSDEC Bureau of Pesticide Management at 518-402-8748.

### **Staff Guidance**

All staff should be reminded of the importance of routine hand and respiratory hygiene practices.

Hand hygiene:

- Regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds should be done:
  - Before eating;
  - After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing;
  - After using the restroom;
  - Before handling food;
  - After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated; and
  - After using shared equipment like computer keyboards and mice.

**If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.**

Respiratory hygiene:

- Covering coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of elbow; and
- Disposing of soiled tissues immediately after use.

Personal Protective Equipment:

- Staff interacting with the general public do not currently need to wear respiratory or other personal protective equipment.
- Staff performing cleaning and disinfection should follow recommendations for personal protective equipment listed on product labels, per above guidance.

### **Reporting Guidance**

If COVID-19 is suspected, immediately notify the [local health department \(LHD\)](#) where the patient resides. Local Health Department information can be found here <https://www.nyscho.org/directory/>. Additionally, transportation providers should notify **Medical Answering Services (MAS)** if any staff or transported member is suspected of exposure to COVID-19. Transportation notifications and COVID-19 related questions can be directed to [covid19@medanswering.com](mailto:covid19@medanswering.com).

#### **More information:**

New York State Department of Health's COVID-19 Webpage:  
<https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Webpage:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>