

# GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

DISCLAIMER: *This procedure was developed by the Department of Buildings and General Services (BGS) and may contain information specific to State of Vermont facilities, cleaning chemicals, and tools used by BGS. These procedures may not be applicable in all facilities or scenarios. The user is advised to follow specific instructions for their own facilities, chemicals, and cleaning tools. Follow all label instructions provided by chemical manufacturers.*

BGS Environmental Health & Safety has prepared this guidance to address how we clean our buildings during the current 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This guidance does not apply to health care or long-term care facilities that have infection control protocols. Between April 17 and May 1, 2020, Governor Scott issued amendments to Executive Order 01-20 entitled: *Work Smart & Stay Safe - Restart VT: Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III*. This guidance addresses the health and safety requirements contained in this executive order through Phase III.

BGS custodial and maintenance staff are expected to be vigilant in using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) according to existing procedures and training. This guidance is intended to provide additional information to supplement our existing BGS custodial cleaning procedures for all facilities. This guidance may also be applied to non-custodial maintenance activities in buildings with suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19. Use of additional PPE, such as respirators and face shields, will be made on a facility-specific basis and coordinated between customer agencies/departments, BGS management, and BGS Health and Safety.

## Important Terms

Dwell Time	The length of time a cleaning chemical must remain on a surface. To disinfect or sanitize, the surface must stay visibly wet for at least this amount of time. Same as “contact time.”
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment is worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses.
Cloth Face Covering	Also called a “face mask,” this is a loose fitting cloth that covers your nose and mouth. A cloth face covering is to be worn in accordance with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Vermont Health Department (VDH) guidance. A cloth face covering is not PPE. It is meant to keep people who may be carrying the SARS-CoV-2 virus from spreading respiratory droplets. Research has shown that people may spread the virus up to 48 hours before they show any symptoms of COVID-19 such as coughing, fever, and shortness of breath.
Cleaning	Cleaning is a process that removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection. Cleaning can be accomplished with soap and water or another cleaning chemical.

## GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Disinfection                      Disinfection is a process that kills germs on surfaces or objects using chemicals that have been tested and approved for this purpose.

### Revised Routine Cleaning Procedures

Cleaning in a non-healthcare facility during the COVID-19 pandemic is not deviate significantly from your normal cleaning routine:

- ❖ **All employees are required to wear non-medical cloth face coverings (bandanna, scarf, or nonmedical mask, etc.) over their nose and mouth when in the presence of others.** BGS will provide cloth face coverings as we receive them from our distributor. If you do not have a state-issued cloth mask, you are required to wear your own if it meets Health Department and CDC guidelines.
- ❖ **Employees shall not report to, or be allowed to remain at, work or job site if sick or symptomatic (with fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath).**
- ❖ **Employees must observe strict social distancing of 6 feet while on the job.**
- ❖ **The disinfecting chemicals we already use will kill COVID-19 virus.** These include Oxivir TB (wipes or liquid) and bleach normally used only for cleaning up blood and bodily fluid spills (bloodborne pathogens). You may be able to use other disinfectants if you have them in stock, such as Enviro-Solutions ES64 (“hospital grade disinfectant”) or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol. Read the product label ask your supervisor to confirm which chemicals to use for disinfection. No change to our sanitizing or general cleaning chemicals are necessary to deal with the COVID-19 virus.
- ❖ **For routine cleaning and disinfection, wear disposable safety gloves.** In areas where confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been identified, wear safety gloves and gowns to protect yourself. Use of additional PPE, such as respirators and face shields, will be made on a facility-specific basis and coordinated between customer agencies/departments, BGS management, and BGS Health and Safety.
- ❖ In accordance with Executive Order 01-20, all common spaces, bathrooms, and frequently touched (high-touch) surfaces and doors, tools, and equipment will be cleaned and disinfected regularly and prior to transfer from one person to another. **For custodial staff this means cleaning and disinfecting common areas and restrooms at least once daily, and frequently-touched (high-touch) surfaces as frequently as practical and no less than twice daily.** The frequency and intensity of disinfection will vary based on facility use. For facilities with multiple work shifts (such as 24-hour facilities) the frequency of disinfection will be coordinated with existing work shifts.
- ❖ Bathroom cleaning and disinfection will follow the Restroom Cleaning procedure which has been revised to reflect Executive Order 01-20 and other relevant guidance.

You will receive specific directions for each facility or type of facility. Here are some general procedures to follow:

- ❖ **Social distancing, washing your hands frequently, and not touching your face** are the most important practices for avoiding the COVID-19 virus.

## GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- ❖ **Proper hand washing** means wetting your hands with water, applying soap, and rubbing your hands together for at least 20 seconds. Do not forget to wash your thumbs and between your fingers. Thoroughly dry your hands with a paper towel after washing and discard the paper towel in the trash.
- ❖ **All custodial and maintenance employees must, at a minimum, wash their hands with soap and water upon arriving at a facility for your shift, after changing gloves, and at the end of your shift before leaving the facility.** You may use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer between glove changes instead of soap and water.
- ❖ **Clean with a damp cloth instead or dry dusting where possible.** Use a fresh cloth, rag, or paper towel each time you clean a new surface. Microfiber cloths may be folded and used for multiple surfaces in a single small room (such as a restroom) before being discarded between rooms.
- ❖ **All tools, equipment, and work vehicles must be cleaned and disinfected at the beginning, middle and end of each shift and prior to transfer from one person to another.**
- ❖ **No more than 2 people shall occupy one vehicle when conducting work.**
- ❖ **The use of respirators such as an N95 mask is not required to protect against the COVID-19 virus during routine cleaning or maintenance activities in facilities without known or suspected cases of COVID-19.** When working in facilities housing persons with confirmed or suspected COVID-19, such as correctional facilities, isolation, or recovery sites, you must follow procedures specific to those facilities which may include additional PPE. Always follow safety instructions from your supervisor and BGS Environmental Health and Safety staff.
- ❖ **Use of respirators by BGS employees, including N95 masks, must be in accordance with the BGS Respiratory Protection Plan.** This includes obtaining medical clearance to wear a respirator, training on proper donning (putting on) and doffing (removing) procedures, and fit testing.

### Cleaning After a Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 Case Is Identified

When a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 is identified in an employee or visitor to one of our buildings, or the virus is suspected to be present, BGS will follow guidance issued by CDC and VDH:

- ❖ Areas used by the employee with the confirmed case of COVID-19 will be closed off for as long as practical, up to 24 hours, before beginning cleaning and disinfection. This will reduce the risk of exposure to respiratory droplets that might contain the virus.
- ❖ If possible, BGS maintenance will increase fresh-air circulation in the area before cleaning and disinfection begins. This may be done using mechanical systems or by opening windows.
- ❖ **Perform Deep Cleaning:** Custodial staff will clean and disinfect all areas used by a person suspected or confirmed of having COVID-19 by following the BGS PROCEDURE FOR CLEANING AT COVID-19 ISOLATION OR RECOVERY SITES. Offices, restrooms, and common

## GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

areas used by the ill person will be cleaned and disinfected. Hard floors will be cleaned using a wet mop and neutral floor cleaner.

- ❖ If the affected areas have carpet, no vacuuming will be performed until at least one week has passed or as otherwise directed by BGS Health and Safety staff.

Speak to you supervisor about any concerns you have. You or your supervisor should contact BGS Environmental Health & Safety staff directly if you need additional information or want to discuss your concerns further:

Steve Hubbs, Environmental Health & Safety Coordinator  
[steven.hubbs@vermont.gov](mailto:steven.hubbs@vermont.gov)

Jean Crockett, Custodial Quality Control Specialist  
[jean.crockett@vermont.gov](mailto:jean.crockett@vermont.gov)

Jason Rudy, Safety Officer  
[jason.rudy@vermont.gov](mailto:jason.rudy@vermont.gov)

## GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Summary of changes.

REVISION NUMBER	SECTION	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
1.0	Title	Changed titled to CLEANING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.
1.0	Important Terms	Condensed this list of terms to only the most important to understanding the revised guidance.
1.0	Introduction	Updated background, Executive Order referenced, added note concerning upgraded PPE in certain facilities.
1.0	Definitions	General revisions, clarifications, removed “sanitizing” definition.
1.0	Cleaning Procedures	Added requirements from amended Executive Order and new or revised CDC guidance. Added more information on respiratory protection. Added reference to new cleaning procedures for COVID-19 isolation or recovery sites.