Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19):
General Disinfection Guidance for Businesses and Non-Health Care Settings

This document provides businesses and other non-health care settings with help to slow person-to-person transmission of COVID-19. This guidance may be updated as the situation is rapidly changing and new information becomes available.

Text "COVID" to 692-692 for the latest information or visit nyc.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-health care 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. Leaders in non-health care settings 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. Leaders should encourage that staff stay informed, remain vigilant and take care of each other. For more information, visit nyc.gov/coronavirus.

Social Distancing

Non-health care settings can consider the following measures to support social distancing:

- Allow employees to telecommute if the job allows.
- Create staggered work hours. For example, instead of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., consider changing some work hours to 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. or 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Make work schedules flexible.
- Inform employees of paid sick leave policies.
- Emphasize that staff should stay home if sick and consider relaxing leave policies to accommodate staff following guidance to stay home until well.
- Encourage staff to help reduce overcrowding on public transportation:
  - Walk or bike to work, if they can.
  - When taking the subway, if the train is too packed, be patient and wait for the next one.

General Infection Prevention Strategies

Good personal hygiene practices remain the best method for preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Non-health care settings should encourage staff do the following to prevent infection:

- Stay home if sick.
If you are experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms, stay home. Call your employer and let them know. If you don’t feel better after three to four days, seek care from your doctor, but call ahead.

- Do not go back to work until you have been fever-free for 72 hours without the use of fever-reducing drugs like Tylenol or ibuprofen.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when sneezing or coughing. Do not use your hands.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact (being within about 6 feet) with people who are sick.
- Do not shake hands. Instead, wave or elbow bump.
- Monitor your health more closely than usual for cold or flu symptoms.
- 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.

General Disinfection Guidance

- Cleaning refers to the removal of dirt and impurities including germs from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs, but it decreases the number of germs and therefore reduces the risk of spreading infection.
- Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces by using chemicals after cleaning.

Non-healthcare settings should follow these guidelines for disinfecting:

- Staff should wear and use appropriate personal protective equipment. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all products.
- Hand washing sinks should have clean running water, soap and paper towels at all times.
  - Wash your hands using clean running water (warm or cold), apply soap, scrub for at least 20 seconds, rinse your hands under clean running water, and dry hands with a clean towel or air dry.
- Place alcohol-based hand sanitizers in common areas to encourage hand hygiene.
- After handling trash, staff should wash their hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Frequently touched surfaces such as drinking fountains, faucet handles, door hardware, elevator buttons, and light switches, are to be wiped down daily with a disinfectant.
- When cleaning vehicles, staff should pay special attention to disinfecting surfaces and objects that are touched often, such as door handles, arm rests, and seatbelts.
- When cleaning workspaces, cubicles, and other office areas, pay special attention to disinfecting surfaces and objects such as desks, chairs, keyboards, phones, printers, and other common areas.
- Use regular disinfection products (e.g., Clorox, Purell, and Peroxide products). Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, use of personal protective equipment).

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves. 3.13.20
The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

- New York State registered disinfectants based on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) list can be found by visiting http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/materials_minerals_pdf/covid19.pdf
- No special ventilation precautions are recommended for residential or commercial buildings.

About Face Masks

The New York City 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 have frequent interaction with the public. It is important to note that people wear face masks for many reasons, including seasonal allergies, pollution or to protect others from a common cold. In addition, some staff may be required to use either face masks or N95 respirators per organization’s protocol for reasons unrelated to the current COVID-19 outbreak. If so, such staff should use face masks or N95 respirators as usual. No coronavirus-specific precautions are recommended for interactions with the general public, including people showing no symptoms who have visited affected parts of the world, including China, Iran, South Korea, Italy and Japan.

Information about Medical Care for Staff

- Staff with symptoms (fever, cough or shortness of breath) should stay home and 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, visit 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.