



CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released [guidance](#) for cleaning and disinfecting workplaces and businesses, as well as other locations where people congregate in large groups such as schools and public spaces. Reducing the risk of employees' exposure to COVID-19 by cleaning and disinfecting surfaces is a critical component of reopening businesses and other public spaces, and businesses and employers play an essential role in making sure our communities remain safe. This alert provides a brief synopsis of recommendations provided by the CDC, but employers are urged to review the CDC guidance in its entirety.

Best Practices for Cleaning and Disinfecting

It is essential for businesses to evaluate their workspaces to determine what kinds of surfaces and materials will need to be cleaned and to have a plan in place prior to reopening. Frequently touched surfaces such as light switches, doorknobs, and countertops will need to be cleaned and then routinely disinfected to further reduce the risk of exposure. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has compiled [a list of approved products](#) that should be used to clean and disinfect surfaces including sprays, concentrates, and wipes, and these products have been shown to be effective against viruses that are more difficult to kill than COVID-19. The CDC recommends wearing disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, and gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. If reusable gloves are used, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other purposes.

The CDC notes that if your workplace has been unoccupied for seven days or more, it will only need your normal routine cleaning to reopen the area. This is due to the fact that the virus that causes COVID-19 has not been shown to survive on surfaces longer than this timeframe. Following any routine cleaning, the CDC recommends disinfecting frequently touched surfaces and objects using a product from the EPA's list of approved products (link above) that are effective against COVID-19.

For soft and porous surfaces such as carpet, rugs, and cloth seating, the CDC recommends the following:

- Clean the surface using soap and water or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces.
- Launder items (if possible) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely

OR

- Disinfect with an [EPA-registered](#) household disinfectant.
- Vacuum as usual.



Maintain Safe Behavioral Practices and Consider Policies that Reduce the Risk of Exposure

Employers can also encourage individual behavioral practices and consider policies that reduce the risk of exposure. This includes:

1. Continuing to practice social distancing.

- Encourage staff to telework (when feasible), and particularly individuals at increased risk of severe illness.
- Consider increasing the physical space between workers at the worksite and, if possible, stagger work schedules.
- Where meetings must be conducted in person, individuals should be spaced at least six feet apart, and large work gatherings (e.g., staff meetings, after-work functions) should be limited.
- Consider the alternatives of meetings conducted via remote means, such as video or teleconference, and limit non-essential work travel.

2. Consider mitigation strategies for public surfaces that are frequently touched.

Encourage sanitary behavior and reduce exposure by:

- Provide sanitizing supplies near frequently touched surfaces to encourage individuals to wipe down common surfaces after use.
- Consider leaving frequently touched doors open to the extent possible.
- Remove commonly touched items in break rooms.

3. Emphasize responsibility for reducing exposure. As we are all aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has required us to change the ways we use public and common spaces and how we conduct our daily lives. Employers should continue to encourage employees to:

- Stay home when sick
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, and mouth
- Frequently wash hands
- Give others at least six feet of space

The CDC also provides further [mitigation strategies](#) to reduce the risk of exposure and tips to [prevent getting sick](#).

If you have questions or concerns about implementing the above best practices, please do not hesitate to contact the FWW Employment Team.

Kelly Tilden ktilden@fwwlaw.com
Kim McGair kmcgair@fwwlaw.com
Trish Walsh twalsh@fwwlaw.com
Jon Himes jhimes@fwwlaw.com