

## **Cleaning Guidelines based on CDC recommendations:**

### **Determine who will develop a cleaning plan**

- Who has the expertise and time to help prepare a cleaning plan BEFORE you reopen your church? Obviously, the cleaning team and church staff must be part of this group. You may also want to involve others such as members who work in the health care field or those who are in maintenance and property management. Don't make this group too large but get enough people who can work together and look at this from different perspectives.

### **Develop a plan and checklist**

- Put together a plan and checklist for different areas of the church. One plan may cover the church office, which may only be open 4 hours a week and not open to the public. Another may cover meeting rooms which won't be used for some time. A third may cover the sanctuary while another plan may cover common areas such as the entryway, the bathrooms and similar locations.
- To assure the prevention of liability issues, the cleaning team should be congregational staff or officially appointed by the governing board of the congregation.
- Don't forget about cleaning areas such as the counting room, the pastor's study, the sound/video board, the organ and keyboard and other areas.
- Finally, put together a plan for cleaning between services, especially if you are going to hold multiple services on a Sunday (this is also the case where more than one congregation worships in the same building). Make sure that there is sufficient time to do a thorough cleaning between worship services – even if this means rescheduling services!

### **Decide what items and areas need to be cleaned and how often to do the cleaning.**

- Start by evaluating your church to determine what kinds of surfaces and materials are present in areas that will be open. Most surfaces and objects will just need normal routine cleaning. Frequently touched surfaces and objects like light switches and doorknobs will need to be cleaned and then disinfected to further reduce the risk of germs on surfaces and objects.
- Focus mainly on interior areas. Outdoor areas generally require normal routine cleaning and do not require disinfection. Spraying disinfectant on sidewalks and in parks is not an efficient use of disinfectant supplies and has not been proven to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to the public.
- Consider what items can be moved or removed completely to reduce frequent handling or contact from multiple people. Soft and porous materials, such as area rugs, upholstered chairs and sofas may be removed or stored to reduce the challenges with cleaning and disinfecting them.

- If possible, reduce the areas and number of items that must be cleaned. You can do this by putting the hymnals and pew pads away, taping over the drinking fountain and restricting access to areas that won't be used.
- Frequently touched surfaces and objects such as light switches and doorknobs need cleaning and disinfection on a routine basis. Don't forget items such as the acolyte's candles or the pastor's microphone. Other items include pews, tables, countertops, drawer handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets and sinks, touch screens, and water fountains/coolers.
- Areas that will be used often, including bathrooms, entry ways and coat rooms, will also require frequent cleaning.
- Areas and items that are rarely used, such as storage closets, may only require cleaning after use. If an area in your church has been unoccupied for 7 days or more, it will only need your normal routine cleaning to reopen the area. This is because the virus that causes COVID-19 has not been shown to survive on surfaces longer than this time

#### **Determine how each item or area can be cleaned.**

- Are you cleaning or disinfecting a hard and non-porous material or item like glass, metal, or plastic? Check EPA's list of approved products for use against COVID-19. This list will help you determine the most appropriate disinfectant for the surface or object. You can use diluted household bleach solutions if appropriate for the surface.
- Are you cleaning or disinfecting a soft and porous material or items like carpet, rugs, or seating in areas? Soft and porous materials are generally not as easy to disinfect as hard and non-porous surfaces. EPA has listed a limited number of products approved for disinfection for use on soft and porous materials. Soft and porous materials that are not frequently touched should only be cleaned or laundered, following the directions on the item's label, using the warmest appropriate water setting.

#### **Decide how to do your cleaning**

- Chose cleaning or disinfectant products from EPA's list of approved products that are effective against COVID-19. You can use diluted household bleach solutions if appropriate for the surface.
- Pay special attention to the personal protective equipment (PPE) that may be needed to safely apply the disinfectant and the manufacturer's recommendations concerning any additional hazards.
- Make sure that you have the proper PPE, including disposable gloves, safety glasses, ventilation requirements and (if recommended) respirators for the cleaning products you purchase. It does your cleaning crew no good to purchase a very strong and dangerous cleaning chemical if they don't have the proper equipment to safely use the items.
- Also, be sure that the chemicals can be used in your facility. Industrial-strength cleaners may not be appropriate for your building.
- Also – NEVER mix cleaning chemicals together! For instance, do not mix bleach or other cleaning and disinfection products together as this can release toxic chlorine gas.

- Finally, and obviously, store all disinfectants out of the reach of children.

#### **Put your plan into action – and revise as needed!**

- If you have time, test out the plan BEFORE you resume worship.
- Share the plan with your congregation and ask them for their input and ideas.
- Gather your planning team together after the first week or so to discuss what is working, what did you miss and what needs to be changed?

#### **What if someone enters the church who later is diagnosed with Covid?**

- **Close off areas** used by the person who is sick.
- **Open outside doors and windows** to increase air circulation in the area.
- **Wait at least 24 hours** before you clean or disinfect.
- Clean and disinfect **all areas used by the person who is sick**, including bathrooms, common areas, offices, handrails, etc.
- Once an area has been **appropriately disinfected**, it **can be opened for use**.
- **Members who did not have close contact** with the person who is sick can return immediately after disinfection.
- If you can wait **more than 7 days** after the person who is sick visited or used the facility, additional cleaning and disinfection is not necessary. Remember, the virus that causes COVID-19 has not been shown to survive on surfaces longer than this time.