Cleaning and Disinfecting

In alignment with public health recommendations, the University of Rhode Island is taking measures to help prevent community spread of COVID-19, which includes undertaking enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures to be used during the COVID-19 public health situation.

The guidelines in this document are intended primarily for custodial staff but may be a useful reference to others. All members of the campus community (i.e. students, faculty, and staff) have a shared role in cleaning and disinfecting the spaces they use. More information can be found at uri.edu/coronavirus.

Definitions

Cleaning. Cleaning is the removal of foreign material (e.g., soil, and organic material) from objects and is normally accomplished using water with detergents or enzymatic products. Thorough cleaning is required before high-level disinfection and sterilization because inorganic and organic materials that remain on the surfaces of instruments interfere with the effectiveness of these processes.

Disinfecting. Thermal or chemical destruction of pathogenic and other types of microorganisms. Disinfection is less lethal than sterilization because it destroys most recognized pathogenic microorganisms but not necessarily all microbial forms (e.g., bacterial spores).

Disinfectants. Usually a chemical agent (but sometimes a physical agent) that destroys disease-causing pathogens or other harmful microorganisms but might not kill bacterial spores. It refers to substances applied to inanimate objects.

Enhanced cleaning and disinfection for prevention

As a general measure to prevent transmission of 2019 Novel Coronavirus, the virus that causes the COVID-19 disease, frequency of cleaning and disinfecting will be increased, focusing on high touch surfaces, such as residence hall communal rooms, public restrooms, tables, buttons, handrails, faucets, doorknobs, and faceplates. Increased frequency of cleaning and disinfecting with attention to these areas helps remove other bacteria and viruses along with the novel coronavirus.

Cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces

Clean surfaces and objects that are visibly soiled first. If surfaces are dirty to sight or touch, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection (note that some products are cleaners combined with disinfection).

Use and EPA registered disinfectant for use against COVID-19. Refer to the list of EPA’s pre-approved products for use against emerging enveloped viral pathogens, such as SARS-CoV-2. A list of EPA-registered disinfectants for COVID-19 can be found here.

IMPORTANT: Follow manufacturer recommendations for the required “dwell time” associated with each product. Disinfecting products may be ineffective if removed too quickly.

Consult manufacturer recommendations on cleaning products appropriate for electronics. If no guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70% alcohol. Use of alcohol-based products may reduce risk of damage to sensitive machine components. Whenever possible, consider using wipeable covers for electronics.
The following products are effective for disinfection of hard, non-porous surfaces:

- A 10% diluted bleach solution, an alcohol with at least 70% alcohol, and/or an EPA-registered disinfectant (see link above) for use against COVID-19
  - Prepare a 10% diluted bleach solution by mixing 5 tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water.
  - After application of bleach solution, allow 5 minutes of contact time before wiping, or allow to dry without wiping.

For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes:

- Remove visible contamination (if present) and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces
- After cleaning, launder items (as appropriate) in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely
- If laundering is not possible, use an EPA-registered disinfectant for use against COVID-19. Refer to the list of EPA’s pre-approved products for use against emerging enveloped viral pathogens, such as SARS-CoV-2.

### Cleaning and disinfection after a confirmed case of COVID-19

When a COVID-19 case has been confirmed in the URI community, the building(s) and/or specific room(s) and areas where a COVID-19 positive person spent time will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. If more than 24 hours have passed since the infected person was in a given location, no special cleaning and disinfection is required. (See Aerosol and Surface Stability of COVID-19 below.) Where possible and appropriate, a potentially contaminated room/area will be closed off for this period of time and then cleaned using the routine preventive cleaning measures outlined above.

If a 24-hour waiting period is not feasible, the applicable custodial department (depending on campus and building) will consult with URI Environmental Health & Safety and URI Health Services to determine the appropriate scope of cleaning each space based on the assessed risk of contamination. Based on this consultation, the custodial department will:

- Communicate in writing the scope of cleaning to the custodial staff responsible for cleaning, including requirements for additional PPE (if any);
- Identify areas that require restricted access during and immediately following enhanced cleaning;
- Communicate with impacted department(s); and
- Coordinate with building coordinators and/or managers

The cleaning crew will:

- Open windows to the outside to increase air circulation, if possible; and
- Follow the guidance of Enhanced Cleaning for Prevention outlined above.

When cleaning and disinfecting rooms with increased surface area due to a large number of desks, tables, and other furniture, and where a spray application of disinfectant is needed, the custodial department will notify the building coordinator and/or manager in advance if the spraying will occur during normal work hours. Advance notice allows the building occupants to be apprised of the schedule for disinfection of the space and any areas that may require restricted access during cleaning.

If an outside contractor is used for cleaning and disinfection, the proposed scope of work, including the products and their respective safety data sheets (SDSs), and application methods must be reviewed by EHS prior to work commencing.
Safety guidelines

To protect yourself during cleaning and disinfecting, wear the required personal protective equipment (PPE) during cleaning and disinfecting, including disposable gloves, gowns (if available) and safety goggles/glasses when there is a potential for splashing/spraying the disinfectant. Gloves should be discarded after use. All staff must be fully trained on donning and doffing required PPE to prevent cross contamination.

Wear a face mask or other form of respiratory protection any time a spray disinfectant is being used, or in accordance with manufacturer recommendations.

Store chemicals in labeled, closed containers and in a manner that prevent tipping.

Practice good hand hygiene after cleaning and always:

- Wash hands often with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds;
- If soap and warm water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol; and
- Refrain from touching facial T-zone: eyes, nose and mouth.

Follow manufacturer’s instructions for safe and effective use of all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., dilution concentration application method and contact time, required ventilation, and use of personal protective equipment. Review the Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) as provided by your supervisor for information pertaining to potential health hazards and the recommended protective measures for common active disinfectant agents used at URI.

Additional references

CDC response plans for Institutions of Higher Education

CDC recommendations for confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 in healthcare settings

CDC recommendations for confirmed or suspected cases of COVID-19 in households

CDC cleaning and disinfecting to slow spread of flu

CDC Cleaning and Disinfection After Persons Suspected/Confirmed to Have COVID-19 Have Been in the Facility

Persistence of Coronaviruses on Inanimate Surfaces and their Inactivation with Biocidal agents

https://www.cdc.gov/infectioncontrol/guidelines/disinfection/glossary.html#D