

# BEST PRACTICES FOR RE-OPENING BUILDINGS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CORONAVIRUS

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As the country continues to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and prepares for a phased re-entry of office buildings and businesses over the coming months, it is important that building and business owners have a re-opening plan in place.

## Common Areas and Amenity Spaces

Increase space between reception desks, lobby furniture and/or reduce seating to promote and support social distancing.

Provide hand sanitizer stations in high-traffic areas, such as: lobbies, elevators, mailrooms, parking facilities, near restrooms, fitness facilities, retail shops, restaurants, and other common areas.

Provide trash containers for face masks near entrances/exits, elevators, and other common areas; empty and disinfect containers at least daily and more often if warranted.

Consider installing physical setups, such as sneeze and cough guards. If possible, install partitioned workstations. Everyone in the building should practice physical distancing, keeping six feet between themselves and others, whenever possible.

Limit the number of people getting into elevators at the same time to avoid crowding. People should consider only riding the elevator with their own party, taking the stairs, or waiting for the next elevator.

## CDC Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfecting Surfaces

Step up cleaning and disinfecting practices to help minimize the spread of infectious diseases like COVID-19 in buildings. Extra precautions should be used before reopening.

If you are in a state that is not re-opening yet, use this downtime to perform a deep clean and disinfection of your facility, especially in high-touch, high-traffic areas.

The CDC says that cleaning of surfaces, followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for

prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in community/business settings.

Pay particular attention to cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, as the virus may be viable for hours to days on chairs, desks, counters, door handles, phones, keyboards, microphones, stairway railings, elevator buttons, reception desks, push plates, laundry room equipment, pews, and other areas.

Make sure that common areas are closed or frequently cleaned and disinfected to help slow person-to-person spread.

Be sure to review the CDC guidance with your employees and cleaning crews about proper procedures for cleaning and disinfecting your facilities.

**If surfaces are dirty**, they should be cleaned using a detergent, or soap and water prior to disinfection.

## Cleaning Products

Using the right disinfecting product is important. While specific products have not been tested against the virus that causes COVID-19, it is expected that many existing disinfectants will be effective against the virus. The EPA publishes a list of products for use against COVID-19. Some cleaners on the list include: bleach, alcohol, citrus cleansers, Lysol and hydrogen peroxide.

**For disinfection**, diluted household bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

- Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted

### Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:

- 5 tablespoons bleach per *gallon of water* or
- 4 teaspoons bleach per *quart of water*

Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

Clean all decorative water features, such as fountains.

- Be sure to follow any recommended manufacturer guidelines for cleaning
- Ensure that decorative water features are free of visible slime or biofilm
- After the water feature has been re-filled, measure disinfectant levels to ensure that the water is safe for use.

## On-going Cleaning

To reduce surface contamination, it's important to follow a two-step process of cleaning and then disinfecting. This means being a little more diligent with your procedures. For example, making sure to disinfect high-touch surfaces like light switches, doorknobs, touchscreens, and tablets.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 takes a combination of every day precautions (washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, using hand sanitizer, disposing of used tissues properly, and following cough etiquette) and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces frequently.

Clean outdoor areas using the same procedures. Areas such as pools, picnic areas, and door handles.

Update your cleaning procedures regularly. As you plan to improve cleaning and disinfecting procedures, develop a robust process.

Are all our frequently touched surfaces involved in the cleaning process (e.g., doors, handles, water fountains, tables, sinks, check-in stations, and touchscreens)?

What does cleaning/sanitation process look like for heavily used rooms?

Do additional cleaning measures need to be taken?

## Communicating Cleaning Protocols

It's a good idea to communicate updated cleaning procedures. Make sure to clearly communicate the steps taken to protect and care for building occupants. Allow occupants to request additional cleaning measures if required.

## When Should Companies Reach Out to Professional Cleaning Services?

**Level 1:** When looking for enhanced disinfecting services. For a one time serves or to set up on a regular basis.

**Level 2:** A suspected case of COVID 19 (if an employee was around someone confirmed).

**Level 3:** A confirmed case of someone in the building.

For free estimates and helpful information to determine if your company might be at a '*Level 1, 2, or 3 Risk*', contact a professional restoration/ cleaning company.

Our partners at Belfor are a great resource. 24-hours a day: 1-800-865-3333 | Business Hours: Clint Timothy, 801-448-1104, [clint.timothy@us.belfor.com](mailto:clint.timothy@us.belfor.com).