

Directing Building and Safety Measures Frequently Asked Questions

Cleaning, disinfecting and other maintenance and security services performed by building service employees are critical to protecting the public health by reducing COVID-19 infections in the commonwealth. The Department of Health is issuing these Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to provide guidance to businesses in complying with the [Order of the Secretary of Health Directing Building Safety Measures](#) issued on April 5, 2020.

Q: Secretary Levine recently announced an Order providing direction for maintaining and cleaning buildings for businesses authorized to maintain in-person operations. What businesses does the Order apply to?

A: This Order applies to the owners of buildings of at least 50,000 square feet that are used for commercial, industrial or other enterprises under the life-sustaining business orders [announced March 19](#), including but not limited to: facilities for warehousing and manufacturing; commercial offices; grocery stores; universities and colleges; hotels and residential buildings with at least 50 units.

Q: My staff does a good job at cleaning our facility. Are there additional things we should be doing?

A: In addition to maintaining the routine cleaning that businesses usually do at the facility, the Order requires that businesses follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) [guidelines](#) in spaces that are accessible to customers, tenants, or other individuals.

- Routinely clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails and doorknobs.
 - If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
 - For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment) can be wiped down by employees before each use. To disinfect, use [products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-Cov-2](#), the cause of COVID-19, and are appropriate for the surface.

Q: I do not have a building that is at least 50,000 square feet but all my buildings combined are over 50,000 square feet. Is this Order viewed by single building square footage or the combined square footage of each building I own?

A: This order applies to single buildings of at least 50,000 square feet.

Q: Does the Order only apply to occupied buildings with occupants? We have unoccupied buildings.

A: COVID-19 is spread from person to person. If the building is unoccupied, there is not a need to clean the building more than a business usually does. Follow routine cleaning and disinfecting practices. If an unoccupied building has a visitor(s), the following applies to areas visited:

- Clean and disinfect all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs.
 - If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
 - For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- Discourage people from using others' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. If necessary, clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks, other work tools and equipment) can be wiped down before each use.

Q: Are there other things that businesses can be doing to help stop the spread of COVID-19?

A: Businesses should support respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene for employees, customers and worksite visitors:

- Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.
- Provide soap and water in the workplace, and specify protocols for [handwashing](#). If soap and water are not readily available, make available alcohol-based hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, soap and water should be chosen over hand sanitizer. Ensure that adequate supplies are maintained.
- Place hand sanitizers in multiple locations to encourage hand hygiene.
- Place posters that encourage [hand hygiene](#) to [help stop the spread](#) at the entrance to the workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Require employees to stay home when sick.
- Discourage handshaking – encourage the use of other noncontact methods of greeting.
- Direct employees to visit CDC's [coughing and sneezing etiquette](#). Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue.
- Follow normal preventive actions while at work and home, including cleaning hands and avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Educate employees on how to recognize symptoms of COVID-19 and provide instructions on what to do if they develop symptoms within 14 days after last possible exposure to the [virus](#).
- Before providing cleaning materials to new employees, make sure they are properly trained on site cleaning protocols, to include how to properly put on, take off and dispose of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Q: Are there other policies or practices that can help with social distancing?

A: Social distancing means avoiding [large gatherings](#) and maintaining distance (approximately 6 feet) from others when possible (e.g., breakrooms and cafeterias). Strategies that a business could use include:

- Implementing flexible worksites (e.g., telework);
- Implementing flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts);
- Increasing physical space between employees at the worksite;
- Increasing physical space between employees and customers (e.g., drive through, partitions);
- Implementing flexible meeting and travel options (e.g., postponing non-essential meetings or events);
- Downsizing operations;
- Delivering services remotely (e.g., phone, video or web);

- Delivering products through curbside pick-up or delivery;
- Ensuring that the facility has enough security employees to control access, maintain order and enforce social distancing, provided the security employees are otherwise responsible for such enforcement; and
- Ensuring that the facility has enough employees to perform the above protocols effectively and in a manner that ensures the safety of occupants and employees.

Q: What happens if an employee or tenant has symptoms of COVID-19 or is confirmed to have COVID-19?

A: If a sick employee or tenant is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, follow the [CDC Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities recommendations](#) and the Department of Health's [COVID-19 Fact Sheet and FAQs for Businesses](#).

Q: Is there a place to go to find more information on cleaning a facility?

A: Yes, visit the [CDC COVID-19 Schools, Workplaces & Community locations](#) webpage.