

Janitors, Custodians and Housekeepers Best Safety Practices

Thorough cleaning efforts, particularly in industries providing goods and services, is essential to the health and well-being of others. Sanitation efforts are critical for employee and customer health, yet presents risks to those responsible for cleaning the space. Janitors, custodians and housekeepers must take precautions and assume that surfaces and waste are contaminated. Viruses can live on surfaces for numerous hours to several days and heightened safety measures should be taken to eliminate them.

Safety Protocols

- Encourage employees who are sick or who have been exposed to viruses to stay home
- Employees should notify their supervisor if they have been in contact with a virus
- Identify personal protective equipment and ventilation requirements for each chemical
- Understand which chemicals cannot be used or stored together
- Assure all containers are properly labeled as to their contents and warnings

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Mandate use of PPE
- Provide employees with approved gloves, safety glasses/goggles and other PPE as required within the safety data sheet(s)
- Assure safety glasses and masks are in good condition and stored in a manner that does not allow contaminants/debris to accumulate

Disposable Gloves

- Gloves should be used for all cleaning and disinfecting tasks
- Ensure the correct size glove is being worn
- Do not touch your face, PPE or surfaces (door handles, light switches and handles faucets) with contaminated gloves
- Change heavily soiled or torn gloves and do not reuse disposable gloves
- Best practices for removal
 - Remove excess liquid first

- Pinch and hold the outside of the glove near the wrist area
- Peel downwards, away from the wrist, turning the glove inside out
- Pull the glove away until it is removed from the hand and hold the inside-out glove with the gloved hand
- With your un-gloved hand, slide your fingers under the wrist of the remaining glove avoiding contact with the outside of the glove
- Again, peel downwards, away from the wrist, turning the glove inside out
- Continue to pull the glove down and over the inside-out glove being held in your gloved hand
- Ensure that both gloves are inside out, one glove enveloped inside the other, with no contaminant on bare hands
- Dispose of used gloves in accordance with hazardous waste protocol
- Cleanse hands immediately after removing gloves

Waste Removal

- Use lined trash containers
- Wear gloves when removing garbage bags, handling and disposing of trash
- Wash hands after handling or disposing of trash

Soiled Laundry

- Use disposable rags and towels for cleaning when possible
- If laundering of soiled linens is required, take the following measures:
 - Wear disposable gloves
 - Do not shake soiled laundry – this can scatter the virus through the air
 - Wash laundry in the warmest water allowed by the manufacturer
 - Dry items completely
 - Clean and disinfect hampers – consider using a disposable bag liner

Manage Fatigue

Janitors/custodians and housekeepers may be required to work longer hours to meet increased business demands.

Ensure the employees:

- Take breaks and lunches per labor code
- Stay hydrated – keep water bottles closed when not in use
- Resist energy drinks – which are potentially harmful to blood pressure and heart function
- Handle food and drinks with clean hands only
- Get ample rest

Sanitation Solution

Diluted household bleach solutions, solutions with at least 70% alcohol and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective per CDC recommendations.

- 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
- Do not experiment with mixing chemicals or increasing ingredients
- Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface
- Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - Five tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
 - Four teaspoons bleach per quart of water

The advice presented in this document is intended as general information for employers.

For further information, review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [website](#) or contact your CompWest loss control consultant for further questions or guidance.