

COVID-19 - General Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Practice and Disinfection Guidance for Commercial or Residential Buildings

This fact sheet provides property owners, property managers, hotel management and cleaning/facilities staff of commercial or residential buildings with infection prevention and control (IPAC) guidance that is appropriate for non-health care settings. It is recommended that all non-essential common areas including gyms, libraries, party rooms, playgrounds, pools, hot tubs and spas be closed at this time. This document may be updated as the situation is rapidly changing, and new information becomes available. Refer to Toronto Public Health's [website](#) for the latest updates.

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is an infection caused by new type of Coronavirus. COVID-19 can present as an acute respiratory illness in humans. More information on COVID-19 can be found in the [Toronto Public Health COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#).

General Infection Prevention Strategies

Building operators should encourage staff to do the following to prevent infection:

- Stay home if sick. Employees who have symptoms of acute respiratory illness are recommended to not come to work, and to seek appropriate medical attention.
 - Ensure that your sick leave policies are flexible. For example, relax requirements for sick notes, and allow staff to stay home to care for sick family members.

Good personal hygiene practices remain the best method for preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Building operators should encourage staff to do the following to prevent infection:

- Wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 15 seconds – an alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching their faces, especially with unwashed hands.
- Cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or sleeve, not their hands.

General Disinfection Guidance

Building operators and staff should follow these guidelines when cleaning and disinfecting the environment:

- Commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against COVID-19.
- Frequently touched surfaces are most likely to be contaminated. Ensure cleaning staff, clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in common areas. In addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that have frequent contact with hands should be cleaned and disinfected twice per day and when visibly dirty. Examples include doorknobs, elevator buttons, light switches, toilet handles, counters, hand rails, touch screen surfaces and keypads.

- Use only disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms it is approved for use in Canada.
- Check the expiry date of products you use and always follow manufacturer's instructions.
- In addition to routine cleaning, check with your organization for any specific protocols for cleaning COVID-19.
- Staff should use appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as gloves, according to existing policies and procedures, as well as following label directions for all cleaning products.
- Encourage and support proper handwashing by keeping washroom facilities stocked with soap and paper towels at all times, and ensure custodian staff keep hand washing sinks in a state of good repair.
- Consider having alcohol-based hand sanitizer in common areas, including but not limited to bathrooms, laundry rooms, gyms and playrooms, and other high traffic areas at all times.
- No evidence to suggest that building waste needs any additional disinfection.

Additional considerations in response to current cases of COVID-19

- Confirmed and suspect cases of COVID-19 are reported by health care providers and laboratories to public health. Workplaces other than health care settings do not need to report to public health.
- Public health performs a risk assessment for all exposures including those that may occur in a workplace.
- Public health will provide advice regarding any other measures that the workplace or staff may need to take to reduce the risk of transmission.
- Unless advised by Toronto Public Health through the above assessment, there are no restrictions or special measures required for contacts of suspected cases of COVID-19 in the setting. There is no need to close the setting or send people home.

Public health will advise if any special cleaning processes are recommended. Regular cleaning (as above) of frequently touched surfaces and hands reduces the risk of infection.

Considerations for persons under self-isolation:

- If hotel patrons / condo tenants have been instructed by public health authorities to self-isolate, staff should postpone visits to the unit for service until after the self-isolation period of 14 days if possible.
- If service cannot be postponed. Staff should avoid close contact with these guests or residents by conducting their work in a separate room, if possible, or keeping a safe distance of 6 feet from the self-isolating person.
- After each visit, staff should wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, if soap and water are not available.

References:

1. New York City Health. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) *General Disinfection Guidance for Commercial or Residential Buildings*. Accessed on March 12, 2020. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/disinfection-guidance-for-commercial-residential-covid19.pdf>
2. Toronto Public Health. *2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)*. Accessed on March 12, 2020. https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/8d59-Fact-Sheet_Novel-Coronavirus.pdf
3. Government of Canada. *Community-based measures to mitigate the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Canada*. Accessed on March 12, 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/public-health-measures-mitigate-covid-19.html#appendix>
4. Government of Canada. *Public health management of cases and contacts associated with novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)*. Accessed on March 12, 2020. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/interim-guidance-cases-contacts.html#app1>
5. Australian Government, Department of Health. *Coronavirus (COVID-19) information for hotels and hotel staff*. Accessed on March 12, 2020. <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-hotels-and-hotel-staff>
6. Public Health England. *Guidance, COVID-19: Decontamination in non-healthcare settings*. Accessed on March 12, 2020. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>