

ISSA Tip Sheet

27 March 2020

Cleaning and disinfecting commercial cleaning equipment (SARS-Cov-2) used in the non-health care environment

The commercial cleaning industry uses a variety of cleaning equipment designed to provide efficient and safe cleaning services. The cleaning action depends on the machine and might rely on mechanical systems, steam, temperature, vacuum, brushes, liquids, sprays and others. When using such equipment during cleaning services in non-health care environments that are suspected to have had contact with SARS-Cov-2 (the virus that causes Covid-19), the following guidance can be used.

Floors, carpets and any other surface that is being walked on can be potentially contaminated, as can items that have come in contact with the floor. However, floors are considered a hostile environment for Covid-19. At this time, there also is no evidence that the virus has been transmitted through such surfaces.

Recent studies have shown that the viral load is greatly reduced after 72 hours on inanimate surfaces. As always, use good hand hygiene practices, appropriate PPE and don't touch your face while performing any cleaning and disinfecting work.

1. As with all cleaning and maintenance operation use good hand hygiene and common sense. Wear gloves and do not touch your face (mouth, nose, eyes) with your hands. Frequently wash your hands with water and soap for at least 20 seconds especially after removing your gloves. Have alcohol-based hand sanitizer available for times when soap and water are not available. Use the personal protective equipment (PPE) that is appropriate for the job and required for the equipment and chemicals you use.
2. For all commercial cleaning equipment, consult the manufacturer for daily, weekly, monthly service and maintenance schedules and procedures. Ask for Covid-19 instructions if available.
3. Clean tanks, filters, hoses, brushes, etc. based on recommended schedules. Use chemicals and procedures that are approved by the manufacturer for your particular piece of equipment. Wear appropriate PPE based on the tools, chemicals and processes being used.
4. For cleaning jobs, if possible and requested/agreed upon by the customer, use chemicals in your cleaning equipment that provide for effective cleaning and disinfection at the same time. Verify that the disinfectant is suitable/approved for the agent.

5. For surface treatment of frequently touched areas on the equipment like handle bars, grips, buttons, levers, switches, etc., use approved disinfectant wipes or microfiber clothes/towels with appropriate disinfectant. Wipe downs are recommended after each use to prepare the equipment for the next use/operator. Make sure the equipment remains wet for the contact time recommended by the disinfectant manufacturer.
6. Never use high pressure liquid sprays on any electrical equipment. Do not soak the equipment with liquids.
7. Any and all parts of the equipment that come in direct contact with surfaces can be disinfected. Do not forget the power cords. The schedule and frequency needs to be determined based on the cleaning job, use and requirements by the customer. For routine cleaning jobs, that frequency can be based on the routine maintenance schedule. Use gloves when cleaning the equipment and wash your hands afterwards.
8. In areas that are known to be contaminated with the virus and/or were occupied by a person with COVID-19 use vacuums with high efficiency filters (HEPA) that contain and trap the virus. The proper respiratory protection should be a N95 or better. Cleaning and disinfecting areas known to be contaminated with SARS-CoV-2 will require special training, equipment and processes carried out by skilled personnel. Refer to additional ISSA Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC) guidance and training for such advanced situations.
9. Any waste that is generated as part of the commercial operation and maintenance needs to be assessed and disposed of based on local hazards waste regulations. It might be considered hazardous waste.

Although SARS-CoV-2 can stay active on inanimate surfaces, it is easily deactivated by appropriate disinfectants, removed by liquid detergents and mechanical agitation. Steam cleaning at high temperatures will deactivate the virus, but must be used in accordance with manufacturer recommendations and awareness of how steam interacts with various surfaces or items, such as paper products or electronic equipment. Also, any overall cleaning and disinfecting work that can be delayed will help reduce viral load and reduce risk to cleaning workers. After 72 hours the numbers of active viruses are greatly reduced.

Other Links of Interest:

- [Coronavirus: Prevention and Control for the Cleaning Industry](#)
- [UK Government: Coronavirus](#)
- [UK National Health Services: Coronavirus](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\) Novel Coronavirus Coverage](#)