



# Health Department

## Environmental & Consumer Health

### COVID-19 SURFACE CONTAMINATION GUIDELINES: GROCERY STORES

#### According to the CDC<sup>i</sup>:

- Transmission of COVID-19 occurs much more often through respiratory droplets than through inanimate objects.
- Transmission of COVID-19 from surfaces to persons has not been documented but the virus may remain on surfaces for hours to days.
- Cleaning and disinfection are the best methods of prevention for the spread of COVID-19.
- There is no current evidence linking COVID-19 to food. However, proper food safety and hygiene procedures must be followed at all times.<sup>ii</sup>

#### Length of survivability on surfaces:

- One study<sup>iii</sup> found:
  - Hard surfaces such as metal, glass, and plastic can harbor COVID-19 for up to 2-3 days although the viral load was reduced.
  - No viable COVID-19 could be measured on cardboard after 24 hours.
- A literature review of 22 studies of other human coronaviruses (SARS, MERS)<sup>iv</sup> with the results believed to be relevant to COVID-19:
  - The viruses can survive up to 9 days on hard surfaces at room temperature with an average of 4-5 days.

#### Recommended cleaning and disinfection procedures for frequently touched hard surfaces:

- Clean visibly dirty surfaces first with detergent or soap and water.
- Disinfect and sanitize commonly touched surfaces once every hour.
- Change disinfectant solution at least every 4 hours.
- Disinfection options<sup>v</sup> include:
  - Household bleach – use 1/3 cup regular (not scented or splashless) household bleach to 1-gallon water. Follow manufacturer's directions for use and proper safety procedures.
  - Quaternary ammonium per manufacturer's instructions
  - Alcohol solution of at least 70% alcohol
  - Other EPA-registered disinfectants. [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list\\_03-03-2020.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf)

#### General Recommendations:

- Self-service operations (salad/food bars, coffee grinders, self-dispensers for nuts, grains, etc.).
  - Suspend self-services and have employees service guest
  - Provide a safe barrier for handling utensils such as bakery tissue paper or disposal gloves
- Ensure sneeze guards are in place where required.
- Prohibit employees from bare hand contact with ready to eat food. This includes operations with approved bare hand contact policies in place.
- Ensure dishwashers and/or three-compartment sinks are used properly and have the appropriate level of sanitizer for the final rinse.
- Start at outside front of store and work way back, making list of all commonly touched hard surfaces that will need to be cleaned and sanitized frequently including but not limited to:
  - Grocery carts

- Customer service counter
  - Checkout conveyor belts and separator bars for customer purchases
  - Self-checkout counters and equipment
  - All touchscreen equipment (computers, iPads, drink machines)
  - Coffee grinders/candy/nut dispensers
  - Produce scales
  - Display cooler and freezer doors and handles
  - Counter tops at deli counters, etc.
  - Tables and any condiments (salt/pepper shakers) after each table turn, chairs, highchairs
  - Public and employee restroom fixtures including soap dispenser plate, towel dispenser handles, door handles, baby changing stations
  - Trash receptacle touch points
  - Door handles and push plates including refrigeration equipment, kitchen sink fixtures
  - Dispenser handles
  - Ice scoops
  - Walk-in refrigerator and plastic freezer curtains
  - 3-compartment sink and mop sink
  - Cleaning tools and buckets
  - Employee break rooms and timeclocks
- Take the opportunity to clean and disinfect shelves and display cases before restocking.

### **Employee Precautions**

- Place posters that encourage [staying home when sick](#), [cough and sneeze etiquette](#), and [hand hygiene](#) at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Provide cleanliness re-training” to reinforce knowledge of safe food handling and sanitation procedures.
- Employees should be reminded
- Remind employees and vendors not to enter the store if exhibiting symptoms or if caring for a family member diagnosed or with symptoms of COVID-19.
- Employees who appear to be ill upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be sent home immediately.
- Instruct wait staff and counter staff to keep a 6-foot distance between themselves and patrons who appear ill as much as possible.
- Consider assigning employees at higher risk for coronavirus such as people 60 or older, people with underlying health conditions (heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes) or those with weakened immune systems or those who are pregnant temporarily to non-public-contact duties, if possible.

### **Public Precautions**

- Provide floor markings and signage to encourage social distancing by customers while waiting in checkout lines.
- Provide signs reminding customers and employees to practice social distancing while shopping (where possible), cough into sleeve, use a tissue, etc.
- Provide the customer with additional napkins or tissues to use when they cough or sneeze and be sure to clean and sanitize any objects or surfaces that may have been touched
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer for customers in common areas such as entering the facility.
- Have signs posted in visible locations asking customers to remain home if they are sick, even with mild illness.

### **Re-opening Recommendations if closed due to incident/outbreak:**

- If possible, determine areas of store that the individual had access to and clean and disinfect all exposed hard surfaces according to the above recommendations.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.03.09.20033217v1.full.pdf> (only study specific to COVID19)

<sup>iv</sup> [https://www.journalofhospitalinfection.com/article/S0195-6701\(20\)30046-3/fulltext](https://www.journalofhospitalinfection.com/article/S0195-6701(20)30046-3/fulltext)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>

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