Janitorial Safety Tip Sheet
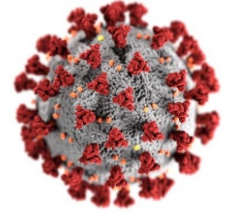
A series of health and safety tips to prevent work-related injuries in the janitorial industry

Employers can help protect workers from COVID-19 (coronavirus) – by **actively encouraging sick employees to stay home.**

Janitorial/custodial workers are on the front lines of helping the public contain the spread of coronavirus and other harmful viruses. Make sure they have the training and tools to do this job effectively. Below are some tips to keep in mind.

COVID-19 image courtesy of CDC Public Health Image Library, 2020.

Let janitorial / custodial workers know if they are going to be working in a location where an infected person has been, so they can take the necessary precautions to protect themselves, and can provide needed cleaning and disinfecting services.

- Allow sick employees to take leave without a doctor's note.
- Allow employees to stay home to care for sick or quarantined family members.

- Direct employees not come to work until they are free of fever and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours.
- Encourage temporary services to allow employees to use sick leave as needed.

- **Develop workplace training to maximize worker and public safety:**
  o Instruct employees to wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60-95 percent alcohol if soap and water are not available.
  o Provide soap, water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizer for all employees.
  o Provide tissues and no-touch disposal receptacles.
  o Follow CDC's recommendations for using a facemask.

- Make sure all employees have been trained to use and have an adequate supply of all-purpose cleaners **and** disinfectants, when needed. Follow the complete CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfection. These include but are not limited to:
  o Gloves, to protect them from chemicals as well as viruses on surfaces they are required to clean.
  o All-purpose cleaners – these remove dirt and grime, a necessary first step in cleaning, but they are not all disinfectants.
  o Disinfectants with ethyl alcohol (also called ethanol or just alcohol), isopropyl alcohol, or hydrogen peroxide are safer choices for your workers, but are also effective disinfectants.

- o **Remind your workers that different types of disinfectants require a different contact time – that is the amount of time they are needed to remain on a surface to kill germs, some products require up to 10 minutes to be effective**.
  - o Routinely clean all frequently-touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. The virus may survive on surfaces for **up to 72 hours**.

- Have workers clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces at least daily. These include cash machine keypads, faucets, time clocks, doorknobs, hand-rails, remote controls, light switches, printers, phones, countertops if in a public or shared area, and other frequently-touched surfaces.
  - o Refer to the EPA list of disinfectants effective against this virus.

- 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.

Additional Resources:

- Employees who are well but who have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 should **notify their supervisor** and refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.

- If an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19, **employers should inform fellow employees of their possible exposure** to COVID-19 in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Employees exposed to a co-worker with confirmed COVID-19 should refer to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure.

- The CDC has created an Interim Guidance for Business and Employers page.