



# UW COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CLEANING PROTOCOL

October 10, 2023

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This cleaning protocol is an element of the COVID-19 [Health & Safety Plan](#); it contains best practices for general communicable disease infection prevention in University spaces.

This protocol was developed by the University's Environmental Health & Safety Department (EH&S) in coordination with custodial and instructional support units and the University's Advisory Committee on Communicable Diseases (ACCD). This protocol reflects current regulatory requirements and guidelines.

[Regular cleaning](#) of surfaces at school, work and home can reduce infection risk from harmful germs such as viruses and bacteria. [The most reliable way to prevent infection from surfaces is to regularly wash hands with soap and water](#). When handwashing is not a readily available option, use hand sanitizer [containing at least 60% alcohol](#). Fragrance-free and dye-free soaps and hand sanitizers are preferred.

[Appendix Table 1](#) at the end of this protocol summarizes the recommended cleaning and disinfection guidelines, frequencies, and roles/responsibilities for various University spaces. University health care settings and other facilities (e.g., food service, youth and childcare settings) may have additional regulatory requirements or procedures for surface cleaning and disinfection.

## 2. GENERAL

The University conducts regular cleaning and/or disinfection of high-touch points in UW owned and leased facilities, in public and common areas, such as residence hall communal rooms, stairwells, public restrooms, lobbies, classrooms, auditoriums, dining establishments, breakrooms, and libraries.

- **Cleaning** removes most germs, as well as dirt and debris from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically degrade and remove most germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill all germs, but it significantly lowers their numbers on surfaces and the risk of spreading infection.
- **Disinfection** works by using chemicals to kill or inactivate germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing remaining germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.
- **High-touch surfaces** include tables or desks, handrails, faucets, doorknobs/handles, light switches, kitchen appliances, drinking fountains, phone handsets, shared tools and equipment, shared vehicle touchpoints (e.g., door handles, keys, steering wheel) and computer workstations (e.g., keyboard, mouse).

Cleaning of high-touch surfaces must be done on a regular operational schedule, and when visibly dirty. More frequent cleaning or disinfecting can be done as a secondary step on high-touch surfaces, especially in high traffic areas.



Custodial staff and space users refer to [Appendix Table 1](#) for recommended cleaning frequencies of typical University spaces.

Unit representatives can contact EH&S (covidehc@uw.edu) for consultation as needed.

### 3. CLEANING AND DISINFECTION OF SURFACES AND EQUIPMENT

- A. Choose products containing soap and water, or use a surface- appropriate safer alternative cleaner with third-party certification (e.g., [Green Seal](#), [Safer Choice](#)) to clean surfaces.
- B. Many cleaning products also include disinfectants. If you want to disinfect, chose a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ([EPA-registered disinfectant](#)) that is effective against common pathogens, such as [COVID-19](#). If possible, use a [product with safer active ingredients](#) as determined by EPA Design for Environment Program. Disinfectant concentrations and contact time are critical for effective disinfection of surfaces. The surface should stay wet for the entire contact time.
- C. Seattle units can purchase approved cleaning and disinfection products through [UW procurement](#) or an outside vendor. Note that units may have existing supplies and/or purchasing mechanisms already established. Bothell and Tacoma campuses have products that are supplied to their facilities.
- D. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on the product label and in the chemical [safety data sheet \(SDS\)](#) for safe and effective use.
- E. **Electronics** (e.g., tablets, touch screens, keyboards, lab, or office equipment with sensitive electronic components): *Follow all the equipment manufacturer’s instructions and recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting the device.*
  - i. Consider putting a wipeable cover on electronics for easier cleaning.
  - ii. For equipment that cannot be easily cleaned and/or disinfected, consider dedicating one user per equipment, changing disposable covers between users, or rotating the equipment out so it sits unused for a few days between users.
  - i. If disinfecting electronic surfaces, use an [EPA-registered disinfectant](#) that meets manufacturer’s recommendations. Many of the products for equipment containing sensitive electronic components are alcohol-based because it dries quickly. Products may include sprays to dampen wiping cloths or pre-moistened wipes. Never spray liquid or gels directly on electronics.
- F. **Hard, non-porous surfaces:**
  - i. Clean surfaces with soap and water or with cleaning products appropriate for use on the surface.
  - ii. If you choose to disinfect, use an [EPA-registered disinfectant](#). If possible, use a [product with safer active ingredients](#).
  - iii. If using alcohol (instead of an EPA-registered disinfectant), use a solution



with at least 70% alcohol (e.g., isopropyl alcohol, ethanol) for surface disinfection. [Store flammable liquids \(like alcohols\)](#) according to fire safety practices (Section 4 of the [Flammable Liquids Standard Operating Procedure](#)).

- iv. If using bleach (instead of an EPA-registered disinfectant), use a freshly prepared diluted [bleach solution](#) compatible with and appropriate for the surface. Do not mix bleach with other chemical products because they may create hazardous vapors when combined.
- G. **Soft (porous) surfaces** including laundry items, carpeted floor, rugs, and fabric chairs:
- i. Vacuum carpets and rugs regularly to remove debris.
  - ii. Clean the surface using a product containing soap, detergent, or an appropriate cleaner indicated for use on the surface.
  - iii. Launder items (as appropriate) in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
  - iv. If you choose to disinfect, use an EPA-registered disinfectant approved for use on soft surfaces.

#### 4. SAFETY GUIDELINES DURING CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- A. Wear disposable gloves when cleaning or disinfecting. Discard gloves after each use. Wash hands with soap and water immediately after gloves are removed.
- B. Wear eye protection, such as safety glasses, goggles, or face shield when there is a potential for splash or splatter to the face.
- C. Discard used PPE and disposable items into the trash immediately after use.
- D. Never mix cleaners and disinfectants unless the labels indicate it is safe to do so.
- E. Use disinfectant products in a well-ventilated space and, as possible, when others are not present. Additional respiratory protection may be required when working for long durations with certain disinfectant products in poorly ventilated areas. Units can consult with EH&S where additional guidance is needed. UW employees who wear respirators as a job requirement must be medically cleared, trained, and fit tested, as outlined in the [University's Respiratory Protection Program](#).
- F. For larger scale cleaning (i.e., a large surface area), gowns or aprons are recommended to protect personal clothing. Most situations don't require the use of electrostatic sprayers. If applying cleaning or disinfecting agents with electrostatic sprayers (e.g., in large or hard-to-reach areas), use products where this method is identified on the label and follow additional safety precautions in accordance with the [Electrostatic Sprayers Focus Sheet](#).
- G. Staff must be fully trained on [donning and doffing](#) required PPE to prevent cross contamination. Training must be documented.



- H. Store disinfectants in [labeled](#), closed containers. If dispensing disinfectants into [secondary containers](#) (e.g., spray bottles), these must also be labeled with their contents and hazards. Keep them in a secure area away from children and food. Store all chemicals in a manner that prevents tipping or spilling.
- I. Ensure chemical products used in your workplace are added to your [MyChem](#) inventory.

## 5. RESOURCES

- [Washington State Department of Labor and Industries Requirements and Guidance for Preventing COVID-19.](#)
- [Washington State Department of Health Safely Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces](#)
- [CDC When and How to Clean and Disinfect a Facility](#)

**APPENDIX TABLE 1: CLEANING FREQUENCIES AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNIVERSITY SPACES**

Users are encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands before entering and after leaving a space. Handwashing facilities and hand sanitizing stations are available in many University buildings.

SPACE	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	MINIMUM CLEANING FREQUENCY
<b>Classrooms and instructional labs</b>	Custodial services* Users**	<p><b>Custodial services:</b> Regular cleaning based on operational schedule with disinfection of priority high-touch points. It is not necessary to clean between each class.</p> <p><b>Instructors:</b> May choose to use cleaning and disinfecting supplies from departmental resources (Seattle campus) or facility supplies (Bothell and Tacoma campuses) as needed for addressing a visibly soiled surface or shared equipment.</p> <p>Seattle campus support staff for general assignment classrooms request that only 70% isopropyl alcohol wipes be used on a/v equipment.</p> <p>Instructors in other areas/using other classrooms should check with their support staff and/or equipment supplier about compatible products and specific procedures.</p>
<b>Computer labs</b>	Users	Shared equipment and workstations are cleaned regularly by users with department/unit supplies (Seattle campus) or facility supplies (Bothell and Tacoma campuses).
<b>Dining areas/ Restrooms</b>	Custodial services	Regular cleaning based on operational schedule with disinfection of high-touch points ***.
<b>Laboratories</b>	Users Custodial services	<p>Regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces and shared equipment. <i>Labs working with biohazardous agents disinfect per biosafety requirements.</i></p> <p>Custodial units sweep and mop floors and collect non-regulated waste from labs.</p>
<b>Libraries</b>	Custodial services Users	<p><b>Custodial services:</b> Regular cleaning based on operational schedule with disinfection of priority high-touch points.</p> <p><b>Users:</b> Cleaning supplies are available for spot cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces or shared equipment, as needed at library information desks.</p>



SPACE	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?	MINIMUM CLEANING AND/OR DISINFECTION FREQUENCY
<b>Lunchrooms/ breakrooms/ conference rooms</b>	Custodial Services  Users	<b>Custodial Services:</b> Regular cleaning based on operational schedule. <b>Users:</b> Users clean high touch surfaces regularly with department/unit supplies (Seattle campus) or facility supplies (Bothell and Tacoma campuses).
<b>Offices/shared workstations</b>	Users  Custodial Services	<b>Users:</b> Regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces and shared equipment with unit/department supplies. <b>Custodial services:</b> Mop and/or vacuum floors based on an operational schedule for the location.
<b>Public spaces/ common areas</b>	Custodial Services	Regular cleaning based on operational schedule with disinfection of priority high-touch points.
<b>University-owned vehicles, tools, material handling equipment</b>	Users	Regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces and shared equipment with unit/department supplies.

*\*Custodial services: Covers all custodial service groups consisting of UW custodians and contract custodians and dining services staff. Units in leased spaces with contract custodial staff should verify scope of work with the building manager and/or UW Real Estate Office.*

*\*\* Users can include a unit or department representative, or personnel and students using the space.*

*\*\*\* The recommended restroom cleaning frequency does not apply to restrooms assigned to on-campus residents within Housing and Food Services residential units. Residential restroom cleaning is determined by unit type and may involve both resident users and custodial services.*