

Environmental Cleaning Fact Sheet For Assisted Living Facilities



Assisted living facilities (ALFs) are at high risk for SARS-CoV-2 spread due to their congregate nature and population served. This ALF-focused fact sheet highlights common recommendations and clarifications to promote best practices and alignment with [CDC](#) and [DHS](#) guidance. These infection control practices can help protect residents and staff from COVID-19 outbreaks that could contribute to severe infections and hospitalizations and can also be used to prevent spread of other communicable diseases.



What is [environmental cleaning](#)?

- ◆ **Cleaning** physically removes foreign material (e.g., dust, soil) and organic material (e.g., blood, secretions, excretions, microorganisms) using water, detergents, and mechanical action.
- ◆ **Disinfecting** uses a thermal or chemical process to inactivate microorganisms on inanimate objects. All organic material and soil must be removed by a cleaning product before applying disinfectants. Some products combine cleaners with disinfectants.
- ◆ Procedures should be in place to thoroughly clean and disinfect all resident rooms, common areas, and [high-touch surfaces](#) regularly.
- ◆ Every provider should ensure that cleaning and disinfecting procedures include:
 - Specific [supplies and equipment](#) needed for each cleaning session.
 - Preparatory steps, including hand hygiene and [required personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#).
 - [Step-by-step instructions](#) for the cleaning process in the order they should be performed.
 - [Final steps](#), including collection of soiled supplies, safe removal of PPE, and hand hygiene.



What are the high-level steps to clean and disinfect surfaces?

Follow the EPA's "[6 Steps for Safe and Effective Disinfectant Use](#)":

1. Check that your product is [EPA approved for COVID-19](#) on List N.
2. Read the product directions.
3. Pre-clean the surface.
4. Follow the contact time.
5. Wear gloves and perform frequent hand hygiene.
6. Lock disinfection products and cleaning supplies when not in use.





What are best practices for cleaning and disinfection?

- ◆ Label all prepared cleaning and disinfecting solutions with appropriate dilution and date. For example, if making a bleach solution from concentrated bleach, follow all instructions carefully to create a [0.1% chlorine solution to disinfect surfaces in health care settings](#). Purchasing a stabilized bleach product rather than making dilutions from concentrated bleach is recommended to avoid chemical exposures and incorrect dilution. Avoid mixing cleaning and disinfecting products.
- ◆ Keep all cleaning solutions in covered containers and under supervision.
- ◆ Wear appropriate PPE when cleaning and disinfecting. Perform hand hygiene before putting on gloves (donning) and after removal (doffing). Change gloves between resident rooms.
- ◆ Use fresh microfiber cleaning cloths at the start of each cleaning session. Do not use the same cleaning cloths or mop heads for multiple resident rooms without laundering them.
- ◆ Clean before disinfecting.
 - Use a strategy that works from cleaner to dirtier. For example, clean resident living areas before cleaning toilets.
 - Proceed from high to low. For example, clean bedrails before legs and clean surfaces before cleaning floors.
 - Proceed systematically. For example, clean from left to right or clockwise around a room to avoid missing surfaces. Discard unused solution after the cleaning session.
- ◆ Allow disinfecting products to remain on the surface according to their “kill or contact” time. This is the time (15 seconds to 10 minutes) that a disinfectant must be in contact with a surface to ensure that appropriate disinfection occurs. The surface must remain visibly wet with the disinfectant for the full amount of time to kill microbes. If the surface dries before the prescribed contact time, the product should be reapplied. Do not attempt to speed up the drying time.
- ◆ Review CDC’s [“Sparkling Surfaces”](#) and [“Clean Hands”](#) videos.



For additional questions, contact:

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