



## Laboratory Disinfection Guidelines

### Environmental Health & Safety Directory of Services

Assistant Vice President for Environmental Health and Safety	1-540-231-9044
Hazardous Materials Management	1-540-231-2982
Laboratory Safety	1-540-231-8758
Occupational Safety and Health	1-540-231-5985
Radiation Safety	1-540-231-5364
Biological Safety	1-540-231-5864
Main Office Number	1-540-231-3600

Guidelines for COVID-19-related lab disinfection products include any EPA product that is effective on flu, cold, or corona virus strains. Specific products are listed on the [Center for Biocide's \*\*Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)—Fighting Products pdf \(03.20.2020\)\*\*](#)

Laboratory personnel should choose a product for both ease of use and one that is appropriate for surfaces that will be cleaned (i.e. will not damage, will work for a hard surface or absorbent ones if those materials are allowed in the lab). Do not forget about offices, especially any offices that are shared by two or more people. The same cleaning guidelines are appropriate for offices.

Laboratory personnel should determine whether wipes or sprays are best for their situation. Some surfaces/items will do fine with being soaked by a spray, others may need to be wiped off so as not to ruin electronics.

This framework has been adapted for labs and offices using CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting households with an infected person. [Please see CDC guidelines.](#)

With information changing almost daily, it is difficult to provide accurate information on the survival of the novel corona virus on surfaces. But the most current information shows that the virus may live for a few hours on metal, up to a day on cardboard, and possibly several days on plastics. Therefore, it would be wise to establish a daily cleaning schedule for high touch surfaces.

Virginia Tech building public areas are already getting extra cleaning attention via housekeeping staff. This is a common occurrence each year for seasonal flu. The guidelines in this note are only for labs or offices that will not get increased attention from housekeeping.

#### **Understand that cleaning and disinfecting are different:**

- **Cleaning:** Removes particles (virus, bacteria, dust, dirt) but does not kill them. Removing particles from all surfaces is extremely important as it is the most effective method in preventing infections. Any soap is acceptable for cleaning hands or surfaces. If disinfectants are hard to locate, soap products can be used for surfaces that are not associated with a biological lab or when COVID-19 has not been verified in any lab personnel.

- **Disinfecting:** Kills virus or bacteria on surfaces. If a spray is used to disinfect a surface, it will not remove any concerning material, but can kill sufficient organisms to make the surface safe to touch. When using a disinfectant, the label directions regarding contact time are critical. If the chemical will be wiped off, never wipe the surface before the full contact time has been completed.

Surfaces to focus on include high-touch areas and areas that may accumulate virus from respiratory particles.

**High-touch - any surface that is touched frequently:**

- Doorknobs
- Light switches (even if motion activated, they may still be touched)
- Chairs
- Pens/pencils (recommend each person keep a writing tool with them so none are shared)
- Computer keyboards
- Computer touch screens
- On/off switches for lab equipment
- Knobs/switches for adjusting settings on equipment
- Lids or doors for lab equipment
- Any wires or other items that may need to be handled often for operating lab equipment
- Benchtops
- Cabinet and drawer handles
- Chairs (especially the backs and arms)
- Any other surface in your space that might be touched frequently

**Potential areas of accumulation of respiratory particles:**

Any area that might not be considered a high-touch location, but personnel might stand/sit in the lab to watch a process, read a screen for several minutes. If items in these areas will be touched, cleaning those items daily is a good idea.

Please be very conscientious to maintain the recommended social distancing practice. Stay 6 feet away from colleagues at all times while working in the lab or sharing an office. Fully cover incidental coughs or sneezes and wash your hands immediately (or cough into your elbow); go home and stay home if you experience the onset of symptoms compatible with those of COVID 19.