

Best Practice COVID-19 Workplace Safety: Hygiene and Cleaning

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This factsheet provides best practice guidance on hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene (cough and sneeze etiquette) and environmental cleaning in the workplace, to help protect against COVID-19, influenza and other respiratory viruses.

Please use this information alongside other Tasmanian best practice guidance, including *Best Practice COVID-19 Safety: for Employers*.

Respiratory hygiene

COVID-19 most spreads through respiratory droplets.

When we cough and sneeze, laugh and talk, tiny droplets get forced into the air.



If a person has been infected with the virus that causes COVID-19 or influenza, these droplets may contain tiny amounts of that virus.

Respiratory hygiene is about minimising the spread of COVID-19 and influenza through respiratory droplets by:

- wearing face masks (see *Best Practice Guidance: Face masks*)
- covering all coughs and sneezes
- washing and/or sanitising your hands after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose.

The best way to cover coughs is with a tissue, then putting the tissue straight into the rubbish and washing your hands or using alcohol-based hand gel.

Often a tissue is not readily available. When that happens, its best to cover coughs and sneezes with the crook of your elbow, not your hands. Coughing into your hands can spread germs to surfaces you touch, including door handles and lift buttons.

What to do

- Display posters and signage demonstrating safe cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Ensure tissues are readily available, alongside no-touch rubbish bins and alcohol-based hand gel.

Hand hygiene

Although less common, COVID-19 and influenza may also spread through touching contaminated surfaces and then

touching your face (eyes, nose, lips, mouth). Respiratory droplets settle on surfaces. Any virus in those droplets can survive for varying periods of time, depending on the virus, the nature of the surface and the environment. Your hands may be contaminated by a virus when you touch contaminated surfaces.

What to do

- Provide alcohol-based (at least 80% alcohol) hand gel at entrances and around the workplace.
- Ensure bathrooms/toilets have handbasins with running water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels or mechanical dryers.
- Ensure hand hygiene products (soap, paper towel and hand sanitiser) are checked regularly and kept stocked.
- Display posters near alcohol-based hand gel and hand basins, showing good hand gel and hand washing techniques.

Environmental cleaning

Effective and regular cleaning and disinfection removes viruses from surfaces and can reduce disease transmission.

What to do

- Review Safe Work Australia cleaning and disinfection guidance at www.covid19.swa.gov.au and the chlorine dilutions calculator at www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/chlorine-dilutions-calculator
- Implement a cleaning plan and schedule that details cleaning and disinfection methods, areas to clean, the frequency and responsible person/s. Make sure the plan considers the patterns of workplace and equipment usage, including shifts times and when areas are used most intensively.
- Ensure cleaners are trained to carry out cleaning and disinfection tasks, and that the tasks are performed to the standard and frequency required to minimise the risk of a COVID-19 in the workplace. Consider using professional/contracted cleaners.
- Ensure cleaning focuses on high touch surfaces such as door handles, chairs, tables, food and drink facilities, EFTPOS machines, rubbish bin lids and bathrooms.
- Use cleaning and disinfection products approved by Therapeutic Goods Administration.

The management of COVID-19 continues to evolve, and as evidence accumulates, advice may be revised. Updates are available at www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au. If any information in this factsheet is inconsistent with information on that website, please use the information online.