COVID-19

Cleaning & Disinfection Guidance: Shared Workspaces/PPE/Tools/Equipment

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Purpose

It is possible that a person could get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own eyes, nose, or mouth. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that this is not thought to be the main route of transmission.

This guidance addresses how to enhance safety if using shared equipment, tools, workspaces, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to help prevent and minimize the spread of COVID-19. It has broad applicability and can be utilized by operational service units, as well as in general office, residential, and academic spaces.

Background

If users cannot be supplied with their own, personal equipment (for example, a copier) then there are multiple options for safely using shared items.

These shared items may be cleaned and disinfected by the user before and after use. Alternatively, they can be frequently and routinely cleaned and disinfected during the day along with hand hygiene facilities or supplies provided for users. In this instance, signage encouraging hand hygiene before and after use should be provided nearby. In other cases, a barrier such as a clean tissue or gloves may be used.

Specialized tools including intrinsically safe meters, monitors, and other devices may have other cleaning and disinfection requirements if they are shared.

Shared workspaces can include cubicles, benches/tabletops, desks, workstations, etc.

In some operations, PPE may be for specific tasks and left in place at each use for the next person performing that operation.

The types of PPE that may be shared vary widely depending on work duties, but can include:

- Fall protection
- Hearing protection earmuffs
- Oven mitts
- Welders’ masks
Assessing Shared Workspaces/PPE/Tools/Equipment

It is important to collaborate with all potentially affected users to identify where and when workspaces, PPE, tools, and equipment are being shared and to communicate about how to properly share them. To do this, conduct an evaluation.

Evaluation Questions

- Can the work task or process requiring sharing be eliminated for the short term?
- Can users be supplied with their own dedicated space, equipment, or PPE?
- If needed, can at least six feet of social distancing be maintained between users while the task or process is conducted?
- Can the work task or process be restructured or reassigned to minimize the number of users who must share the space or equipment?
- Can work be accomplished remotely?
- Is single-use disposable PPE an option for the task?

Cleaning and Disinfection

Use a N-Listed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved disinfectant or disinfectant-cleaner when performing cleaning and disinfection.

Precautions

It is important to determine if the cleaning/disinfectant products will compromise the efficacy of the PPE or the functionality of various tools and equipment. Contact the manufacturer or distributor supplier for more information.

In some cases, cleaning/disinfection may require specialty equipment, or an outside company should be used.
Product Type Guidelines

Separate Cleaning and Disinfection Products

If using separate cleaning and disinfection products, clean the surfaces first while following the cleaning product’s directions for use.

If required, rinse surfaces after cleaning.

Disinfection products must be applied in accordance with the label directions, and each has a specific “dwell” time which is the amount of time that the disinfectant must remain wet on the surface to be effective. The EPA website specifies these dwell times for approved disinfectants.

Combination Cleaning and Disinfection Products

If using a combination cleaner/disinfectant product, clean the surfaces first while following the product’s directions for use.

Apply the product a second time, using a fresh wipe or cloth (depending on chosen product formula) and wipe the targeted surfaces so that they remain wet for the required dwell time.

Cleaning and Disinfection Frequency Logging/Tracking

It is recommended that workplaces track and log when cleaning and disinfection has occurred.

See the disinfection procedure example in EH&S Reusable Safety Glasses/Goggles/Face Shields: Use, Care, and Decontamination.

Other Shared Surfaces

Workspaces

Shared workspaces should be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use, focusing on high touch surfaces (ex., table tops, railings, arm rests, keyboards, etc.).
PPE/Tools/Equipment

Shared PPE shall be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use following the manufacturer’s instructions. If there are no available instructions, contact your EH&S Designated Safety Officer (DSO) for more information.

Consider putting a wipeable cover over electronic touch screens for easier cleaning.

Launderable Materials

Shared launderable materials such as aprons shall be washed and dried in accordance with the manufacturer’s guidelines between users. Consider tracking/logging the laundering frequency.

Post Cleaning and Disinfection

Following cleaning/disinfection, personnel should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds using soap and warm water and dry thoroughly.