

This document contains routine cleaning guidance to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among shelters. The information included is from the CDC and from interviews with Vermont shelters by the Health Department. The ideas below can help create a detailed cleaning plan for your facility. These guidelines are to prevent the spread of COVID-19 when there is community spread, but no known COVID-19 cases within your shelter. If your facility had someone with confirmed COVID-19, there are additional [guidelines for cleaning after exposure](#) to COVID-19.

Hand Hygiene is Key

- While proper cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces is important, frequent and proper handwashing is still an important prevention measure.
- Hang [posters](#) about proper hand hygiene in easy to see areas. Use materials that are appropriate for the guests staying in your facility, taking into account literacy levels and [languages spoken](#).
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20-30 seconds, paying attention to back of hands, nails, and between fingers.
- Key times to wash your hands are:
 - Immediately after removing gloves and after contact with a person who is sick
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - After using the restroom
 - Before eating or preparing food
 - After contact with animals or pets
 - Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance
- If soap and water are not readily available and hands are not visibly dirty, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly dirty, always wash hands with soap and water.

General Cleaning Information

- Have easy access to simple to use wipes and cleaning supplies in multiple locations (e.g. bedrooms, bathrooms, common spaces, etc.) and encourage guests to regularly clean after themselves.
- Wash your hands and put on gloves before cleaning and disinfecting surfaces.
- Cleaning with soap and water **reduces** the number of germs, dirt and impurities on the surface. Disinfecting **kills** germs on surfaces.
- Clean visibly dirty surfaces with soap and water before disinfecting.
- Use [EPA-approved disinfectants](#) and follow the directions on the bottle.
- Post a list of “high touch” areas for others to make sure everything gets cleaned. These areas should be cleaned regularly, at least once a day. More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use.
- After cleaning, remove gloves and wash hands thoroughly.

Walk through your facility and create a list of areas that need to be cleaned more frequently.

Common Spaces

- Consider putting a wipeable cover on shared electronics, like computers or remote controls.
- Keep doors in hallways or to common area open, to reduce the number of times they are opened.
- Hard surfaces are easier to clean and disinfect. Consider switching out upholstered chairs for hard surfaced ones.
- For soft surfaces such as carpeted floors, rugs, and drapes, clean the surface using soap and water or with cleaners appropriate for use on these surfaces. Launder items (if possible) according to the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely or disinfect with an EPA-registered household disinfectant. Vacuum as usual.

Bathrooms

- Consider installing no-touch faucets or soap dispensers.
- Encourage guests to lower the lid of the toilet prior to flushing. Install a lid on any toilets that do not have one.
- Offer paper towels instead of cloth towels if possible.
- Consider leaving the vent on in between uses.

Linens and Laundry

- Use gloves when handling dirty linens or other laundry.
- Dirty laundry from a person who is sick can be washed with other people's items.
- Do not shake dirty laundry as this could aerosolize any virus that was on the item.
- Launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.
- Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.

Kitchens

- Handle any used dishes, cups/glasses, or silverware with gloves.
- Guests that use common dishes need to put them immediately in the dishwasher, if available. If not, ensure that dishes are washed immediately after using with soap and hot water.
- Common dishes should be put away using clean gloves.

Outside Spaces

- Outdoor areas generally require normal routine cleaning and do not require disinfection. Do not spray disinfectant on outdoor playgrounds – it is not an efficient use of supplies and is not proven to reduce the risk of COVID-19.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- High touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars and railings, should be cleaned routinely.
- Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces (play structures, benches, tables) or groundcovers (mulch, sand) is not recommended.

References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

For more information: AHS.VDHCovid19PreventionResponse@vermont.gov