

Date: July 14, 2020

To: All Equipment Managers and Fleet Coordinators

From: Department of General Services
Office of Fleet and Asset Management

Subject: **VEHICLE CLEANING & DISINFECTING GUIDANCE FOR COVID-19**

This guidance is provided to help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19 through exposure from the daily operation of state fleet vehicles. By employing regular cleaning and disinfecting practices to state fleet vehicles, we can effectively minimize the transmission of COVID-19 and other diseases.

Studies have shown that the COVID-19 virus (coronavirus) can survive for 72 hours or more on hard surfaces including metal, plastic, and glass; less than four hours on copper; and less than 24 hours on cardboard. This resiliency provides a source of contamination for the next operator or occupants in state vehicles. By touching these surfaces, employees can transfer pathogens to their eyes and mouth; or, spread germs to other commonly touched surfaces outside the vehicle.

Cleaning and disinfecting commonly touched surfaces with approved cleaners and disinfectants removes the vast majority of bacteria and viruses that cause illnesses, ultimately reducing the probability of transmission.

Definitions

- **Cleaning** - Refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities by using soap, detergents, or other cleansers and clean water. Cleaning does not kill germs, but removing them lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

- **Disinfecting** - Refers to using chemicals like US EPA-registered disinfectants to kill germs on surfaces. Disinfectants do not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but when used after cleaning, they can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

Guidelines

The following are general guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting fleet vehicles.

Routine Vehicle Cleaning and Disinfecting - Clean *and* disinfect commonly touched surfaces of the vehicle at the beginning and end of each trip and between transporting passengers. Equipment, such as handheld computers, scanners, toolboxes, and cart/dolly handles used to haul equipment should also be sanitized. Ensure that cleaning and disinfection procedures are followed consistently and correctly, including the provision of adequate ventilation when chemicals are in use. Doors and windows should remain open when cleaning the vehicle. When cleaning and disinfecting, individuals should wear disposable gloves compatible with the products being used as well as any other personal protective equipment (PPE) required according to the product manufacturer's instructions.

- For hard, nonporous surfaces within the interior of the vehicle such as hard seats, arm rests, door handles, seat belt buckles, light and air controls, doors and windows, and grab handles, clean with detergent or soap and water if the surfaces are visibly dirty prior to disinfectant application. For disinfection of hard, nonporous surfaces, appropriate disinfectants include:
 - [Disinfectants approved by US EPA to kill viruses \(including COVID-19\)](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19)
(<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>)
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for concentration, application method, and contact time for all cleaning and disinfection products.
 - [Diluted household bleach solutions](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)
(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>)
- Prepare according to the manufacturer's label for disinfection, if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.

- Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol.
- For soft or porous surfaces such as fabric seats, remove any visible contamination and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning, use [products that are US EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19) (https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19) and that are suitable for porous surfaces.

For frequently touched electronic surfaces, such as tablets or touch screens used in the vehicle, remove visible dirt, then disinfect following the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products. If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect.

Gloves and any other disposable PPE used for cleaning and disinfecting the vehicle should be removed and disposed of after cleaning; after removal of gloves and PPE, [wash hands](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html) (https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html) immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

Have a small trash bag to dispose of soiled gloves, towels and wipes; be sure to dispose of trash at the end of each shift.

Once a vehicle has been cleaned and disinfected, avoid cross-contamination from the outside. This is especially important when refueling. Drivers should either wear gloves while outside the vehicle, being sure to remove them before re-entering, or they should use a disinfecting wipe on the fuel pump handle and keypad prior to use. If gloves or wipes are not available, then consider using a paper towel or some other material as a barrier between the hands and the equipment. A driver should also wipe down the fuel card, especially if it is a shared card.

Vehicles Exposed to Persons with Suspected/Confirmed COVID-19 - If made aware less than seven days after exposure to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, immediately take the following actions to thoroughly clean and disinfect the vehicle. (If seven or more days have passed since exposure, follow routine cleaning and disinfecting procedures, no further action needs to be taken.)

- Contaminated vehicles, or potentially contaminated vehicles, should not be used for 24 hours, or as long as possible.

- Open doors and windows and use ventilating fans, if available, for a minimum of two hours prior to cleaning and disinfecting to increase air circulation and to remove potentially infectious particles.
- Clean and disinfect the vehicle in accordance with standard operating procedures, paying special attention to any surfaces that may have come in contact with the ill person. Keep all windows and doors open during cleaning and disinfecting.
- When cleaning the vehicle, it is recommended that a disposable gown, gloves, and face shield be worn.

Vehicle Occupancy - When possible, vehicle operators should maintain single occupancy in state vehicles. However, when transporting passengers is necessary, it is required by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) [Guidance for Face Coverings](#)

(https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/COVID-19/Guidance-for-Face-Coverings_06-18-2020.pdf) that all vehicle occupants wear appropriate face coverings. Face coverings may prevent people who don't know they have the virus from transmitting it to others. Face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove their mask without assistance. Additionally, drivers should practice regular hand hygiene; avoid touching their nose, mouth, or eyes; and avoid picking up multiple passengers who would not otherwise be riding together on the same route.

Additional resources for helpful information related to COVID-19:

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>) provides the latest information about COVID-19.
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>) provides advice for the public.
- [California Department of Public Health](#) (<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/>) provides updates and guidance to California residents.
- [The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#) (<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>) offers information specific to workers and employees.