



CIRSA HAZARD ALERT

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SAFER TOGETHER

Hazard Alert – Disinfecting High Touch Surfaces

Our cleaning regimes just got a lot l-o-n-g-e-r. But hopefully, we will all be healthier for it.



Cleaning surfaces that get touched frequently is an important step in staying healthy during this COVID-19 pandemic. These “high traffic” surfaces include:

- Both at home and the office: Door handles, light switches, kitchen, and bathroom faucets and fixtures.
- Additionally, in the office: reception counters, keyboards, copier keypads and trays, computer mice, elevator panels, touch screens, shared work counters, etc.
- Additionally, in the home: kitchen counters, remote controls, stair rails, etc.

EPA List N:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has important information about types of disinfectants that have proven the most effective against COVID-19 as we currently know it: <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>. You can access EPA's List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 here:

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

SARS-CoV-2 is the novel coronavirus that causes the disease COVID-19.

When purchasing a product, check whether its EPA registration number is included on this EPA List N. If it is, you have a match and the product can be used against SARS-CoV-2. You can find this number on the product label – just look for the EPA Reg. No. These products may be marketed and sold under different brand names, but if they have the same EPA registration number, they are the same product. Also, note the EPA's disclaimer at the top of List N, which states in part that “inclusion on this list does not constitute an endorsement by EPA,” and additional disinfectants may meet the criteria. Likewise, this Alert does not constitute an endorsement or assurance for any product.

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Disinfecting High Touch Surfaces (cont.)

Important Factors:

Don't mix and match: Never mix different types of cleaning or disinfecting products together at the same time! This can result in hazardous mixtures that create toxic gases.

Follow instructions: Always – Always - read and follow the directions for use and application.

Contact time: Many products have a 5 to 10 minutes contact time before they kill viruses they claim to kill. This means that the chemical (before it is wiped off) must stay in contact with the surface for this amount of time. Many of these disinfectants should then be wiped and rinsed off with water to minimize damage or corrosion to the surface you are cleaning.

Materials that you use: Use new or decontaminated cloths. Some information states that microfiber cloths have shown more effectiveness against bacteria and virus contamination, but these studies involved high quality, brand new ultra-microfiber cloths and not all 'microfiber' cloths are the same.

Sprays vs. wipes: Both can be found on EPA's List N; which one to use will depend on the surface to be disinfected. A spray will get into smaller spaces and crevices, as well as minimize the personal skin contact with the disinfectant. A wipe can be used for smooth, uncomplicated surfaces, or when carrying a spray bottle is not feasible.

Personal protection: Remember that these products kill bacteria and viruses and can be very corrosive. Wear protective eyewear and gloves when applying them so that you do not experience adverse effects from their use.

Handwashing: Finally, do not forget that plain old hand soap will go a long way.

"It isn't possible to disinfect every surface you touch throughout your day," says Stephen Thomas, M.D., chief of infectious diseases and director of global health at Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, N.Y. "The planet is covered with bacteria and viruses, and we're constantly in contact with these surfaces, so hand-washing is still your best defense against COVID-19." So, even when using products to disinfect a surface, be sure to continue with handwashing, and refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance on how and when to wash your hands.

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>

Resources:

<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/frequent-questions-about-coronavirus-disease-covid-19#disinfectants>

<https://www.consumerreports.org/cleaning/common-household-products-that-can-destroy-novel-coronavirus/>