

Cleaning and Sanitizing In Your Workplace

Are cleaning and sanitizing the same thing?

- No. Cleaning removes oil, dirt and debris using soap, warm water and friction followed by rinsing. Cleaning must occur before sanitizing. Sanitizing reduces the number of harmful germs on surfaces that can lead to illness.

Perform routine environmental cleaning and sanitizing:

- Routinely clean and sanitize all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents and sanitizers that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.
- Provide disposable wipes (not personal care wipes – i.e. baby wipes) so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use. Ensure that they follow the directions on the label.

How do I know what sanitizer to use for surfaces in my workplace?

To sanitize surfaces you can use either one of the following:

1. **Chlorine:** label may say “hypochlorite” or “sodium hypochlorite”. The most common chlorine-based chemical is household bleach.
2. **Quaternary Ammonium:** label may say “benzalkonium chloride”.

How to make your own sanitizer

Workplaces can make their own sanitizing solution to use on surfaces, however, please note that there is no scientific evidence stating the exact concentration that is effective against COVID-19. The following solutions are considered effective against other viruses and bacteria:

For surfaces that can be bleached, a mild solution (1:100) of bleach and water can be used:

- 1 teaspoon (5 millilitres) bleach in 2 cups (500 millilitres) of water

If a surface has been soiled with body fluids (e.g. vomit, diarrhea, blood, saliva), a stronger solution is recommended (1:10).

- ¼ cup (62 millilitres) bleach in 2¼ cups (562 millilitres) of water. The bleach solution should stay on the surface for a minimum of 10 minutes.

Other products such as tea tree oil, baking soda, vinegar, ozone, silver are not considered effective sanitizers by Health Canada.

RESOURCES

CDC: Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID- 19), February 2020

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>

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