



Safety Note

28 June 2021

Cleaning of workstations and work areas to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19

Coronaviruses can survive on surfaces for many hours or more but are readily inactivated by cleaning and disinfection.

COVID-19 spreads through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. A person can acquire the virus by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes. A keyway you can protect workers and others from the risk of exposure to COVID-19 is by implementing appropriate cleaning and disinfecting measures for your local work area.

A combination of cleaning and disinfection will be most effective in removing the COVID-19 virus.

What arrangements are in place for the routine cleaning of spaces at UQ?

UQ's regular contract cleaning of approximately 40,000 spaces around campuses is continuing with a focus on all hard surfaces and touch points.

Separate teams work in higher-traffic buildings and areas from 9am-5pm sanitising hard surfaces and touch points (e.g. handles, rail, bins, switches, bathrooms, equipment).

This team is also dispatched by P&F (requested through HSW Safety Leads) for precautionary cleaning where a person with flu-like symptoms has gone home ill, where a person has been contacted by QLD Public Health as a potential close contact of a confirmed case and been asked to self-isolate, or where a person is awaiting test results for COVID-19.

Staff and students can also help by cleaning their work areas.

When and how often your workplace should be cleaned will depend on the likelihood of contaminated material being present. You should prioritise cleaning surfaces that many people touch. Cleaning with detergent and water is usually sufficient.

Work practices such as cleaning (several times per day) commonly touched surfaces such as lab benches, lab equipment, desks, phones, remote controls, printers, fax machines, computer mice and keyboards help reduce the threat of disease transmission.

If your workplace is only attended by the same small work crew each day and involves little interaction with other people, cleaning in addition to the routine cleaning organised by P&F may not be needed.

More frequent cleaning is recommended in the following circumstances,

- If your workplace has many people entering each day.
- If your workplace operates in shifts, it should be cleaned between shifts.
- If equipment is shared between people, it should be cleaned between uses.



COVID-19: CLEANING

Wash your hands thoroughly after cleaning. Hand washing should include the use of regular soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds. If soap is not immediately available, use hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol content or greater.

Is it safe to clean my work area?

Yes, with the proper precautions. Remember the main source of transmission is either through close contact with an infected person or through a contaminated surface. When cleaning, staff should minimise the risk of being infected with coronavirus by disposing of paper towels immediately in general waste and using alcohol-based hand sanitiser or soap and water to wash hands before, and after cleaning.

What should I use for routine cleaning?

Standard cleaning products can be purchased via UQ eMarket and are effective when the manufacturer's instructions are followed.

Hard surfaces: In most circumstances, cleaning with detergent and water is sufficient.

Soft or porous surfaces: For soft or porous surfaces like fabric or leather, seek advice from the manufacturer of the item to be cleaned about which products can be safely used.

What if I need to disinfect an area?

Refer to Safety Note: "Disinfecting a work area to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19"

Who can I contact if I am unsure what to do?

Your local [HSW Manager or local Work Health and Safety Coordinator \(WHSC\)](#)

Resources and Additional Information

- [Safe Work Australia – Office > Cleaning](#)
- [Australian Government – Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) resources](#)
- [Stop the Spread - QLD Government](#)
- [CDC - Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#)