



Safety Note

28 June 2020

Disinfecting a work area to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19

Surfaces that many people touch should be cleaned and disinfected regularly. This safety note is to outline the process for disinfecting an area where a person may have been showing flu-like symptoms or have been asked to self-isolate by Qld Public Health or awaiting test results for COVID-19.

Should a colleague's workstation be disinfected if they go home sick?

Disinfecting is a good practice and is an important way to reduce the risk of transmission of infectious organisms, including viruses. Viruses including coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2 that causes COVID-19) and influenza virus can be spread by touching an object or surface with virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands. If the person had flu-like symptoms, you can contact your HSW Manager for advice.

Who should disinfect the workstation?

If a staff member is comfortable to wipe down a person's workstation they can do this as long as the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is worn and the correct method used. Alternatively, P&F can be contacted through your HSW Safety Lead to organise this.

Is it safe to disinfect someone's workstation?

Yes, with the proper precautions.

What resources are needed to disinfect the workstation?

- 70% isopropanol impregnated wipes (e.g. iso-wipes) and / or disinfectant liquid (e.g. 0.1% bleach, 0.1% sodium hypochlorite, hydrogen peroxide, 70% ethanol or 70% isopropanol).
- Paper towel;
- 70% alcohol gel for hand sanitising
- Rubbish bags; and
- Disposable Gloves.

Where do I buy the resources needed?

UQ Enterprise Procurement procurement@uq.edu.au is centrally managing all requests for cleaning products and PPE.

Are the P&F contract cleaners able to assist?

Yes - the P&F cleaning staff and P&F contract cleaners (Spotless staff) can visit to disinfect most workplaces. They are regularly cleaning touch points and public refectories more frequently. They will also complete a precautionary clean of an area in the following circumstances:

- If a person on campus has been confirmed with COVID-19; or
- If a person has been directed by Public Health to self-isolate due to being considered a close contact of a confirmed case; or
- If a person has gone home sick with flu-like symptoms.



These precautionary clean requests must go through your local HSW Manager, not directly to P&F.

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

Your local HSW Manager / coordinator.

Steps for disinfecting a workstation or work area

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention advise the following steps for disinfecting a shared work area when there has been suspected viral contamination by a work colleague, student or client.

1. Notify other persons within the area that disinfecting will be undertaken

If contamination of lecture theatre or multiple workstations with visible contaminants, you must request assistance from your HSW Manager who will refer to P&F cleaners.

2. Protect Yourself

- Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol gel before commencing as well as after the task is completed. Wear gloves during disinfecting. Do NOT touch your face during or after the disinfecting procedure without cleaning your hands first.
- Ensure you have: gloves, disinfectant (wipes and/or spray), rubbish bags and alcohol hand sanitiser gel with you.

3. Disinfect the workstation

- Wipe down any electrical equipment (e.g. computer screen, keyboard, mouse and phone) with 70% isopropanol impregnated wipes or paper towel sprayed with ethanol, hydrogen peroxide or bleach solution;
- Spray the appropriate disinfectant on hard work surfaces only (e.g. 0.1% bleach, 0.1% sodium hypochlorite, hydrogen peroxide, 70% ethanol or 70% isopropanol) or wipe down hard surfaces with 70% isopropanol impregnated wipes. NOTE bleach and hypochlorite are not compatible with all surfaces and may cause staining or damage; and
- Wipe down the workstation with paper towel and allow surfaces to dry.

4. Clean up after disinfecting the workstation

Before moving away from the area:

- Place the used paper towel / wipes in a rubbish bag;
- Remove gloves by peeling off one glove and then clutching it with your other gloved hand and using your free hand, peel off the second glove so that both gloves are together but inside out, then deposit in a rubbish bag;
- Tie rubbish bag closed and deposit in second rubbish bag/bin;
- Clean your hands thoroughly with alcohol gel.
- Once away from the work area, wash your hands with soap and water.

Resources and Additional Information

UQ: <https://about.uq.edu.au/coronavirus-advice-uq-community>

Australian Government: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/novel-coronavirus-resources>

QLD Health: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/clinical-practice/guidelines-procedures/diseases-infection/diseases/coronavirus>

CDC - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>