

## Indoor Workspace Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocol for Laboratories and Sensitive Equipment

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### Definitions:

- **Cleaning:** The routine process of removing visible debris, dirt, and dust by using cleaner or mechanical equipment.
- **Sanitizing:** The process of reducing the number and growth of bacteria, viruses, and fungi by using a cleaning agent in order to maintain a space safe for use.
- **Disinfecting:** The process of killing identified microorganisms and removing potential infectious material with an EPA approved chemical to prevent the spread of germs, viruses, and fungi. Areas must be cleaned before they can be disinfected.

**Purpose:** This protocol describes how Caltech Lab members can **clean and disinfect indoor laboratory workspaces** when **positive case(s) of COVID-19 or other reported illness have been identified** in a campus building.

Laboratories can request consultation regarding the process for disinfecting lab areas by contacting the Caltech Safety Office ([safety@caltech.edu](mailto:safety@caltech.edu)).

### Note:

- All workspaces (offices, classrooms, restrooms, etc.) used by a person who tested positive for COVID-19 or who reports illness consistent with COVID-19 symptoms will be cleaned and disinfected by Caltech custodial crew, as appropriate.
- A general protocol for routine workplace cleaning and sanitizing has been developed and is available on the [COVID-19 webpage](#).
- While not strictly necessary, as a measure to help individuals feel more comfortable engaging in cleaning and disinfection of sensitive equipment, laboratory workspaces may be closed for 72 hours following a reported illness. This temporary closure provides time for any remaining viral material to dissipate and reduces the risk of contact transmission. Laboratory managers should consult with the Caltech Safety Office if there are questions or concerns about disinfection of lab spaces and/or sensitive equipment.

### **Social and Personal Protective Equipment:**

- Social Protective equipment: Lab members performing cleaning and disinfecting must wear a cloth face covering.
- Personal Protective equipment: Lab members performing cleaning and disinfecting must wear disposable gloves, lab coat, and safety glasses when handling cleaning or disinfectant products and when disinfecting lab space.

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting Materials and Equipment:**

- Cleaning is performed using a variety of materials and equipment available in the lab: paper towels, wipes, and commercially available cleaning products.
- Laboratories operating at BSL1 or BSL2 can use their regular disinfectant solution to sanitize work surfaces: 70% ethanol or 10% bleach.
- All other laboratories can procure [EPA approved](#) cleaning agents and supplies on their own or

request supplies from Custodial Services. If commercial supplies are not available, use a solution of 70% ethanol or 10% bleach.

- [EPA approved](#) disinfectant products that are known or anticipated to kill SARS-CoV-2 when used according to manufacturing recommendations are recommended.

## Cleaning Procedures:

- All lab surfaces that are visibly soiled, dusty, or covered with debris must be cleaned prior to being disinfected.
- Work surfaces (bench tops, fume hoods, biosafety cabinets, tables, desks, etc.) in the lab and frequently touched surfaces (door handles, light switches, etc.) must be dusted and scrubbed with cloth or disposable wipes if visibly dirty.

## Disinfecting Procedures:

- All surfaces used for research work (bench tops, fume hoods, biosafety cabinets) and frequently touched surfaces must be disinfected.
- Wipe or spray surfaces, leaving the surface moist for at least one (1) minute or per manufacturer's instructions prior to wiping down completely.
  - For sensitive equipment that cannot withstand a large amount of moisture, use wipes or wet paper towels with the maximum amount of disinfectant possible without compromising the equipment.
- Disinfecting should focus on all surfaces that are frequently touched:
  - Bench tops, fume hoods, biosafety cabinet surfaces and sashes, and refrigerator/freezer handles
  - Door handles, light switches, computer stations, keyboards/monitors, phones, desks, chair arms
  - Laboratory hand tools: pipettors, pipettes heads
  - Waste container lids
  - Other frequently used equipment (especially controls, buttons, etc.)

**Waste management:** All disposable material and PPE used for the purpose of disinfecting a lab space should be collected in a biohazardous waste bag (coordinate with custodial or EHS for supplies). Waste bag must be stored in the lab in a sturdy, leak-proof container and picked-up by EHS waste management crew. Place pick-up request in AIM, email [safety@caltech.edu](mailto:safety@caltech.edu), or call ext. 6727