

# The Government of The Bahamas



## **Environmental Guideline Document for addressing Homes, Commercial Building & Quarantine Facilities with a suspected or confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 throughout the Commonwealth of The Bahamas**

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (DEHS)  
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING

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Submitted by: Mr. Anthony Ryan, Public Analyst II  
Approved by: Ms. Melony Mckenzie, Director, DEHS



**CORONAVIRUS**

## **PREFACE**

This Environmental Guideline Document serves to provide guidance for addressing Facility(s) with a suspected or confirmed case(s) of COVID – 19. As new information is brought to the fore, this Document will be updated in kind. Further, we at DEHS will continue to review the findings of the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO) and other credible information sources regarding this pandemic.

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## DEFINITIONS

**“COVID-19 specialized cleaning and disinfection”** refers to an intense cleaning and disinfecting of all surfaces by trained private or custodial staff.

**“Facility”** refers to a permanent, semi-permanent, or temporary commercial or industrial property such as a building, plant, or structure, built, established, or installed for the performance of one or more specific activities or functions ([www.business dictionary.com](http://www.businessdictionary.com)).

**“Impacted”** refers to a Facility directly affected by the Coronavirus (SARS-COV-2).

**“Infected person”** refers to a person exposed to the Coronavirus (SARS-COV-2) that causes the disease (COVID-19).

**“Routine Cleaning and disinfecting”** refers to daily cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces and objects. Additionally, the cleaning and disinfecting of shared objects after each use.

**“Sick person”** refers to a person suffering from the disease (COVID-19).

**“Ventilation”** refer to the provision of fresh air to a space or building.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CDC – Centers for Disease Control & Prevention

COVID – 19 – Coronavirus Disease 2019

DEHS – Department of Environmental Health Services

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

SARS-COV-2 – Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2

PPE – Personal Protective Equipment

WHO – World Health Organization



## GENERAL

### **DEHS' position relative to confirmed COVID-19 case(s) at a Facility(s):**

Any Facility(s) throughout the Commonwealth of The Bahamas with a confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 are required to undergo an intense disinfecting and cleaning procedure which involve all surfaces from ceiling to floor.

### **Suspected case(s) of COVID-19 at a Facility(s) :**

The following governmental agencies should be notified immediately:

- Ministry of Health and by extension the Department of Public Health; and
- Department of Environmental Health Services (DEHS).

### **Implementation of COVID-19 cleaning & disinfecting procedures:**

COVID-19 specialized cleaning and disinfection ***should be*** carried out at a Facility when an infected person, or a person suspected of infection due to symptoms has occupied that Facility within a 7 day period.

### **Non-implementation of COVID-19 cleaning & disinfecting procedures:**

- (a) COVID-19 Specialized cleaning and disinfection ***is not necessary*** at a Facility if for 7 days or more the infected person(s) did not occupy that Facility.
- (b) Routine cleaning and disinfection is sufficient and is recommended.

## PRELIMINARY STEPS FOR CONFIRMED CASES AT A FACILITY(S) OR AREA(S)

### **Closure:**

- (a) Impacted spaces or areas should be closed immediately.
- (b) No unauthorized person(s) should be allowed into any impacted spaces or areas during the closure period.
- (c) If the portion of the Facility/Building impacted can be successfully isolated, the remainder of the building may be used, and reopening of the impacted portions only after cleaning and disinfecting protocols have been implemented.

*See Commencement of Cleaning & Disinfection (page #5 section a&b) for length of closure time.*

### **Air circulation:**

Outside doors and windows should be opened in order to increase air circulation.

*Note that studies have shown that the introduction of fresh air in enclosed spaces can effectively dilute the concentration of the coronavirus (SARS-COV-2) and other contaminants in such spaces.*

**REQUIREMENTS FOR PRIVATE COMPANIES OR CUSTODIAL STAFF SEEKING TO CLEAN & DISINFECT FACILITY(S) OR AREA(S) IMPACTED BY THE CORONAVIRUS (SARS-COV-2)**

**Performing Covid-19 cleaning & disinfection:**

Cleaning & disinfection should be carried out by:

- DEHS approved private COVID-19 cleaning & disinfecting company(s)
- COVID-19 trained custodial staff responsible for routine cleaning & disinfecting

*COVID-19 trained individuals and companies should seek to take advantage of reputable COVID-19 training courses as often as possible.*

**Requirements for private cleaning & disinfecting companies:**

Private cleaning & disinfecting companies must possess a valid COVID-19 training certificate from DEHS and/or a reputable training agency.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR COVID-19 CLEANING & DISINFECTION

### **Commencement of cleaning & disinfecting:**

- (a) There should be at least a 24 hour waiting period before the commencement of cleaning and disinfecting of a Facility(s).
- (b) If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible.

*Waiting minimizes the risk of exposure.*

### **PPE:**

- (a) PPE must be worn during cleaning and disinfecting (inclusive of an N-95 mask).
- (b) Following use, PPE should be properly removed and disposed of by placing them securely into waste bag(s).

### **Availability of supplies & equipment For cleaning & disinfecting of surfaces:**

Supplies & equipment that must be used for cleaning & disinfecting of surfaces:

- Appropriate PPE
- EPA certified disinfectants
- Microfiber cleaning cloth for effective cleaning
- Equipment necessary for the application of disinfectants on surfaces, items and shared objects example spray bottles, commercial and/or electrostatic sprayers
- Use of vacuums equipped with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter if vacuuming is necessary

**Treating closed spaces with restricted ventilation (indoor air):**

The following should be disinfected:

- All spaces with EPA certified disinfectants
- Air-conditioning system(s)

*Note immediately correct ventilation issues. Taking measures to improve ventilation is vital as it will help to shorten the time it takes contaminated respiratory droplets to be removed from the air.*

**Cleaning & disinfecting:**

- (a) Allow the disinfectant to remain on surface(s) for the appropriate contact time as recommended by the manufacturer.
- (b) Bag & launder cloth items.
- (c) Dispose of plastic bags in waste bins, disinfect bins, place clean plastic bag in waste bin and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- (d) Clean & disinfect restrooms last.
- (e) Upon completion of cleaning and disinfecting, disinfect all equipment and wash hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds.
- (f) Outside surfaces requires and should undergo normal routine cleaning and disinfection.

**Where to clean & disinfect:**

- (a) The primary goal of cleaning and disinfecting should be that of impacted spaces and/or areas and not necessarily an entire Facility

*Note see Closure (page 3 part c) and if necessary seek additional information from DEHS.*

- (b) The primary focus of cleaning and disinfecting should be all areas and spaces exposed to the person(s) who are sick or symptomatic.
- (c) Special attention should be afforded to restrooms utilized by sick person(s).
- (d) Identify other areas where sick person(s) may have visited then clean and disinfect.

**Disinfection of air conditioning  
Systems central & split level:**

Disinfect shared air conditioning systems.

*Note that in addition to cleaning and disinfecting, proper air exchange (ventilation) system are vital in reducing the concentration of contaminants in air.*

## ACCOUNTABILITY

**Accountability:**

- (a) It is recommended that DEHS' regulator(s) observe and/or advise as to cleaning & disinfection processes as compared to complete reliance on post cleaning & disinfecting inspections only.
- (b) If post cleaning & disinfecting inspections are to be carried out, ensure proper documentation and timely submission to DEHS of cleaning and disinfecting procedures.

## RE-OCCUPANCY FOLLOWING CLEANING & DISINFECTION

**Re-occupy and/or resumption of activities at Facility(s), Area(s) or Space(s) impacted by Coronavirus (SARS-COV-2):**

Where necessary, following the satisfactory implementation of recommended cleaning and disinfecting procedures a communication indicating the same shall be issued by the DEHS' Director.