



Cleaning Coalition
of America

CLEAN SLATE

A Reopening Guide For New York Businesses

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About The Cleaning Coalition Of America

The Cleaning Coalition of America was founded in 2020 by seven of the nation's largest facilities services companies. With more than 1 million professional cleaners employed and operations in every state, the Coalition advocates on behalf of professional cleaners nationwide to shape and advance balanced, common-sense policies and cleanliness standards that promote safety and a healthy workforce.

Industry Facts



Over
2 Million
Employees



Estimated
\$60 Billion
Market



Majority Of
Industry Costs
Tied To Wages



About The Report

As concerns over the COVID-19 Delta variant mount and [hospitalizations rise](#), vacant office space in Manhattan reached 18.7 percent in July — marking the [highest availability rate](#) in the city on record. With workplace activity in other major metropolitan hubs across the country, including Los Angeles, Chicago, and San Francisco still remaining 50 percent below normal levels and employees [worried](#) about contracting COVID-19 or the next highly transmissible variant, businesses are facing an uphill battle in attracting workers back to the workplace.

This Report Covers



**Virus Spread And
Transmission In
The Office**



**The Impact Of
Infectious Diseases
On Worker
Productivity**



**The Importance
Of Cleaning In
Maintaining Healthy
Workplaces**



**Reopening Cleaning
And Disinfecting
Recommendations
For Businesses**

The report reflects the opinions and recommendations of all seven Cleaning Coalition of America members, including Able Services, ABM Industries, Building Service Contractors Association International, Collins Building Services Inc., GDI Integrated Facility Services Inc., Harvard Maintenance, and Marsden Services.

Introduction

The State of New York has formally recognized the value of disinfecting in mitigating the spread of pathogens and has mandated extensive new workplace health and safety protections. This summer, all employers with worksites in New York had to adopt and disseminate either a model plan prepared by the Department of Labor or develop an alternative plan that meets the minimum standards of the NY HERO Act's Airborne Infectious Disease Exposure Prevention Standard.

On September 6, 2021, the New York State Commissioner of Health formally designated COVID-19 a highly contagious communicable disease and a serious threat to public health, enabling the state to enforce these recently adopted workplace safety standards to control the spread of the virus.

“ While we continue to increase our vaccination numbers, the fight against the Delta variant is not over, and we have to do everything we can to protect our workers. This designation will ensure protections are in place to keep our workers safe and support our efforts to combat the virus and promote health and safety. ”

— Governor Kathy Hochul



A single commonly-touched area can impact between **40% to 60%** of other surfaces in **12 hours** — in some cases in **two hours**

With experts classifying herd immunity as unlikely, the omnipresent fear of contracting COVID-19, a new variant, or the next highly transmissible illness will likely take years — if not more — to fade. Now more than ever, it is critical that businesses embrace the public health lessons of the pandemic and adopt comprehensive cleaning protocols that are proven to reduce the spread of viruses and keep people healthier. The reality is that contamination of a single commonly-touched area can impact between [40 percent to 60 percent](#) of other surfaces in less than half a day — and in some cases within two hours.

Covid-19 Delta Variant Upends Return-To-Office Plans

The surge in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations related to the spread of the Delta variant has left U.S. companies once again struggling to adapt to the virus while upending post-Labor Day reopening plans. Even for employees who have been vaccinated, the highly transmissible Delta variant is raising concerns of breakthrough infections, spread to unvaccinated children, and broader disruptions to economic activity.

With both Wall Street and Main Street businesses grappling with rising cases, **44 percent** of New York companies have officially delayed their return-to-office plans until October and, in some cases, into 2022. As the Delta variant continues to spread across the U.S., it is critical that the real estate industry, facilities managers, employers, and building occupants rethink their ongoing health and safety practices.



44% of New York companies have officially delayed their return-to-office plans until October and, in some cases, into 2022

Cleaning Is The First Line Of Defense

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced businesses to embrace a more holistic view of safety that prioritizes worker health. While many workplaces have previously put an emphasis on cleaning for appearance, the pandemic has prompted the need to make enhanced cleaning protocols, including regular disinfecting and sanitization, the new normal for any shared space.

To reduce the potential for new outbreaks that could cause more shutdowns and slow economic recovery efforts, businesses must have proper cleaning and disinfecting protocols in place that reflect the latest federal guidelines and expertise from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and the professional cleaning industry.

Facilities Services Companies Are Trusted Partners

Since the onset of the pandemic, the professional cleaning industry has partnered with property managers and business owners to develop transparent COVID-19 response plans that help workplaces safely keep their doors open while ensuring the health of their employees, customers, and professional cleaners working on the front lines.

Developed in coordination with independent experts, Cleaning Coalition of America member companies have deployed a variety of new products, technologies, and protocols to specifically fight COVID-19 and quell worker anxiety, including electrostatic sprayers that can quickly disinfect larger areas, round-the-clock services to keep high-touch surfaces disinfected, and increasing the visibility of professional cleaners. Not only can these approaches help create safer shared indoor environments amid COVID-19, but they can have long-term public health and economic benefits beyond the current pandemic.

“ The more frequent visibility of our professional cleaning workforce has been a high priority for our clients and helps calm concerns about returning to work. ”

— Josh Feinberg, President, Cleaning Coalition of America

An overhead photograph showing two office cleaners in blue aprons and white shirts. One is using a floor buffer on a wooden floor, and the other is using a vacuum cleaner. In the center, a desk is visible with a computer monitor, keyboard, and a small potted plant.

The Spread Of Pathogens In The Workplace

Offices are breeding grounds for disease-causing pathogens — not only COVID-19, but other viruses such as influenza and the common cold — with many people congregating in small spaces and frequently touching shared objects and surfaces.

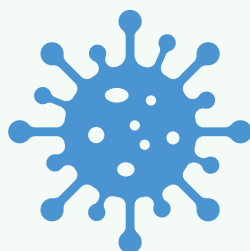
Studies show that contamination of a single commonly touched surface in an office can impact 40 percent to 60 percent of other surfaces in an area in less than half a day. If just a **single person** comes into work sick, more than half of commonly touched surfaces such as doorknobs and shared buttons can become contaminated.

Indeed, offices are among the places where one is most likely to get sick. According to one estimate, an average of **16.2 percent** of flu cases — approximately 5,670,000 people based on **2018-2019** figures — are contracted in the workplace.

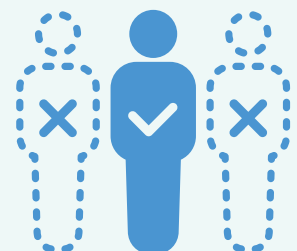
Open floor plan offices in particular may pose a considerable threat to employee health. One study conducted in Denmark, for instance, found that workers in open-plan offices were **62 percent** more likely to be absent due to sickness than workers in private or cellular offices — a private space enclosed by walls, although not necessarily permanent or floor-to-ceiling.



If just one person comes into work sick **more than half** of commonly touched surfaces can become contaminated

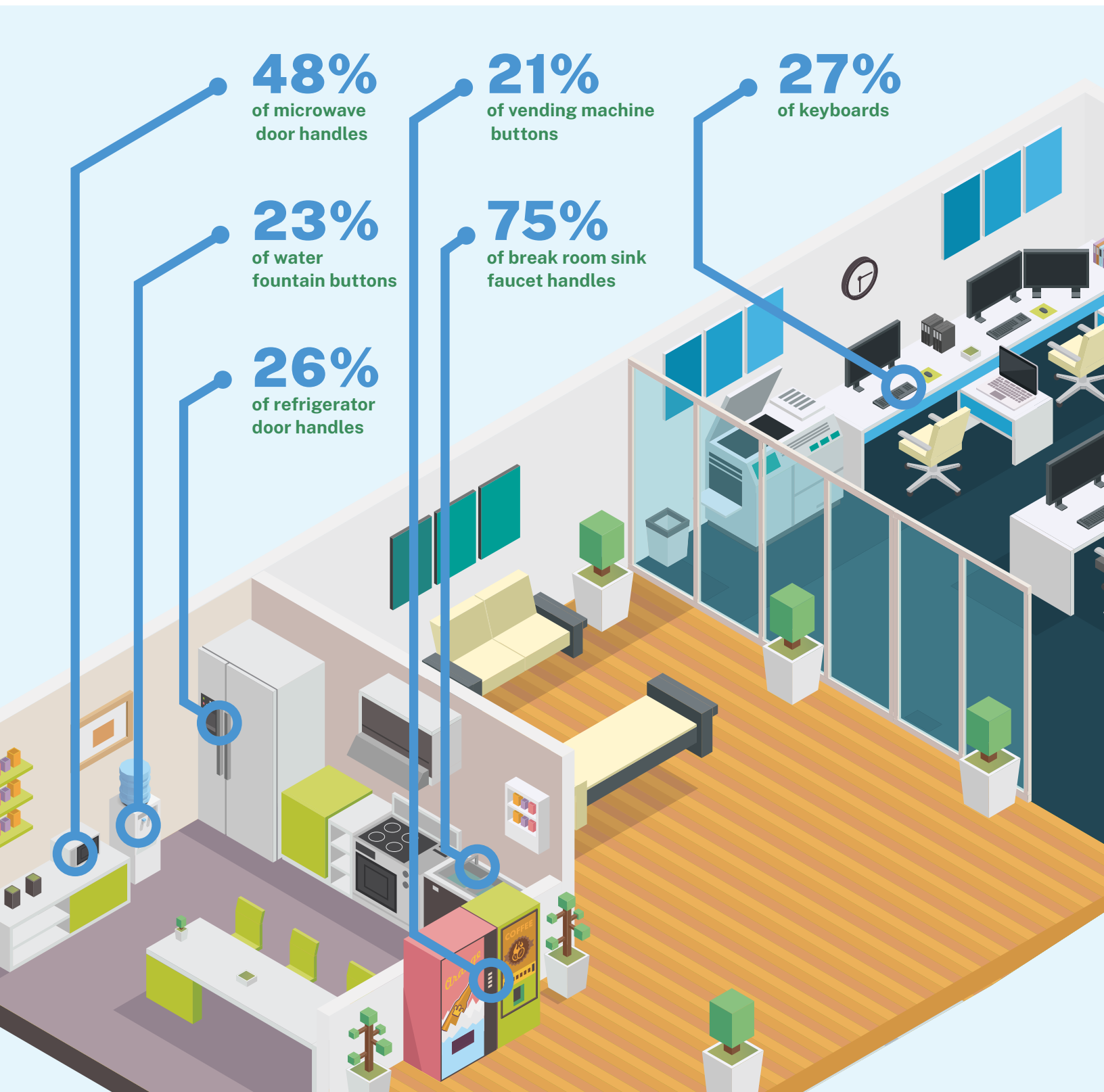


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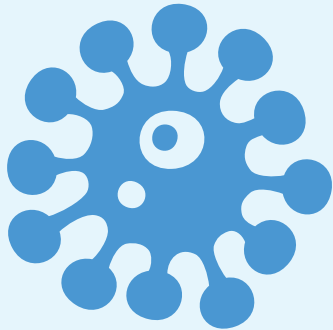
Telephones, desktops, tabletops, and coffee pot handles are some of the most common hot spots for germs. One study found that other surfaces with high levels of contamination [include:](#)



The Impact Of Infectious Diseases On U.S. Productivity

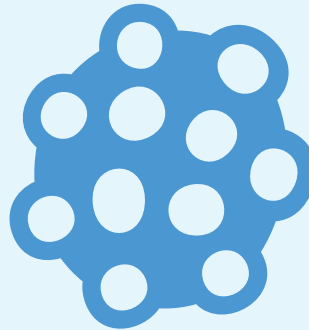
Beyond serious public health impacts, office-borne illnesses also pose financial challenges to businesses and commercial landlords due to the significant losses in productivity they cause each year.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, infectious diseases cost the U.S. economy billions in lost productivity on an annual basis.



Influenza:

The flu alone creates an economic burden for the healthcare system and society of [\\$11.2 billion](#) per year, while costing the U.S. approximately 20 million work days per year.



Cold:

The common cold has an even larger impact, costing the economy an estimated [\\$40 billion](#) every single year. Colds amount to 40 percent of all lost time from jobs, according to [one study](#).

More than
75% reported going to work while feeling under the weather

Workplace disease transmission is further exacerbated by a high proportion of workers who continue to attend work while feeling sick — a phenomenon known as presenteeism. More than [75 percent](#) of employees with flu symptoms in one study conducted by the CDC reported going to work while feeling under the weather.

According to a [paper](#) published by the Association for Medical Imaging Management, presenteeism has caused a productivity loss of approximately 77 percent and has cost the U.S. economy approximately \$180 billion annually. The practice was reported in approximately 63 percent to 83 percent of employees surveyed in various 2015 employment studies.

The burden of infectious disease on the economy has no doubt worsened amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The World Bank predicted that COVID-19 will result in a [5.2 percent](#) overall contraction in global GDP, amounting to the worst global recession in decades. Advanced economies are expected to shrink by 7 percent.

The impact on workers and businesses was — and will continue to be — enormous. In the U.S., there were [nearly 10 percent fewer](#) people working full-time or part time in 2020 than expected.

Anxieties Surrounding Return To Work

Seventeen months after the coronavirus pandemic was declared a national emergency, U.S. workers still remain deeply concerned about the safety of returning to the workplace. In fact, a recent survey found that **65 percent** of American workers fear returning to in-person operations could pose a risk to their personal health and safety. Strikingly, according to an October 2020 survey, **75 percent** would even consider quitting their job if they felt their employers' actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 were inadequate or inappropriate.

More broadly, the coronavirus pandemic has significantly impacted mental health and increased worker anxiety across the country. According to Gallup's latest [State of the Global Workplace](#) report, U.S. workers are some of the most stressed employees in the world. Some 57 percent of U.S. and Canadian workers — whose surveyed data was combined — report feeling stressed on a daily basis, up by eight percent from the previous year.

As businesses welcome back employees and look to recruit new talent amid a labor shortage, ensuring a safe and clean workplace is more important than ever. Both current and prospective employees need to know that their employer will not sacrifice worker health for an improved bottom line.



75%

of American workers would quit their job if they felt their employers' actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 were inadequate or inappropriate

65%

of American workers fear returning to in-person operations could pose a risk to their personal health and safety

57%

of American and Canadian workers report feeling stressed on a daily basis

8% increase from the previous year



Cleaning Is The First Line Of Defense

With many companies operating at [reduced capacities](#) and employees seeking increased flexibility in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, hybrid working models are fast becoming the norm — not the exception. In fact, one Commercial Real Estate Services' survey found that [58 percent](#) of senior-level global real estate executives plan to adopt some level of hot desking or “free address” in the future. That means more shared spaces — and more opportunities to share germs and illnesses.

With shared workspaces increasing the likelihood of virus transmission by making the work desk a communal area, it is critical that employers and facilities managers implement policies that require spaces to be disinfected after every use.

“ You may want to either clean more frequently or choose to disinfect (in addition to cleaning) shared spaces if the space is a high traffic area or if certain conditions apply that can increase the risk of infection from touching surfaces. ”
– Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, June 2021

Even relatively small cleaning interventions in an office can make a major difference for worker health and productivity. Experts say that cleaning — including washing, wiping, and disinfecting — can reduce rates of cold, flu, and stomach illness by [80 percent](#). Consistent access to hand sanitizer at one Fortune 1000 company [reduced absenteeism](#) by 13.4 percent and health care claims by more than 24 percent.

What Is Clean?

Embracing enhanced cleaning regimens is both a health and business imperative that can help reduce the potential for outbreaks and support the nation's economic recovery. As businesses formalize reopening plans and look to facilitate a safe return to business, the Cleaning Coalition of America developed the following cleaning and disinfecting best practices in concert with independent experts in infectious disease, industrial hygiene, and more. These procedures and protocols should be used in conjunction with other safety measures outlined by local, state, and federal governments.

Terms Defined

Cleaning

Cleaning uses detergents to physically remove germs, dirt, and other impurities from surfaces and objects. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but lowers the risk of spreading infection. Cleaning is most appropriate for all contact surfaces, especially high-touch surfaces.

Sanitizing

Sanitizing – which includes either the cleaning or disinfection of surfaces – reduces the number and growth of bacteria, viruses, and fungi. Sanitizing is particularly important in food preparation areas where germs can cause foodborne illnesses.

Disinfecting

Disinfecting works by using chemicals to neutralize or kill germs on surfaces or objects. Most EPA-registered disinfectants contain both disinfectant and detergency.

Cleaning And Disinfecting Best Practices

01

Initial Site Assessment

Intervals Based On Reentry

Performing a site assessment will help businesses plan and prepare for building and occupant health and safety.



Perform a thorough walkthrough using a reentry checklist to identify high-touch points where routine disinfection will be needed.



Where possible, evaluate opportunities to replace manual fixtures and dispensers with touchless products.



Identify the most appropriate locations to add disinfecting wipes or hand sanitizing stations.



Consider installing a physical barrier at the reception desk and developing visitor protocols.

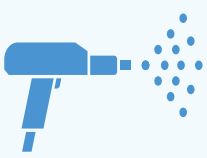


02

Decontamination Plan

Evaluate As Needed

Developing a decontamination plan in partnership with trained cleaning professionals will ensure a streamlined response should a positive COVID-19 case be reported.



Decontamination plans should consider the benefit of advanced cleaning technologies, such as electrostatic spraying, to reduce environmental contamination.



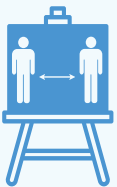
When appropriate, the plan should be communicated to employees to foster confidence.

03

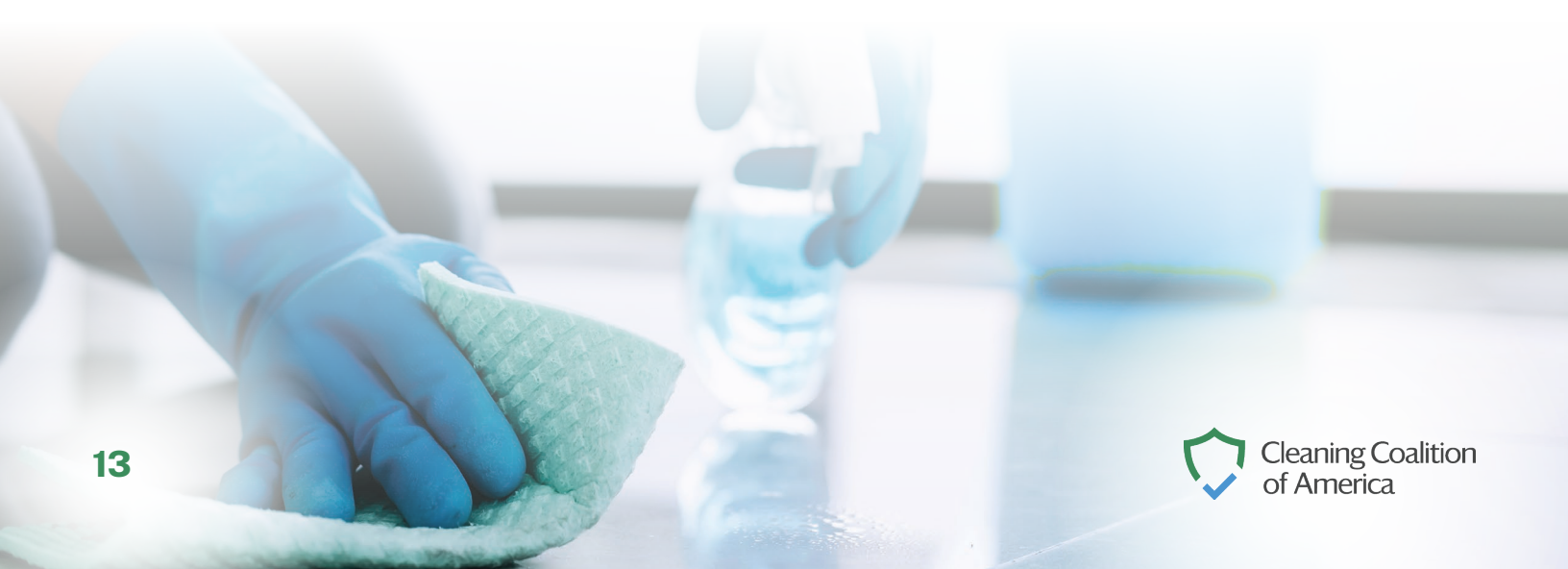
Occupant Communication Signage Kits

Evaluate As Needed

Prioritizing clear and consistent communication through signage and transparent updates will help employees adhere to the rules of the building – including keeping spaces clean – and feel comfortable returning to the workplace.



Recommended forms of signage include, but are not limited to, entryway easel signs communicating mutual social contracts upon entering the space, educational wall posters, restroom clings to promote proper handwashing, table tents in common areas, and a web page with FAQs for occupants.





04

High-Touch Disinfection

Hourly To Daily

Creating safer spaces requires more robust, frequent disinfection beyond the routine cleaning procedures used pre-pandemic.



Ensure the use of EPA-registered disinfectants qualified for use against SARS-CoV-2.



Convert to microfiber cloth to optimize effectiveness of the cleaning and disinfection process.

High-touch surfaces include desks and tabletops, chairs, telephones, keyboards and mice, doors and light switches, elevator buttons, seat cushions and armrests, office equipment, cabinet handles, sinks and faucets, toilets and flush valves, and sanitary product dispensers.

Advanced Disinfection Technologies To Consider

Ultraviolet Disinfection

Disinfecting works by using chemicals to neutralize or kill germs on surfaces or objects. Most EPA-registered disinfectants contain both disinfectant and detergency.

Electrostatic Spraying

Electrostatic sprayers use charged particles to coat surfaces and provide for easy large-scale dispersal of EPA-registered disinfectants.

05

Broader Disinfection

Nightly To Quarterly

Disinfecting large surface areas complements the scope enhancements and increased frequencies of high-touch point cleaning and disinfecting. Note: The right method of deployment and proper training is essential to ensure efficacy and safety.



Through the use of electrostatic sprayers, focus on the broad disinfection of large areas.



Utilize hospital grade EPA-registered disinfectants with faster kill times and broader pathogen elimination should an outbreak occur.

Other Considerations

Where possible, businesses should adopt a multi-layered approach to maintaining a safe and healthy workplace. In addition to embracing enhanced cleaning protocols, companies should consider actively evaluating indoor air quality (IAQ) and embracing evidence-based testing technologies to evaluate the impact of the cleaning process.

Indoor Air Quality

There are three widely accepted methods of managing IAQ: ventilation or dilution to reduce the concentration of airborne contaminants inside; air cleaning and disinfection to remove or destroy these contaminants; and source control through filtration to prevent contaminants from getting into the facility. In combination, these approaches help mitigate or minimize the factors that can impact IAQ.

ATP Testing

Evidence-based testing with adenosine triphosphate (ATP) is designed to quantify the cleanliness of a surface. ATP bioluminescence — a glow given off by organic matter — detects the amount of residue or biofilms on a surface that have the potential to support microbial growth. A facilitator, equipped with an ATP monitoring device, uses a specialized swab and takes a surface sample from a sixteen square inch test site. The swab is shaken by hand in a tube containing a testing solution to activate, then inserted in the device. Within seconds, PASS or FAIL results are returned to validate the competence of the worker as part of the training process, and performance of the work and cleaning program.

Reopening Questions For Property Owners and Landlords

As individual businesses formalize return-to-office plans, it is imperative to understand the health and safety protocols of the broader building. As such, sample questions to ask property owners or landlords prior to reopening include, but are not limited to:

- What protocols have been implemented to mitigate the spread of viruses in communal spaces such as the lobby, elevators, and public restrooms?
- Is there a clear and concise decontamination and evacuation plan in place for the building in the case of an outbreak of COVID-19 or other airborne infectious diseases?
- How will you be accommodating enhanced cleaning protocols and increased visibility of cleaning staff? Are your cleaning professionals properly trained and their competencies validated?
- What measurable steps have been taken to improve the facility's IAQ?
- How is the building prepared to manage the flow of outside traffic coming into the premises?
- What is the building's process for communicating to occupants any updates to COVID-19 protocols?



Disinfecting Has To Be Part Of Our Workplace Culture

With the Delta variant surging across the U.S. and widespread concerns about the safety of returning to the workplace, it is critical that proper cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitization practices are put in place that reflect the latest federal guidelines and expertise from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and the professional cleaning industry.

Specifically, businesses should consider the following reopening procedures and protocols:



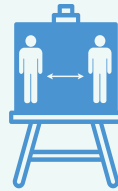
Conduct An Initial Site Assessment

Intervals Based On Reentry



Develop A Plan For Decontamination

Evaluate As Needed



Create Occupant Communication Signage Kits

Evaluate As Needed



Ensure Routine, High-touch Disinfection

Hourly To Daily



Craft Broader Disinfection Plans

Nightly To Quarterly

Complementing traditional cleaning measures with advanced disinfecting procedures is proven to reduce environmental contamination — not only COVID-19 but also other common pathogens that sicken millions of people and cost businesses [\\$225 billion](#) in productivity losses every year.

The Cleaning Coalition of America and the professional cleaning industry are dedicated to keeping America's doors open for business and creating a healthy workforce.