



Mount Royal University - Environmental Health & Safety - Safe Work Guideline		
Cleaning of Shared Work Spaces During COVID-19		
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SAFE WORK GUIDELINE: CLEANING OF SHARED WORK SPACES AND OFFICES DURING COVID-19

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, additional requirements have been put in place for employees performing work on the Mount Royal University campus. This document reflects current restrictions that will change as the situation evolves. Mount Royal University may have protocols in place not required by the government. Please watch for updates from Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) and monitor the [Employee Welcome Back webpage](#).

SCOPE

The procedure applies to all employees of Mount Royal University performing work in the shared spaces (i.e., kitchens, shared offices, copier rooms, storage rooms, etc.) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This document covers department cleaning responsibilities and methods for cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched work surfaces. The cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces in shared spaces is the responsibility of all the department employees using the space.

Additional information on updated occupancies and office configuration, and the use of shared meeting rooms, can be found in [Safe Work Guideline: Pandemic Expectations for Employees](#).

RESPONSIBILITIES

The employer is responsible for ensuring there is a person(s) responsible for the oversight of shared space etiquette, including the increased frequency of cleaning of high-touch surfaces in areas under their control. The employer is required to provide employees with a procedure for this task and the supplies required to complete the task.

Employees must follow the provided procedure and refer to product labels and (when applicable) the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for information. Product Safety Data Sheets can be found here on the [Environmental Health & Safety website](#). Employees must report any health and safety concerns to their supervisor.

Employees using the shared space must:

- Wear a cloth or disposable face mask when in the shared space.
- Avoid touching their face while wearing a mask.
- Sanitize hands when entering the space with the sanitizer provided.
- Sanitize any surface/objects before and after touching.
- Sanitize hands when leaving the shared space.
- Clean high-touch surfaces, door knobs, light switches, water cooler, microwave handles, etc. two times per day (once midday, once at the end of the day).

Based on current evidence about COVID-19 and similar coronaviruses, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently via respiratory droplets when people are in close contact for a prolonged



amount of time. Transmission of coronaviruses in general occurs much more commonly through respiratory droplets than through contaminated surfaces, objects or materials. It is unknown how long the virus may remain viable on surfaces but evidence for other coronaviruses suggested hours to days depending on the material. [Please see the MRU COVID Current Restrictions for more information.](#)

Eliminate shared equipment in your workspace where possible. This includes items such as office supplies or dishes. Equipment such as copiers, printers or kitchen appliances that must be shared should be wiped down with sanitary wipes or spray between users, and users should wash or sterilize their hands before and after each use.

CLEANING PROCEDURES

Department employees present in shared spaces will ensure increased daily cleaning of high-touch surfaces that are accessible to multiple employees during a work day. High-touch surfaces represent a higher probability of viral loading in the work area, and should be routinely disinfected and cleaned.

The recommendation is two times a day; however, employees can wipe down surfaces more frequently if required. The following are examples of locations and equipment with high frequency of handling and contact:

- Door handles
- Light switches
- Sink handles, levers and/or controls
- Shared computers
- Bench tops
- Shared seats – backs and armrests
- Lab drawers and cabinet handles
- Fridge/freezer doors
- Fume hood and biosafety cabinet sashes and switches
- Micropipettes and other shared tools
- Faucet and water cooler taps
- Equipment handles/latches and controls/touch pads

Do not touch your face or other materials while performing decontamination.

How often should I sanitize my personal work area?

Equipment and surfaces will vary in how often they need to be cleaned. As a general rule, these areas should be cleaned at least daily and between users when space or equipment is shared.

To clean and sanitize:

1. Clean visibly dirty surfaces with soap/detergent, warm water and paper towel prior to disinfection.
2. Spray the surface with disinfectant until damp and allow to dry.
3. If using sanitizing wipes, wipe the surface and allow it to dry.
4. Dispose of paper towels in the organics bin or sanitary wipes in the landfill bins.
5. Wash hands immediately after disposing of paper towel / wipes, for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water.

Cleaning of moldy food containers found left in a fridge

Employees may find food containers that have been left in a fridge since March 2020. Cleaning and maintaining fridges in a department are the responsibility of that department. Containers with moldy food should be placed in the department's landfill bin. Any moldy fruit or open containers of food in the fridge, should be picked up with a plastic bag and discarded in the landfill bin. After all food has been removed the wire shelving and fridge liner can be cleaned with the sanitizing wipes or a cleaner that your department may already have.

If your fridge is overgrown with mold or if you have concerns with the contents, close the fridge, put an out of service note on it and contact EH&S for inspection and further instructions.

WASTE DISPOSAL PROCEDURES

Paper towels and wipes used to decontaminate the shared space must be disposed of in the appropriate bin after each cleaning/disinfection (organics and landfill, respectively).

MAINTENANCE

Ensure shared spaces have an adequate supply of materials such as disinfectant, disinfectant wipes, hand soap and paper towels. Disinfectant, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer can be obtained by completing the [EH&S Safety Supply Request Form](#). Paper towel or hand soap dispenser refills can be obtained by submitting a [Frontline](#) service request.

Disinfectants can be:

- 70% ethanol or isopropanol (this is appropriate for use on electronics)
- 10% bleach solution (1000ppm sodium hypochlorite) – 80mL of bleach to 3.8L of water
 - Bleach solutions must be freshly prepared – diluted bleach is effective for disinfection up to 24 hours. Ensure the bleach or sodium hypochlorite has not expired.

Disinfectants appropriate for the novel coronavirus must be approved by Health Canada and have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). Materials supplied by EH&S meet this requirement.

DEFINITIONS

Cleaning: The removal of pathogens, dust, dirt and oils from surfaces. It does not kill pathogens, but it lowers the risk of spreading infection by removing the dust, dirt and oils that encapsulate pathogens.

Coronavirus: The novel coronavirus, now named severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), as per the World Health Organization.

COVID-19: The disease caused by the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2).

CSA: Canadian Standards Association



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Disinfecting: A proper disinfection requires the area to be cleaned before it can be chemically treated to effectively reduce and deactivate pathogens on the surface. The surface must remain damp with disinfectant for at least one to five minutes, as directed by the products label, to maximize the efficacy of the disinfectant.

Employee: Volunteers or individuals who work for the University under an employment or apprenticeship contract, including faculty, staff, exempt employees, management employees; and undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate students carrying out work for the University.

Employer: A person who employs one or more workers, including volunteers, or a person designated by an employer to be the employer's representative. At MRU, this includes all management employees.

Management employee: The President, Vice-Presidents, Associate Vice-Presidents, Deans, Directors, Managers, Supervisors, Chairs, Team Leads and all employees classified as management employees by Human Resources.

Sanitizing: Using appropriate chemicals to reduce pathogens on surfaces. This process does not remove and kill pathogens the way cleaning and disinfecting does, but **reduces**, kills or deactivates the pathogens to lower the risk of spreading infection.

Shared space: Any commonly used space that is dedicated to specific departments, such as offices, kitchen areas, shared office spaces, meeting rooms, copier rooms, storage rooms, etc.

REVISION HISTORY		
Date	Revision	Notes
July 2020	01	Creation of Safe Work Guideline
September 2020	02	Removed additional PPE for work area disinfecting (not needed)
May 2021	03	Added fridge cleaning