

# Cleaning Office, Workspaces and Facilities During a Pandemic

During an influenza pandemic, workplaces should focus on office, workspace and facility cleaning. To limit the spread of the influenza virus, organizations should consistently implement the following cleaning activities:

- Inspect and replace filters of air conditioning systems regularly. If filters must be reused, clean with a disinfectant in the concentration that the manufacturer recommends;
- Clean telephone sets for each phone, especially in common areas, after each shift;
- Regularly clean all common areas, counters, desk tops, door handles, railings, sinks, washroom utilities, etc. daily or more frequently as necessary;
- Individual headsets for each person should be available;
- Consider removing all magazines/newspapers from reception areas or common rooms.

For standard workplace settings, such as office facilities, cleaning can be accomplished with water, detergent and mechanical action (such as scrubbing) with a sufficient amount of contact time. This will reduce or eliminate reservoirs of potential pathogenic organisms.

Although detergents are adequate for most work environments, some facilities may require enhanced cleaning practices.

For enhanced surface cleaning, the solution recommended for use is as follows:

- Diluted household bleach (1:50 bleach to tap water ratio) with 1000 parts per million (PPM) of useable bleach.<sup>1</sup> One can also consider using any disinfectant that is mixed in accordance with manufacturers guidelines.

The following precautions should be taken when using diluted household bleach for enhanced surface cleaning:

- Should be used in well-ventilated areas;
- Protective clothing should be worn while using and handling diluted bleach;
- Do not mix with strong acids like ammonia to avoid release of chlorine gas;
- Should be used immediately once diluted;
- Can be corrosive to metals;
- Follow safe procedures as listed on the MSDS or the manufacturers' instructions when using cleaning and disinfecting agents.

Alcohols (60-95%) can be used on smooth metal surfaces, tabletops, noncritical equipment used for home health care, or any area where bleach cannot be used. Allow to completely dry.

Frequent cleaning of your environment will protect against the spread of the influenza virus.

<sup>1</sup> Ontario. Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. *Best Practices for Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization*. (April 30, 2006) p 62.



Main Office