



Vehicle and Equipment Cleaning

Question(s):

How and what should we use to clean surfaces in vehicles, so we don't damage surfaces?

What should we do if we run out of wipes to clean vehicles?

Answer:

Do's:

- Washing hands and cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces are two of the best ways to defend against spreading the coronavirus, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Clean/disinfect the vehicle at the start/end of each shift or employee rotation.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces, including the steering wheel, door handles, shift lever, any buttons or touch screens, wiper and turn signal stalks, passenger and driver door armrests, grab handles, and seat adjusters, sun visor, anything touchscreen, the console and cup holders.
- It's important to clean a visibly dirty surface to rid it of dirt and debris before disinfecting.
- Use disposable towels for cleaning, place in a plastic bag after use and throw away in a covered garbage container.
- Click [HERE](#) for a list of disinfection wipes, sprays, and cleaners that have been identified to fight COVID-19. This list should be used in conjunction with the guidance provided in this question.
- If available, most disinfecting wipes claim they can kill up to 99.9% of germs. If used appropriately, they may be effective against COVID-19.
 - Make sure to follow the instructions and recommended precautions on the label.
- You want to do the best with what you have, so even soap and water can chip away at the risk.
 - Consider any supplies you may need such as a spray bottle, refillable jug of water, soap, etc.
 - Use regular soapy water to clean hard surfaces throughout the cabin. [The soap doesn't need to be antibacterial](#); regular hand soap or dishwashing soap is effective against the coronavirus.
 - Soap and water are also safe for most car interiors, especially fabrics and older leather that may have begun to crack.
 - Allow time for cloth surfaces to dry and don't over wet surfaces.
- Use alcohol solutions that contain at least 70 percent alcohol; they are effective against coronavirus, according to the CDC. For the most part, nearly every interior surface of a vehicle can be cleaned with isopropyl alcohol.



- Car manufacturers use isopropyl alcohol for cleaning parts in their own factories. They use it to clean smudges or any kind of last-minute details before shipping.
- Most products from plastic trim to painted chrome to imitation leather have been tested to ensure they don't degrade when exposed to pure isopropyl alcohol. It's even possible to rub the exterior surface of soft cloth upholstery with alcohol in order to clean it.
- For cloth seats, a spray like Lysol is considered effective when given time to dry.
- Allow cleaners to remain on surfaces before wiping off.
 - The surface that you are disinfecting will need to stay wet for the amount of time listed on the label. This step is important because the contact time is what is required to kill the germs. When in doubt use 20 seconds.
- Allow proper ventilation. Open doors and/or windows when cleaning and allow surfaces to dry before sealing the vehicle.
- Once you're finished cleaning, don't forget to wash your hands before and after.
- Disposable gloves can protect your hands against harsh cleaning chemicals. They're especially helpful for picking up trash between shifts.
 - Dispose of the gloves by peeling them off your hands, turning them inside out in the process (read manufacturer's instructions for donning/doffing).
 - [The CDC recommends washing your hands immediately after removing the gloves.](#)
- Note: At the Gas Pump:
 - Take the same precautions as with any other outside surface. If you can't wash your hands after using the pump, use a disinfecting wipe or hand sanitizer. You could also carry disposable latex or plastic gloves for filling up.

Don'ts:

- Don't use bleach or hydrogen peroxide on the inside of your car. While they can both kill coronaviruses on surfaces, they will likely damage your car's upholstery.
- Don't use ammonia-based or alcohol-based cleaners on car touch screens, as they can damage their anti-glare and anti-fingerprint coatings.
- Don't splash water over the infotainment system, the steering wheel or electronic locations.
- Don't over-use sprays/chemicals/wipes since other employees may be more sensitive to smells.
- Most leathers are dyed, and cleaning too vigorously can remove the dye.
- When using soap and water: The goal is not to create too many suds. If you get suds, you'll have suds forever.
 - If you soak through the fabric down to the cushion beneath, it could end up creating a musty smell or encouraging mold growth in the cushions.
 - Instead, lightly agitating the fabric with a small amount of water and laundry detergent.



- Avoid reusable gloves where stocks of disposable gloves are available. Reusable gloves can hold onto the germs and spread it to other surfaces if they cannot be washed between uses and allowed to dry thoroughly.
- **Note: Wearing gloves will not stop transmission if you touch a potentially contaminated surface and then touch your face or other surface with the gloves on.**

Availability of Approved Disinfectants

Due to high demand of commercially available disinfecting solutions many of the State's vendors and local sources may have limited supplies to complement the procedures outlined in this guideline. As a replacement for commercially available disinfectants, diluted household bleach solutions and alcohol solutions with at least 70% ethyl or isopropyl alcohol may be used to meet the intent of this guideline. As a last resort, when disinfecting methods are unavailable, employees shall use gloves (chemical gloves recommended) if it is practical and does not hamper the safe operation of the vehicle's controls.

Note: Never use alcohol near ignition sources including pilot lights, running motors and welding/cutting torches; and, never smoke while using alcohol.

- **Bleach Solution** Diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. After using bleach, ensure the vehicle cabin is well ventilated before using the vehicle again.
 - Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - For buckets: 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water.
 - For spray bottles: 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water.
- **Alcohol Solution** Alcohol is effective against many viruses. Isopropyl alcohol or ethyl alcohol (70%) is a powerful broad-spectrum germicide and can be used to disinfect plastic, glass and metal vehicle surfaces. Since alcohol is flammable, limit its use as a surface disinfectant to small surface-areas and use it in well-ventilated spaces only away from ignition sources.

When mixing an alcohol solution, it is important to know that most isopropyl or ethyl alcohol is already diluted for household or consumer use. Therefore, ensure that what you purchase contains a minimum of 70% alcohol and then use it directly from the container. No further dilution is required unless you purchase alcohol above the 70% content.

- **Use Gloves During Operation** If the above disinfecting solutions are unavailable or incompatible with vehicle surfaces, a final countermeasure recommended is for employees to use gloves (preferably chemical or nitrile gloves) during the operation of the vehicle or equipment. This recommendation is to be followed only if, when using gloves, it does not hamper the driver's ability to safely operate the vehicle controls. By reducing skin contact to vehicle surfaces, the probability of transmitting germs to a vehicle surface is severely reduced; thus, the need to clean and disinfectant commonly touched surfaces is also reduced or eliminated altogether.

Note: If leather or synthetic gloves are used instead of chemical (nitrile or rubber), it is important to know these gloves cannot be disinfected and may transmit germs across surfaces. The cleaning and disinfecting procedures above will need to be followed.