

## Coronavirus-COVID-19 Guidance - March 13, 2020



**The information developed for this guidance was taken largely from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov>. It is important to note that the information is still developing as world health officials learn more about this strain of virus. We will continue to monitor the situation and adjust any guidance as needed.**

### **Coviden 19 Stats**

- The virus is transmitted from person to person by exposure to large respiratory drops (by sneezing!), and by direct contact. The infection itself takes place in the respiratory tract. The recommendation at this point is to take the same precautions as a flu outbreak. Wash hands frequently or

use hand sanitizer and when sneezing do not cover your mouth and nose with your hand but sneeze into the crook of your arm.

- Transmission of Covid-19 to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented. Transmission of coronavirus occurs much more commonly through respiratory droplets than through objects or materials which are likely to carry infection, such as clothes, utensils, and furniture. Current evidence suggests that novel coronavirus may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials, according to the Centers for Disease Control. At this time testing has only been done on hard surfaces, as more information regarding textiles becomes available we will be sure to get information out to you.

### **Risks To Drycleaning & Laundry Personnel**

The risk when transporting and cleaning linen from the general public is considered very small at this point. General standard hygienic procedures that you have outlined for your plant are appropriate such as:

- Wash your hands regularly.
- Cough and sneeze in the inside of your elbow.
- Use tissues.
- Routine cleaning of hard surfaces with a disinfectant.
- Availability of hand sanitizers throughout the plant and counter area.
- Drivers should routinely use hand sanitizers and wipe down the steering wheel and other hard surfaces frequently handled.

## **Cleaning Garments From The General Public**

There is no need to take any special precautions AT THIS TIME. The CDC advises that the drycleaning process, which includes cleaning and pressing, is effective on most viruses.

As is true with other viruses, laundering in hot water, 160°F and with chlorine bleach is the most effective method for sanitizing laundry. If hot water and chlorine bleach are not safe for the items then laundering with a disinfectant product is an option. The CDC states the laundering with detergent alone is an effective method.

## **Cleaning Linens Suspected Of Being Contaminated With Bodily Fluids**

Follow Blood borne Pathogens Guidelines for handling and laundering. See DLI bulletins OSHA 4 & 5 and R & L 10 for further information.

- The customer or care institution can or must supply the linen marked and packaged separately.
- Other guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) on the handling of linen need mentioning. If linen is to be transported on routes, then the soiled linen must be separated from the clean linen. Any containers used to transport clean linen, if previously used for soiled linen, must be properly decontaminated. Containers need to be labeled appropriately.
- Personnel should wear protective clothing if there is a risk of direct contact with biological agents (for example in the event of splashing). Replace and launder protective clothing in the event of contamination.
- Washing should be done at high temperature, 160°F, for 25 minutes with chlorine bleach.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q: "Can the virus be transferred from someone else's clothes to my clothes?" From Customers**

**A:** There is little chance of this type of transfer occurring. First the virus only lives for a short period outside the body. Second the cleaning process kills the virus on any garment and all garments.

Take time to reassure your customers on the hygienic measures you are taking in the store. They will appreciate that you are wiping down the counter and having staff wash their hands or use hand sanitizer frequently.

Some cleaners are having counter staff wear disposable gloves. This not only gives peace of mind to your staff but also sends a signal to your customers that you are aware of the situation and taking precautions.

### **Q: "Can I get the virus from handling the general public's garments?" From Staff**

**A:** The virus only lives for a very short time outside the body, so there is little chance that your employees will contract the virus from touching people's garments. Any case, reassure your staff that there are disposable gloves available and allow the time to wash their hands and use hand sanitizer as frequently as they need to.

### **Q: "Can I get the virus from handling the general public's linens?" From Staff**

**A:** There is little risk from handling any type of linen from the general public.