

## **Guidance to Mitigate the Transmission of COVID-19 and Other Seasonal Diseases through Vehicle Cleaning & Disinfecting**

The safety and wellbeing of our employees is a core value of WSDOT. This guidance is to mitigate the transmission for COVID-19 and other seasonal diseases through exposure from the daily operation of our fleet vehicles and equipment. By employing regular cleaning and disinfecting practices we can effectively minimize the transmission of these diseases while utilizing vehicles and equipment.

Recent studies indicate bacteria and viruses, including COVID-19 (coronavirus), can live on surfaces in excess of 72 hours. This resiliency provides a source of contamination for the next operator or occupants in our vehicles. Surfaces including metal, plastic, glass and other hard surfaces harbor bacteria and viruses, and by touching these surfaces, employees can transfer pathogens to their eyes and mouth; or, spread germs to other commonly-touched surfaces outside the vehicle that can lead to an illness.

Cleaning and disinfecting these surfaces with approved cleaners and disinfectants removes the vast majority of bacteria and viruses that cause flu, colds and other seasonal illnesses reducing the probability of transmission.

### **Definitions**

- **Cleaning:** refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. Cleaning does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection. Cleaning is typically performed using soap, detergents, cleansers and clean water before using a disinfecting method.
- **Disinfecting:** refers to using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface *after* cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection. Disinfecting is typically performed using approved commercial or household disinfecting solutions.

### **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 guidance. See WSDOT's Disinfection of Surfaces Pre-Activity Safety Plan (PASP) for preferred chemical disinfectants located on Safety's web page [here](#). As a last resort, when disinfectants are unavailable, employees shall use gloves (chemical gloves are 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.**

**Note: Never smoke while using alcohol.**

**Note: Never mix bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Use one or the other. Use either an alcohol solution or use a bleach solution but never mix the two together.**

## A. Preferred Chemical Disinfectants

The Disinfection of Surfaces PASP is located on the Safety office's web page at <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/16AE71C4-F8CA-42B5-8A8C-D7B0F0283CC4/0/PASPDisinfectingSurfacesPASP20200416B.pdf>.

## B. 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 use it directly from the container. No further dilution is required unless you purchase alcohol above the 70% content.

## C. Use Gloves During Operation

If the preferred chemical disinfectants 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.**

**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.**

## Guidance for Maintenance Vehicles and Equipment

Routine cleaning methods should be employed with special attention in certain areas as specified below:

1. Employees should use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as disposable gloves and eye protection, such as a face shield or goggles when mixing concentrated materials into secondary containers for daily use.

**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.**

2. The secondary containers must be properly labeled to prevent adverse reactions between chemicals (i.e. bleach, alcohol hydrogen-peroxide and other chemicals which are clear liquids and can cause hazardous vapors if mixed).
3. Many of the surfaces in the cab and associated compartments can be cleaned with soap and water using paper towels or disposable rags, according to the vehicle

manufacturer's recommendations. Avoid using cleaning methods that cause splashing or generate aerosols. To avoid splashing, spray the cleaning agent into the rag/cloth instead of spraying directly onto the surface.

4. Avoid using excessive amounts of water only dampen the cloth or rag. Using excessive amounts of water inside the vehicle could damage the equipment.
5. It is always best practice to wear nitrile or rubber gloves while cleaning and when operating the same piece of equipment that other drivers operate. Especially during cold and flu season or when a general health alert is issued.
6. Dispose of gloves and soiled material in a sturdy, leak-proof bag that is tied shut and not reopened.
7. When cleaning has been completed and gloves have been disposed, immediately clean hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based (no less than 70% alcohol per CDC recommendations) hand gel and wash hands with soap and water as soon as feasible. Avoid touching the face with gloved or unwashed hands.
8. Do not use compressed air, water under pressure, or any other methods of cleaning that can cause splashing or which might re-aerosolize infectious material. If there is debris that needs vacuumed out of the cab, the vacuum cleaners should only be used after proper disinfection has taken place on frequently touched surfaces (see list below).

Examples of frequently touched surfaces:

- Cab door switches
- Cab door grab handle and surface
- Steering wheel
- Ignition key
- Gauges and switches on dash and in cab
- HVAC on louvers on dash
- Exposed dash surfaces
- Radio controls
- Seat adjustment knobs
- Two-way radio mike and knobs
- Freedom or another spreader controller
- Overhead console doors and locks
- Cup holders
- Steering column-mounted stalk controls (turn signals, cruise controls, windshield wiper)
- Manual/automatic transmission shift lever
- Seat covers (vinyl, fabric, or leather)
- Cabinet door handles
- Reflector kits
- First aid kits
- Air horn cable
- Fire extinguishers
- Seat belt buckles
- Hood latches
- Dip sticks, lids/caps under the hood

#### Additional Precautions:

1. Thoroughly clean surfaces at the beginning and end of each shift. Items inside the cab such as the steering wheel and control switches shall be wiped down, whereas items outside the vehicle such as the door handle can just be sprayed.  
To verify this has been conducted note this in the vehicle walk around sheet in the comments section.
2. Some vehicles have a clipboard and pen, ensure clipboard and pen are also wiped down during the cleaning process.
3. The container that is used to keep the spray/disinfectant must **not** be kept in any vehicle and should be kept at the work location for other people to have access to the cleaning material.
4. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
5. Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, not your hands.
6. Clean surfaces frequently to prevent the spread of common viruses and diseases.
7. Avoid coming into close contact with co-workers.
8. Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose, and mouth.