



April 9, 2020

To: All Employees

From: Pandemic Working Group

Re: **COVID-19: White House Notes ~ Cleaning Surfaces ~ Genome Tracing**

White House Briefing. Last night, following the President’s comments, noting that persons with underlying conditions were the most severely affected by the pandemic, Dr. Deborah Birx reiterated that “everyone is susceptible of getting infected, not just those with underlying conditions” (such as asthma, hypertension, heart disease and diabetes). She surveyed trends within the U.S., finding that the NY-NJ-CT-RI area was experiencing 11,000 new cases per day with a 40% positivity rate of those tested, while, at the milder end of the spectrum, Los Angeles metro is experiencing 800 new cases per day and only 9% positivity. She was followed by Dr. Anthony Fauci, who found encouragement in the fact that daily hospitalizations, ICU admittances and intubations in New York City were leveling off. He added that “mitigation is having a positive effect, but you don’t see it until weeks later.” Consistent with these observations, we remain committed toward keeping our employees healthy and our workplaces safe.

Cleaning Surfaces. As per CDC guidelines, it is imperative to keep shared surfaces clean in order to help contain the pandemic. This is especially important in public places, but also applies in the workplace (where numerous people may use the same door handles, railings, etc.) and at home. The chart to the right, which is based upon information provided by the New England Journal of Medicine, shows the length of time during which the coronavirus can live on various surfaces. Two surfaces of particular interest are paper money, which can carry the virus for up to four days and disposable masks, which can do so for up to seven days. In light of these facts, it is prudent to use cash as infrequently as possible and to discard medical grade masks after one day’s use. As per the pictogram at the end of this advisory, we are providing CDC’s recommended guidelines for cleaning surfaces properly. As you know, we have doubled up on cleaning at our locations and continue to encourage frequent handwashing.



How the Virus Got to the U.S. According to an article from today’s New York times, using genome tracing from thousands of cases, geneticists from Mount Sinai and New York University in separate studies came to the same conclusion that the COVID-19 virus came to the New York region through people traveling back from Europe. Knowing that a virus mutates slightly each time it spreads from one person to the next, researchers collected and analyzed the genome of the virus from patients in different regions at different times. When a particular mutation that had infected multiple people in the EU

mysteriously appeared in New York City, researchers concluded that that version was carried from one region to the other. Researchers also found that this virus was silently transmitting within New York weeks before the first positive test result on March 1. In similar studies, researchers in Washington state concluded that the virus first appeared in that region from one or more persons traveling back from Wuhan Province in China. Using similar methods, researchers from Penn State University have determined that the virus's genome makes it clear that it arose from bats, possibly the Chinese horseshoe bat. As a point of encouragement, researchers note that the typical mutation occurring in a single transmission are insignificant and that, like other viruses, COVID-19 should be vulnerable to a single vaccine.

General Cleaning Guidelines. The CDC has issued guidelines on how to clean surfaces most efficaciously for control of the COVID-19 virus. We have captured them below for your convenience.

## COVID-19 Guidelines for Cleaning & Disinfecting at Work

*The CDC's everyday steps for cleaning & disinfecting our workplace*

### How to clean & disinfect:

- Wear disposable gloves to clean and disinfect.
- Clean surfaces using soap and water.
- Practice routine cleaning of **frequently touched surfaces**: sinks, doorknobs, light switches, desks, countertops, handles, toilets, faucets, tables, keyboards, etc.

- Then, use disinfectant.**
- An EPA-registered household disinfectant is recommended.
- Alcohol solutions (at least 70% alcohol) / diluted bleach household solutions may be used (4 tsp bleach per quart water).

### For soft surfaces:

- Including carpeted floor, rugs, fabrics, and drapes
- Clean surface using soap & water / with appropriate cleaner / laundry.
- OR disinfect with an EPA-registered household disinfectant.

### When cleaning:

- Wear disposable gloves (& gowns, if available) for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap & water for 20 seconds. Always wash immediately after removing gloves.
- Hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) may be used if hands are not visibly dirty.
- Additional key times to wash hands:
  - After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
  - After using the restroom
  - Before eating or preparing food
  - After contact with animals or pets
  - Before & after providing routine care for a person (i.e. a child)

*If you have questions on any of these matters, please contact either Kelly Willmott ([kellyw@amvac.com](mailto:kellyw@amvac.com)) or Tim Donnelly ([timd@amvac.com](mailto:timd@amvac.com))*