



## Large Residential and Multifamily Residential Buildings: COVID-19 Disinfection and Social Distancing Guidance

March 21, 2020

There is currently widespread transmission of COVID-19 in Massachusetts. Owners and managers of large residential properties in Cambridge **must take certain actions to reduce the risk of coronavirus transmission in their buildings**, with particular attention to lobbies and shared facilities. This guidance is intended for owners, managers, and facilities staff. Additional guidance for owners/managers: [https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/Housing/documents/MF\\_Corona\\_QA\\_FINAL\\_3-12-20.pdf](https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/Housing/documents/MF_Corona_QA_FINAL_3-12-20.pdf).

### Staff Precautions

- **SICK EMPLOYEES MUST STAY HOME.** No staff should be allowed to enter the residential building, at any time, if they have symptoms of **body ache, fever, cough, and/or nausea**. Health status of employees should be established before they show up for work.
- All employees should wash their hands frequently with soap/water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

### Social Distancing

- Building occupants from different households **should keep a six-foot distance from each other** in common areas.
- Staff should ensure, using signage and regular checks, that the six-foot social distancing rule is strictly observed in all common areas. For instance:
  - **Elevators should be limited to 1-2 people at a time.**
  - Tenants, staff, and visitors should **not** gather—even in small groups—in common areas, such as laundry rooms, game rooms, and lobbies.
  - Staff who have direct contact with tenants and visitors **should practice social distancing.**
  - **Package delivery:** Leave packages outside the tenant's door. No in-person delivery.
- We recommend temporarily closing all unnecessary amenities, including lounges and fitness rooms, in the building.
- In shared facilities that do remain open (laundry rooms and lobbies), staff should increase cleaning during this time with an emphasis on all high-touch surfaces (see next section).

### Cleaning and Disinfecting

Work with your custodial staff to identify and prioritize potentially contaminated surfaces.

- Identify all high-touch surfaces (both public access and employee-only areas) for **twice-daily cleaning or more for the most highly touched surfaces**. Conduct a team walk-around to document targets and create a checklist.
- **We recommend 3-4 times daily cleaning** of front door panels, doorknobs and lobby counters.
  - **Most common disinfecting agents are effective.** For the most active high-touch surfaces it is best to rely on disinfection agents that contain bleach (1:50), H2O2 (1:11) or alcohol (65%+). For the list of EPA-registered products for use against the new coronavirus, see: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- Double-check for **proper preparation and concentration** according to label.
- **Clean visible dirt from surfaces before disinfection** and make sure to leave disinfectant on surface for **long enough to kill microbes** as directed on product.
- **Work from standardized spreadsheet or checklist** for continuity during staff hand-offs.
- Additional CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>



Common Public “high-touch” surfaces	Personal “high-touch” surfaces
Lobby or office door knob Doorknobs to shared space Elevator buttons (all, inside and outside) Washers and dryers in Laundry Room Apartment amenities Concierge desk/ Service counter Conference tables, but not personal desks Bathroom sinks, faucet handles, flush knobs Water fountains Railings Utensil dispensers (in cafeterias or common kitchens)	Keyboard and mouse on desks Laptop keyboards Mobile phones and desk phones Office doors Chair hand rests Staff refrigerator doors Cabinet or storage shelf doors and handles Pens Eyeglasses Dishes and cups FAX machines and printers touch points

### Laundry Facilities

- Shared laundry facilities (high-touch points) should be disinfected 2-4 few times a day.
- Drying on high heat for 45 minutes will kill the virus, which is fragile and easily destroyed. Hang drying delicate items outside is fine. Detergents with bleach are preferred, but not strictly necessary.
- Dryer exhaust does not pose a risk of spreading the virus if set to higher temperature.
- Contaminated clothes (used by/around a sick person) should be washed with detergent at highest temperature and transferred directly to dryer. The sick person’s laundry **should not** be combined with laundry from well household members. Well household members can combine clothes in laundry loads, as long as laundry is washed with detergent at high temperature.
- Machines should be empty-washed with dilute bleach solution twice a day, ideally.
- Encourage residents to use laundry room during off-hours and establish a maximum occupancy that will allow social distancing.
- Towels should be washed separately, as they can host higher pathogen loads.

### Custodial Staffing and Supplies

- Identify additional staffing capacity and supplies needed to complete twice-a-day coverage of all high-touch surfaces (especially where the public has access).
- If your building does not have janitorial services during the day, consider contracting daytime services or asking other employees and residents to volunteer their time.
- Make sure any cleaning staff, custodial contractors, and resident volunteers use gloves, long-sleeve pants, and shirts to protect themselves from exposure to cleaning products.
- Take an inventory of cleaning supplies to determine when you will run out. Supply chains are unreliable and the use of alternative products may be needed, so plan ahead.
- Consider using more widely available liquid disinfectants and detergents with warm water since they will be easier to restock. For product list, see: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>.
- Use disposable wipes (alcohol, bleach) only when other disinfectants will not work so supplies last longer.

### Ventilation

No special ventilation precautions are strictly necessary for residential buildings. The main transmission pathway of the coronavirus is person-to-person with close contact (6 feet or less). Though it is plausible for the virus to linger as a micro-droplet (e.g., in elevators and crowded common areas), there is not strong evidence that the virus can spread through HVAC systems in a residential building. However, if tenants/staff seek greater assurance, we recommend:

- Installing high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters for the HVAC system in the building. The HEPA filter can filter out 99% of particle larger than 0.3 μm which can significantly reduce the risk of aerosol transmission
- Increasing outdoor ventilation by opening windows is strongly encouraged, but may increase allergic symptoms, so encourage anyone with a history of allergies to medicate.