

## **WORKPLACE SAFETY GUIDELINES – COVID-19**

### **Cleaning & Disinfection – Research/Teaching Workspaces**

*Updated August 19, 2020*

Concordia is taking the necessary steps to ensure the safety of its community members within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This guide also answers some frequently asked questions regarding cleaning strategies. The university has implemented new cleaning procedures developed in accordance with CNESST protocols and requirements, including increasing the frequency of cleaning in high traffic areas (corridors, washrooms, kitchenettes) and high touched surfaces (light switches, door handles and elevator buttons).

Concordia has also implemented several required preventative measures to protect the health of faculty and staff returning to campus during the pandemic. Supervisors are prioritizing return to campus plans based on which activities and personnel are most essential. Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) is carrying out on-site workplace inspections, particularly in areas that handle hazardous materials, prior to resumption of activities, to ensure Concordians return to a safe environment. Those Concordians returning to campus also receive a detailed EHS orientation.

#### **How is Concordia improving its cleaning procedures in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?**

- Hand sanitizer stations are located at campus entry points and security desks, as well as in various locations on campus;
- Security is using restricted access lists, as well as following a COVID-19 screening protocol to control access to buildings on campus;
- Frequently touched surfaces (e.g., door handles and elevator buttons) and shared/common spaces (e.g., washrooms, kitchenettes and breakrooms) are cleaned more frequently;

#### **How often is Concordia cleaning different areas on campus?**

Concordia’s increased cleaning schedule varies depending on the area.

Area	Frequency per day	Frequency per week
Campus access points	2 times per day + intense cleaning at night	7 days
Circulation areas <i>Corridors, elevators, stairs</i>		7 days
Washrooms	2 times per day + intense cleaning at night	7 days
Lounges/Kitchenettes	1 time per day + intense cleaning at night	7 days
Labs/Studios/Shops	1 time per day (evening)	7 days

**PLEASE NOTE:** The university campuses are closed. This cleaning schedule is only for areas where activity has been authorized to resume. Washrooms in unoccupied areas are locked. Unoccupied areas are not being cleaned.

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For any questions or concerns, please contact Facilities Management by phone at extension 2400, or by e-mail at [call2400@concordia.ca](mailto:call2400@concordia.ca).

### **How can I clean my own space?**

As a general rule, custodial personnel will clean floors and door handles. However, custodial staff will not clean equipment, machinery and tools. Individuals who are in charge of a lab or studio are responsible for cleaning its equipment. Custodial personnel will not clean workbenches either seeing as some contain material that is incompatible with the staff's cleaning products.

If you notice your floor is visibly dirty, you can contact Facilities Management by phone at extension 2400, or by e-mail at [call2400@concordia.ca](mailto:call2400@concordia.ca).

Before you begin cleaning, carefully select a disinfectant solution. As a basic principle, no one should use chlorine-based solutions such as bleach or Clorox to disinfect surfaces. Chlorine is aggressive both on surfaces and lungs. Chlorine is also a reactive material. When mixed with standard detergents or chemicals frequently used in laboratories or studios, including flammable products, oxidizers and acids, chlorine can react and expose individuals to harmful vapors.

Concordia no longer uses chlorine as a general cleaning agent on campus. Other cleaning solutions are just as effective and less dangerous. You should opt for quaternary ammonium products such as Decon™ Conflikt or [Coverage NPD Disinfectant](#).

For work surfaces such as workbenches, Concordia recommends you follow the two-step process widely used to disinfect biosafety cabinets:

1. Spray diluted soap on the surface and wipe it with brown paper. This is an excellent way to remove potential viruses, bacteria and other microbes because:
  - a. detergents are effective against COVID-19 and destroy microbes present on work surfaces
  - b. wiping ensures the active removal of microbes, debris and other dust particles that can be present on work surfaces
2. Use isopropanol or denatured ethanol 70 per cent solutions to help dry the work surface and kill whatever remains after the first step. This part of the process is not necessary if you carried out the first step properly.

For equipment and machinery, make sure the solution you use is compatible with the manufacturer's recommendations.

You can disinfect most equipment, tools and machinery using the following two cleaning solutions:

- For computer screens and monitors, use a 30 per cent isopropanol solution. A proper cleaning paper or rag may be necessary depending on the monitor or screen. Spray the solution on paper and gently wipe the surface.
- For other equipment, use a 70 per cent isopropanol solution. Spray the solution on paper and gently wipe the surface.

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## When should I clean my space and equipment?

Good hygiene etiquette suggests you should consider cleaning your work surfaces before and after their use. Follow the soap and alcohol procedure mentioned above to properly disinfect your work surfaces.

☞ **Always test** the cleaning solution on your equipment using a small surface to make sure it doesn't cause any damage.

- Clean **pens, brushes, pipettes and small tools** as much as possible. Always make sure you have your own equipment and tools. If you need to share with others, implement a cleaning-after-use protocol. Gently spray alcohol or diluted soap on the tool, wipe it with brown paper and discard the paper.
- Wearing gloves when using **laboratory materials** such as vortex, centrifuge and benchtop equipment is very effective. Implement a twice per day cleaning procedure for this type of equipment.
- Always make sure your **machinery** is off or **furnaces** are cold before cleaning. Be mindful of all moving parts and elements that could fall, as well as machine doors. Never spray alcohol directly on a machine. Always spray the solution on a rag and then clean the machine.
- Use a 70 per cent alcohol solution for **larger tools**. Wipe with a rag rather than brown paper to avoid leaving crumbs. Spray the 70 per cent isopropanol solution on the rag and gently wipe the surface.
- For **computer screens and monitors**, use a 30 per cent isopropanol solution. A proper cleaning paper or rag may be necessary depending on the monitor or screen. Spray the solution on paper and gently wipe the surface.
- To avoid leaving bits of brown paper, use a rag to clean your **keyboard and mouse** rather than brown paper. Spray a 70 per cent isopropanol solution on the rag and gently wipe the surface.

For more specific equipment, contact EHS to review your cleaning procedure. You can reach them by email at [ehs@concordia.ca](mailto:ehs@concordia.ca), or by phone at extension 4877. EHS can assist you in preparing a local cleaning plan, including the specific needs of a workshop, studio, laboratory, or instrument room.

Keep in mind that you may affect your material by repeated cleanings or powerful solutions. For example, if you spray a solution directly on your keyboard instead of on a rag, you may damage your equipment. If you use a cleaning agent that is not compatible with your equipment, you might stain or damage it.

## Can I leave my door open at all times?

The ventilation in Concordia's buildings accommodates different needs in terms of cooling and fresh air distribution. The central ventilation system has been adjusted with closed doors in mind.

In spaces where individuals handle hazardous materials or operate 3D printers, the difference in air pressure between public areas and the laboratory ensures that no fumes, particles or contaminants escape. Keeping the door closed ensures you will not expose other members of the community to hazardous materials.

For security reasons, it is good practice to close doors to computer labs, studios, shops and other spaces with valuable equipment.

### **What happens if someone leaves and re-enters a studio, workshop or lab?**

People will have to leave a studio, workshop or lab many times during the day, whether it's to go to the restroom or to take a lunch break.

In an effort to reduce contact with door handles, washroom doors will remain open whenever possible. This will ensure that people who leave a washroom will have clean hands when they return to their workspace. In addition, many work areas have a sink for people to wash their hands upon their return.

The university will not provide hand sanitizing solutions for every laboratory, studio or shop. Soap and water are much more effective against COVID-19 than hand sanitizers. Also, most hand sanitizers can dry and crack your skin after repeated use. Cracks can open your body up to various contaminants such as chemicals, viruses and other microbes.



*Refrain from using hand cream during the day since it might cause a reaction with your regular hand sanitizer. Apply any hand cream after leaving the campus.*

**Questions about cleaning/disinfecting? Contact Facilities Management by phone at extension 2400, or by e-mail at [call2400@concordia.ca](mailto:call2400@concordia.ca).**

**Questions about COVID-19? Contact EHS at [ehs@concordia.ca](mailto:ehs@concordia.ca) or by phone at extension 4877.**