This fact sheet provides information on how to perform cleanup measures in areas that may be contaminated by an infectious disease, such as influenza, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), or novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The procedures outlined will help control or minimize the spread of possible infectious diseases among individuals and in the community.

**BACKGROUND**
A severe pandemic (defined as a worldwide epidemic) in a vulnerable population, such as the 1918 flu pandemic, represents a worst-case scenario for pandemic planning and preparedness. Communities, individuals, employers, schools, and other organizations are asked to prepare and plan for the use of interventions that will help limit the spread of disease. Pandemic concerns have escalated due to the more recent impacts of disease outbreaks such as the SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) in 2002, pandemic H1N1 in 2009, MERS coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in 2012, and novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in 2019. Future disease outbreaks are likely, but difficult for scientists to predict.

**Personal Protective Equipment**
Employees cleaning buildings in areas where contamination from an infectious disease is a concern should take the following precautions:

- Personnel doing general cleaning where infectious disease is a concern should wear disposable vinyl gloves and safety glasses but typically do not need to use protective clothing, masks, or respirators.
- Personnel who clean where a person suspected of having an infectious disease has been should wear disposable vinyl gloves and eye protection (goggles or face shield). NIOSH-certified disposable N95 respirators (masks) may be necessary depending on the infectious disease.

**Cleaning for Infectious Disease**
Depending on the infectious disease, the virus may survive on environmental surfaces for a duration of time and can infect a person. In the workplace, the CDC recommends cleaning surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact. Frequently clean all commonly touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas, and follow the directions on the label. No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended.

**Hygiene and Housekeeping Practices**
Supervisors of cleaning personnel should be aware of the symptoms of suspected infectious disease that they are cleaning for. Any employee who cleans a building that has been occupied by a person suspected of having an infectious disease should notify their supervisor if they develop similar symptoms within 10 days of cleaning the building. The main source of airborne infectious particles will have been removed once a person suspected of having an infectious disease leaves the building. Personnel cleaning potentially contaminated facilities should practice frequent handwashing with soap and water (see “Pandemic Planning—Personal Hygiene” fact sheet). Cleaning personnel should also follow these additional recommendations:

- Remove and discard gloves if they become soiled or damaged while cleaning.
- Discard gloves after you have finished cleaning (do not wash or reuse gloves worn during cleaning).
- If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand wash to clean hands.
- Frequently touched surfaces in the building (such as armrests, doorknobs, and latches) and bathroom surfaces should be wiped down with an EPA-registered low- or intermediate-level chemical household germicide and allowed to air dry in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.

The CDC recommends the use of EPA-registered chemical germicides that provide low- or intermediate-level disinfection during general use against infectious agents, because these products are known to deactivate viruses with physical and biochemical properties similar to other viral agents.

Disposable N95 respirators should be used in the context of a complete respiratory protection program. Refer to the respiratory protection program in the Church Safety, Health, and Environmental Manual. A respiratory protection
program includes medical determinations; fit testing; training; and properly maintaining, cleaning, inspecting, and storing respirators. Order respirators from local safety suppliers. If respirators are not available locally, submit a purchase requisition to the area purchasing manager.

REFERENCES

"About Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)." CDC. https://www.cdc.gov/sars/about/index.html


"Interim Domestic Guidance on the Use of Respirators to Prevent Transmission of SARS." CDC. https://www.cdc.gov/sars/clinical/respirators.html