



# COVID-19 WORKPLACE PROTOCOLS



## **Environmental Health Interim Guidelines and Procedures for the Reopening of Public Facilities /Spaces for COVID-19**

### **Introduction**

A Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) was declared for the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) / COVID-19 on 30 January 2020 by World Health Organization (WHO) Director General (DG) based on the number of persons affected. On the 11th March, 2020 – WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

Jamaica confirmed its first case of COVID-19 on March 10, 2020. The Government of Jamaica has mounted an intense prevention and control programme for the outbreak. Prevention and containment is a key strategy to minimize the impact on Jamaica's labour force. The Ministry of Health & Wellness (MOHW) is providing the following information to guide employers in support of this strategy.

When someone who has COVID-19 coughs or sneezes, they release droplets of infected fluid, which in most cases fall on nearby surfaces and objects - such as desks, tables, telephones etc. Persons can become infected with COVID-19 by coming into contact with these contaminated surfaces or objects – and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

Where persons are standing within two meters (6 feet) of an infected person, the infected individual can transmit the disease by droplets expelled through coughing, sneezing or exhalation.

The risk of spread and exposure to COVID-19 can be reduced through:

- regular cleaning and disinfection,
- hand and respiratory hygiene,
- physical distancing,

- effective risk communication,
- training and education,
- management of people with COVID-19 or their contacts

## **Background**

In response to COVID-19, countries across the globe (including Jamaica) have implemented a range of public health and social measures, including movement restrictions, partial closure or closure of schools and businesses, quarantine in specific geographic areas and international travel restrictions. As the local epidemiology of the disease changes, the measures identified may be loosened or reinstated as deemed necessary. As transmission intensity declines, some countries will begin to gradually re-open workplaces to maintain economic activity. This requires establishing protective measures, including directives and capacity to promote and enable standard COVID-19 prevention in terms of physical distancing, hand washing, respiratory etiquette as well as monitoring compliance with these measures.

Careful planning is therefore required to reopen businesses and relevant public facilities. This includes the identification of risks, and the introduction of all measures necessary to mitigate the ill-effects of poorly phased or complete opening.

Every Jamaican (including citizen, employees, and employers) will therefore be called upon to do their part to slow the spread of the virus through social distancing and infection prevention and control practices, as well as the proper wearing of face masks or face coverings. Strict adherence to these measures will contribute to the safety of communities, allowing for the reopening.

## **Scope of the document**

This guideline document is to be used as a basis for decision-making by owners and/or operators of public establishments / facilities, namely:

- i educational institutions,
- ii recreational facilities,
- iii bars,
- iv places of amusement,
- v Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs),
- vi Faith-based Organizations (churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, etc.),
- vii food establishments,
- viii manufacturing and processing plants (e.g., chemical manufacturing, concrete and concrete products, food processing, printing industry, wood product industry),
- ix Points of Entry – Authorized Air and Seaports
- x Health clinics (Food Handlers' Training)
- xi Beauty salons, barbers and cosmetology groups

In addition, this MOHW guideline document will provide the general requirements for each type of establishment / facility/ entity/ business, to ensure the health and safety of all workers / patrons / visitors / users. An outline of the environmental / public health requirements to reduce the risk of transmission or exposure to SARS-CoV-2 virus (COVID-19) is also contained in this document.

## **1. General Considerations for all categories of Establishments / Facilities**

### **A. Establish policies and practices for social distancing.**

- Alter workspaces to allow workers and customers to maintain social distancing and physically separate employees from each other and from customers, when possible.

Strategies that can be employed at businesses:

- i Implement flexible worksites (e.g., telework).
- ii Implement flexible work hours (e.g., rotate or stagger shifts to limit the number of employees in the workplace at the same time).
- iii Implement flexible meeting and travel options (e.g., postpone non-essential meetings or conduct them virtually).
- iv Defer or suspend workplace events that involve close and prolonged contact among participants, including social gatherings.
- v Increase physical space between employees and customers (e.g., drive-through service, physical barriers such as partitions).

## **B. Install and Maintain Effective Ventilation Systems.**

In creating and maintaining a healthy work space, the following considerations are to be implemented with the aim of improving the building ventilation system. This may include some or all of the following activities:

- Ensure ventilation systems operate optimally, and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space.
- Improve central air filtration to the MERV-13 or the highest compatible with the filter rack, and seal edges of the filter to limit bypass.
- Implement preventive maintenance schedules.

## **C. Regular environmental cleaning and disinfection**

Cleaning, using soap and water, with mechanical action (brushing, scrubbing) removes dirt, debris, and other materials from surfaces. After the cleaning process is completed, disinfection is used to inactivate (i.e. kill) pathogens and other microorganisms on surfaces.

- i High-touch surfaces should be identified for priority and periodic disinfection (commonly used areas, door and window handles, light switches, kitchen and food preparation areas, bathroom surfaces, toilets and taps, as per MOHW Guidelines.
- ii Disinfectant solutions must always be prepared and used according to the manufacturer's instructions, including instructions to protect the safety and health of support staff, use of personal protective equipment, and avoiding mixing different chemicals.

## **2. General Considerations for Employees**

Whilst the major responsibility of ensuring safe environments in which to reopen and operate business, is on the owners / operators, employees also impact the effectiveness of maintaining their safety and health and that of other patrons, users or visitors of the place of business. The following considerations are to be noted by employees:

- Report any respiratory signs and symptoms to your physician. If there are no symptoms of COVID-19, persons should return to work with a medical certificate.
- Employees who are well, but have sick family members with COVID-19 are to also report the situation and stay at home.
- Keep informed or updated on developments of COVID-19, especially being aware that SARS-CoV-2 can be transmitted within work environments.
- Be compliant with the measures instituted by workplace policies:
  - Wearing appropriate face coverings (eg. masks) as per the risks and duties to be performed;
  - Maintaining physical distancing;
  - Adhering to proper personal hygiene practices; sneeze or cough etiquette, and hand washing/hand sanitization practices;

- Avoid touching eyes and nose;
- Adhering to the routine cleaning and disinfection measures as per MOHW guidelines
- Regular cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces based on MOHW guidelines;
- Avoid using co-workers' personal devices, office spaces, work tools and equipment
- Participate in related training provided by the employer,
- Report to supervisors any situation which may affect the health of other workers.

### **3. General Preventive Measures to be put in place by the employer**

The following preventive measures are universal for preventing transmission of COVID-19 and applies to all workplaces and all people at the workplace, such as employers, managers, workers, contractors, customers and visitors. They should be implemented and maintained:

#### **A. Hand hygiene**

- i Install hand-washing stations fully equipped with soap, water, disposable hand towels, and hands free garbage bins.
- ii Hand sanitizing stations must be equipped with alcohol-based hand-sanitizers (containing at least 62% alcohol).
- iii Hand hygiene stations, should be placed in strategic locations throughout the workplace.
- iv Appropriate communication materials to promote hand hygiene should be posted in prominent places.



### **B. Respiratory hygiene**

- i Promote respiratory etiquette by all people at the workplace. Ensure that face masks and paper tissues are available, for those who develop a runny nose or cough at work.
- ii Ensure compliance with the requirements of wearing a mask or a face covering in accordance with *The Disaster Risk Management Act, 2015*.

### **C. Physical/Social distancing**

- i Introduce measures to maintain a distance of at least 2 meters between people and avoid direct physical contact with other persons (i.e. hugging, touching, shaking hands).
- ii Reduce density of people in the building (no more than 1 person every 4 square meters), physical spacing at least 2 meters apart for work stations and common spaces.
- iii Where the 2 meters (6ft) is not attainable, physical barriers of 1 meter (3ft) must be installed.

### **D. Risk communication, training, and education**

- i Increase awareness among workers of COVID-19 and promote safe individual practices at the workplace by erecting posters, videos, and electronic message boards.
- ii Conduct periodic training among the staff.

### **E. Provision of facilities for Sick Employees**

Suitable facilities should be provided for sick employees

- ***Separation from other employees***

Identify a room that will be used as a sick bay / holding area. The sick bay should have at minimum an equipped hand-washing station or where not



practicable, the provision of a hand-sanitizer station (equipped with the requisite alcohol content - 62% alcohol).

- ***Sent home arrangement***

Employees presenting with respiratory symptoms who have not been exempted by their physician should be provided with Personal Protective Equipment and should be sent home to seek medical care with the appropriate precautions taken.

#### **4. Measures to be taken where an employee has tested positive for COVID-19**

- Where an employer is informed that an employee is confirmed to have COVID-19 the Health Department should be immediately informed so that the necessary Public Health measures can be put in place. These include;
  - i Interview of the patient.
  - ii Initiation of contact tracing.
- Deep cleaning and disinfection must be conducted within the facility and special attention made for those areas where the infected person(s) was stationed/visited. This must be done in accordance with MOHW guidelines.
- In the event that a large number of persons become infected, this may result in a site lock down.

#### **5. Mask Etiquette**

The MOHW advises the wearing of facial barriers (masks) in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies).

**In addition, the MOHW recommends the wearing of masks in the following situations:**

- If you are taking care of a person with suspected COVID-19 infection.
- If you are ill, i.e., coughing or sneezing.

- Persons who are quarantined or isolated at home with or without respiratory symptoms
- Caregivers of persons who are quarantined or isolated and other members of the household;
- Persons who have had COVID-19 and have been discharged from hospital should wear a mask for two weeks; and
- Elderly and persons with chronic illnesses, who are at high risk, if infected, of developing severe illness and complications of illness. These persons must also avoid ill persons and minimize contact with the public.

Appropriate use of masks / facial coverings is essential to ensure their effective use and to reduce the risk of transmission associated with the incorrect use and cleaning of masks. Masks/facial coverings should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be washed and dried without damage or change to shape

It is expected that all staff employ the measures or steps listed below:

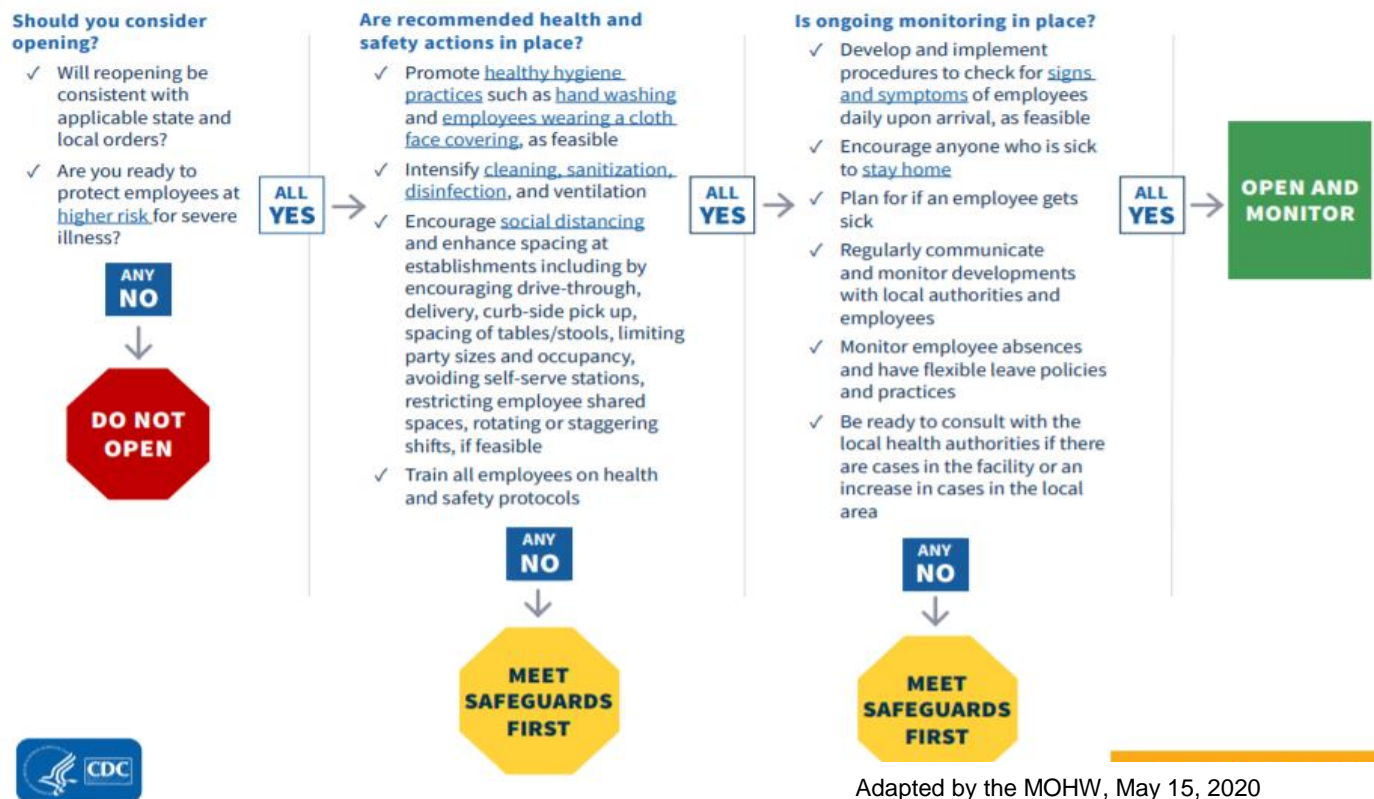
- Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.
- Place mask carefully to cover mouth and nose and tie securely to minimize any gaps between the face and the mask;
- While in use, avoid touching the mask;
- Remove the mask by using appropriate technique (i.e. do not touch the front but remove the lace from behind or using the ear loops);
- Replace masks with a new clean, dry mask as soon as they become damp/humid;

## APPENDIX I

- **Self- Assessment Decision- Tree Process to be used for Businesses/ Establishments/ Institutions/ Facilities in light of COVID-19: Reopening of Public Facilities**

The decision tree outlined below is a schematic flow of all the parameters that has to be place or be met before the operations can be approved or considered for reopening. The purpose of this tool is to assist businesses in making (re)opening decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Where any operator or owner answers **NO** to any of the item areas within the decision tree, reopening will need to be reconsidered or re-evaluated based on the ease of spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, and to protect the safety and health of all employees and customers.

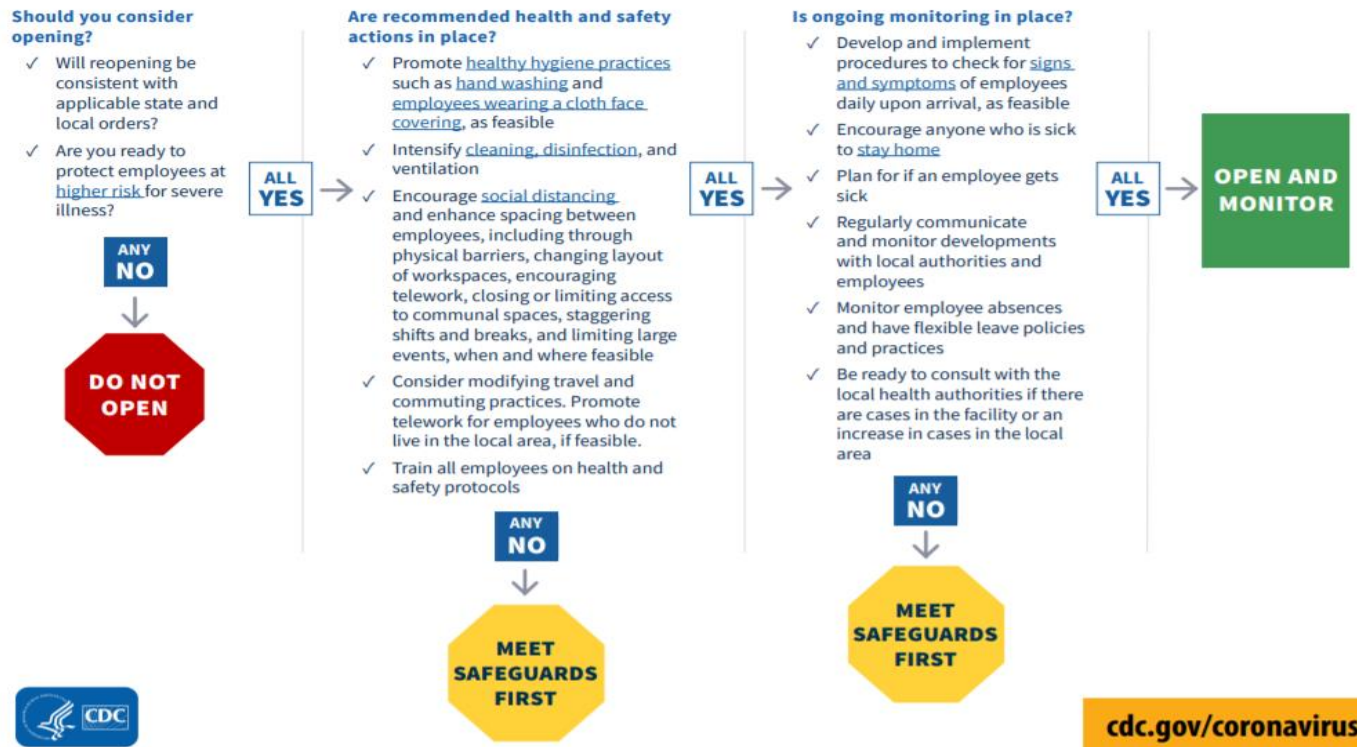
**Diagram 1: Decision-Tree for Restaurants, Bars, Supermarkets and the like**



Adapted by the MOHW, May 15, 2020



**Diagram 2: Decision-Tree for Workplaces**



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Adapted by the MOHW, May 15, 2020

## Appendix II

### Abbreviated Guideline Conditions for different Category of Establishment/ Facilities

Table 1 highlights below the general as well as special considerations (as deemed necessary) for the varying public facilities.

Establishment / Facility	Special Provision (in Addition to general requirements)	Remarks
<b>Educational Institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staggered lunch hour and breaks</li> <li>▪ Staggering opening and closing hours</li> <li>▪ Limited sporting activity in keeping with the general COVID -19 principles</li> <li>▪ Parent teacher’s engagement conducted by class</li> <li>▪ Crowd control barriers instituted</li> </ul>	
<b>Recreational facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain restrooms that remain open. Ensuring they have functional toilets, clean and disinfected surfaces and handwashing facilities and supplies;</li> <li>• Swimming pools to be properly cleaned and disinfected;</li> <li>• Limit the number of patrons to large events/ gatherings</li> <li>• Erect signs advising or recommending social distancing in popular sections of the parks</li> <li>• Erect signs promoting everyday preventive actions</li> <li>• Ensure that all park staff/ support staff are informed about COVID-19 and preventive actions.</li> </ul>	
<b>Bars (Taverns, clubs)</b>	See the Decision-Tree in <b>Diagram 1</b> for considerations on deciding to reopen	



Establishment / Facility	Special Provision (in Addition to general requirements)	Remarks
<b>Places of Amusement</b>	Conform to the general requirements, placing special emphasis on maximum number of persons allowed in any space and social/ physical distancing requirements	
<b>Ministries, Department &amp; Agencies (MDA's)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All MDA's that interface with the public on a large-scale should provide walk-in service to both internal and external clients.</li> <li>• The use of tents should be considered</li> <li>• Where possible provide physical barriers, special floor/ground markings between clients and staff</li> <li>• Ensure the general requirements for COVID-19 prevention are in place.</li> </ul>	
<b>Faith-based Organizations (Churches, synagogues, mosques, temples)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Worshippers sixty-five and over with underlying conditions should not attend church.</li> <li>✓ Families should be encouraged to sit together whilst observing physical distancing and other personal protective measures</li> <li>✓ No handshaking, group prayers or hugging should be allowed.</li> <li>✓ No congregating should take place on the premises after services</li> <li>✓ A team should be assigned to ensure all measures are adhered to.</li> <li>✓ If microphones are used by multiple individuals, same should be sanitized between each use, using 70% alcohol.</li> </ul>	<p>Special provisions or considerations are to be made for cases when a congregant becomes or shows signs/ symptoms of COVID-19. Considerations could include but are not limited to: having ample supply of disposable face masks; arrange for transportation for persons (done in accordance to the MOHW guidelines); Church members with comorbidities that require them to stay home or are</p>



Establishment / Facility	Special Provision (in Addition to general requirements)	Remarks
		<p>“shut-ins”, care visits are to be contacted by telephone or other virtual means.</p> <p>Also, church-based institutions could make visits by assigning special members of the church board who have experience in IPC measures (that could be a practising nurse or doctor or other health care provider).</p> <p>Limit the number of persons that will make up that delegation for home visits whilst ensuring the general COVID-19 prevention measures are observed.</p>
<b>Food Establishment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Dining taking into consideration the six feet physical distance</li> <li>✓ Encourage pick-up services</li> <li>✓ Discourage dining services unless the density of persons to building can be controlled and physical distancing achieved and maintained</li> <li>✓ Encourage the use of out of door dining for patrons</li> </ul>	



Establishment / Facility	Special Provision (in Addition to general requirements)	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Avoid the use of self-serve stations</li> <li>✓ Restrict employee shared spaces</li> <li>✓ Limit or control the waiting period for diners at reservation booths</li> <li>✓ Implement the use of scheduled dining for groups of persons within eatery</li> <li>✓ Where large families are desirous of using the dining facilities, limit the number of members seated at a one table. Suggest the use of outside dining.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Manufacturing and Processing Plants</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) requirements in place to facilitate proper ventilation</li> <li>✓ Ensure that the hierarchy of controls (Administrative, Engineering &amp; Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):</li> <li>✓ Configure communal work environments so that workers are spaced at least 6 ft apart.</li> <li>✓ Use physical barriers such as strip curtains, plexiglass or other impermeable dividers/ partitions to separate manufacturing workers from each other if possible</li> <li>✓ Consult with HVAC engineer to ensure adequate ventilation is in work areas to help minimize worker's potential to exposures</li> <li>✓ Discourage the use of pedestal fan or hard mounted fans which oscillate from one worker directly to another. Personal cooling fans should be removed from the workplace to reduce potential spread.</li> </ul>	





Establishment / Facility	Special Provision (in Addition to general requirements)	Remarks
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ For hand-washing requirements please see MOHW guideline documents</li> <li>✓ Reduce crowding at clock in/out stations</li> <li>✓ Rearrange chairs in breakrooms and other areas where workers may frequent</li> <li>✓ Include adequate number of sanitizing stations</li> <li>✓ Limit facility access only to essential workers.</li> <li>✓ If meetings must be held, such as at shift changes, break them into smaller groups instead of holding a larger meeting. Eliminate non-essential meetings.</li> <li>✓ Encourage single-file movement with a 6-foot distance between each worker through the facility, where possible.</li> <li>✓ Designate workers to monitor and facilitate distancing on production or assembly line floors.</li> <li>✓ Ensure that Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP's) are adhered to</li> </ul>	
<b>Points of entry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Conform to the general requirements</li> <li>✓ Conform to specific guidelines for points of entry</li> </ul>	
<b>Health Clinics (Food Handlers Training and for other suspended activities)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Apply the similar measures as for Ministries, Department and Agencies requirements.</li> </ul>	

## APPENDIX III

### Guideline on Cleaning and Disinfection

#### General Cleaning

Cleaning refers to the removal of visible dirt, grime and impurities. Cleaning does not kill germs but helps remove them from the surface. Increasing daily cleaning and disinfection of common areas utilized by the public is one of the primary strategies to prevent COVID-19 transmission.

Cleaning of public spaces includes, but is not limited to, the following procedures:

- Gather and remove (sweeping) all trash, debris and accumulated material from surfaces (roadways, walkways, drains).
- Garbage receptacles (bins and skips) should be enclosed, emptied and cleaned as per pick-up schedule.
- Regular refuse collection (twice weekly) is recommended. Followed by pressure washing of the area.
- During general cleaning a simple soap solution can be used to remove organic matter that may be present on surfaces and special attention should be paid to door knobs, light switches, bus/taxi sheds, rails, staff rooms, desktops, washrooms and other high touch surfaces.

#### Disinfection

Disinfection refers to the use of chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This is most effective after surfaces are cleaned. Both steps are important to reduce the spread of infection.

- When using commercially prepared disinfectants be sure to follow the instructions on the label to disinfect effectively. Alternatively, bleach can be used to prepare a solution that is as effective as commercially prepared disinfectants.

#### Steps for Disinfecting Surfaces

- Clean and flush surfaces with soap and water before disinfecting, and for pavements and walkways flush with ample supply of water



- Prepare disinfection solution as per disinfection guide provided in Table 1 below
- Apply chlorine bleach and water solution to the entire area to be disinfected
- For frequently touched surfaces wipe extensively and allow to air dry

### Preparing a bleach solution by mixing

**Table 1: Disinfection Solution Guide**

<b>Water</b>	<b>Bleach Strength 5.25% (Household Bleach)</b>	<b>Bleach Strength 8.25% (Industrial Bleach)</b>
1 Gallon	3 Tablespoons	2 Tablespoons
55 Gallon	165 Tablespoons or 2.4 litres (0.64 gallons)	110 Tablespoons or 1.63 litres (0.43 gallons)
500 gallon	1,500 Tablespoons or 22 litres (5.87 gallons)	1,000 Tablespoon or 14.79 litres (3.91 gallons)

### Preparation Tips

- Prepare a fresh bleach solution each day in a well ventilated area that is separate from children
- Label bottles of bleach solution with contents, ratio and date mixed.
- Use cool water. Always add bleach to cool water, NOT water to bleach.
- Wear gloves and eye protection.
- Prepare solution in an area with an eye-wash.

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