Cleaning Products and COVID-19

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As states begin to reopen and people return to office, retail and manufacturing facilities, the question of effective disinfection takes on new urgency. Although social distancing, controls and personal protective equipment (PPE) all play a role in COVID-19 response, hygiene should not be overlooked. Recommended procedures for enhanced cleaning and disinfection of workplace surfaces are available from the CDC and the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), which both refer to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) registered disinfectants that meet the criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2 on surfaces. More information on cleaning and disinfecting surface products can be found in a previous article at "Cleaning & Disinfecting Amid COVID-19, Health & Indoor Air Quality Implications". For new organisms such as COVID-19, the EPA has the Emerging Viral Pathogens policy, which allows companies who have already passed EPA registration on "harder to kill" viruses to say that their products can be used against the current viral pathogen, with the expectation that a product already effective against norovirus, rhinovirus and certain other viruses will be effective against SARS-CoV-2 on surfaces.

The "EPA Pesticide Registration List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2" is available online and contains a 17 page list of products that meet EPA criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2. List N allows for search by EPA registration number, which can be found on the product label, and includes the registration number, active ingredient(s), the product name, disinfection directions, and contact time. Hand sanitizers, antiseptic washes, and antibacterial soaps are not included on List N and are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). List N only includes EPA-registered surface disinfectants (www.epa.gov).

As a supplement to List N, the EPA has recently launched a new interactive tool (List N Tool: COVID-19 Disinfectants) for searching using various search parameters to aid in finding products that suit specific needs, including EPA registration number, active ingredient, use site, contact time, and/or keyword. Once criteria are selected, the results display the EPA registration number, active Ingredient(s), product name, company, which disinfection directions and preparation to use for which virus, contact time (one minute or less, five minutes or ten minutes), formulation type (such as dilutable, wipe, towelette, ready-to-use), surface type (such as hard nonporous, food contact, post-rinse or no rinse required,) and use site (such as healthcare, institutional, and/or residential).

Some products on the EPA List N which may already be "under the kitchen sink" and may be easier for non-commercial buyers to obtain include various disinfecting cleaners, spays and wipes, with recognizable brands such as:

- Fantastik® All-Purpose Cleaner and Multi-Surface Disinfectant Degreaser

- Soft Scrub with Bleach
- Windex Disinfectant Cleaner
- Lysol® Disinfecting Wipes (All Scents), Bleach Mold and Mildew Remover, Clean & Fresh Multi-surface Cleaner, Disinfectant Spray, Neutra Air® 2 in 1, All Purpose Cleaner, Deodorizing Disinfectant Cleaner, Kitchen Pro Antibacterial Cleaner
- Clorox Multi Surface Cleaner + Bleach, Pet Solutions Advanced Formula Disinfecting Stain & Odor Remover, Disinfecting Bleach1 and Bleach2, Performance Bleach1, Clean Up Cleaner + Bleach, Disinfecting Wipes, and Ultra Clorox Brand Regular Bleach
- PURELL Professional Surface Disinfectant Wipes

The CDC has indicated that diluted household bleach solutions may also be used (if appropriate for the surface) with a recommended dilution of 5 tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of water (https://www.cdc.gov/). The CDC further recommends first checking the label to see if the bleach product is intended for disinfection and making sure the product has not passed its expiration date. Follow the manufacturer's instructions as far as application and proper ventilation, and do not mix bleach with ammonia or other cleansers. To be effective, the solution should be left on the surface for at least one minute. The CDC further has identified alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol as effective.

It should be noted that common use areas like kitchens and pantries should be addressed separately, and only cleaners and disinfectants approved for food preparation surfaces should be used in these areas. And, of course, be sure to assess the appropriateness of any given cleaner for the surface you intend to clean and consider testing first in an inconspicuous place.

Following recommended hygiene procedures and selecting the proper products for disinfection/cleaning of SARS-CoV-2 on surfaces is only one part of an effective COVID-19 response and should not be prioritized above or used instead of measures such as engineering controls, social distancing, hand washing, and PPE. Remember when adding new chemical product to the workplace you should keep records of and/or post MSDs and other safety measures such as wash stations and eye wash stations. Furthermore, information and guidance surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic are rapidly evolving and following reliable and recognized resources are vital for businesses to return to work safely, to provide their workforce the comfort and assurances needed to return to the workplace, and to protect customers and clients and thereby the company brand and reputation. Our qualified health and safety professionals can help tailor an infectious disease control plan / return to work plan, including hygiene precautions, to fit your specific needs. More information on important components of an infectious disease plan is described in detail in a previous RHP article titled "Pandemic Infectious Disease Plan: Returning to a New Normal".

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For more resources concerning COVID-19, visit https://rhprisk.com/coronavirus/