



Communiqué

PSPC Property Management Direction for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

April 3, 2020

Scope

The purpose of this document is to communicate PSPC's property management approach during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

This functional guidance applies to all PSPC real property inventory, including crown-owned, lease-purchase, and leased facilities including those managed by a third party real property contractor.

Context

On December 31, 2019, the World Health Organization was alerted to several cases of pneumonia in Wuhan, China. The virus did not match any other known virus. On January 7, 2020, China confirmed COVID-19. Since then, there has been a global spread of the virus which has left health professionals on high alert.

Health Canada's Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) is working with provinces, territories and international partners, including the World Health Organization, to actively monitor the situation. Global efforts are focused on containment of the outbreak and the prevention of further spread. PHAC is working closely with the medical community to ensure that any cases of COVID-19 occurring in Canada continue to be rapidly identified and managed in order to protect the health of Canadians.

By mid-March, 2020, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and provincial leaders introduced social and physical distancing measures in an attempt to flatten the curve of COVID-19 spread within Canada. This meant that federal employees in non-essential services were asked to telework.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) How does COVID-19 spread?

Human coronaviruses cause infections of the nose, throat and lungs. They are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- respiratory droplets that are spread when you cough or sneeze
- close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- touching something with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands

IMPORTANT: The virus is not known to spread through ventilation or water systems.

2) How can I protect myself from getting COVID-19?

First, stay calm and don't panic. You can stay healthy and prevent the spread of infections by:

- washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds;
- avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands;
- avoiding close contact with people who are sick;
- coughing or sneezing into your sleeve and not your hands; and
- staying home if you are sick to avoid spreading illness to others.

3) From a property management perspective, has Health Canada's PHAC recommended any enhanced cleaning protocols to which we should be implementing in our assets?

Property & Facility Management Service Line (PFM SL) and Technical Services Service Line (TSSL) have been in contact with Health Canada to inquire about enhanced proactive cleaning/disinfecting protocols that PSPC should consider implementing within our assets.

Effective March 23, 2020 and until further notice, PSPC has amended their standard cleaning specifications to increase the cleaning/disinfecting frequency of high touch points to twice daily (from once daily). HC guidance is that standard cleaning products can continue to be used. A list of high touch points were included in the March 20, 2020 communication to the property management community found in the Reference section below.

Health Canada has also published guidance on [Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces \(COVID-19\)](#).

For areas experiencing a shortage of cleaning personnel, resources may need to be mobilized and cleaning priorities adjusted to meet these new disinfecting protocols. This may include focusing on areas of buildings that are occupied while reducing non-essential levels of service in unoccupied areas.

Note that these new provisions do not include disinfecting client workspaces or their equipment. These, as well as other services above the new protocols, would still be considered an additional building service (ie printers, keyboards).

Reinforcing the importance of frequent hand washing remains the cornerstone of preventing the spread of infections.

We also encourage you to proactively discuss Health Canada's direction with your clients. Should enhanced cleaning or installation of sanitizing stations still be requested, normal tenant service processes apply.

4) What are the levels of cleaning services offered during the COVID-19 pandemic?

PSPC has always offered cleaning services to clients above the standard specifications for clients' unique program requirements. During the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, PFM SL uses the following three definitions of cleaning:

Standard cleaning: cleaning that follows the standard cleaning specifications of PSPC or its service providers. This cleaning is offered at no additional cost to the client.

Enhanced cleaning – Any request for cleaning/disinfecting services requested by the client that exceeds the services laid out in the standard cleaning specifications.

Specialized cleaning and disinfection – cleaning/disinfecting services requested by a client as a result of an employee with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19

5) What if a client requests additional cleaning/disinfectant in their space?

There are numerous reasons why clients may approach you to discuss implementing enhanced cleaning protocols so empathy and patience is vital. These may include public-facing services (ie border crossings), areas with a high flow of visitors, high traffic areas, employee apprehension, etc.

First, reassure your clients that PFM SL has been liaising with Health Canada and our standard cleaning specifications are in line with their current guidance. If enhanced disinfection/cleaning is requested, design a cleaning plan in collaboration with the cleaning contractor and client as a tenant service/additional building service.

Client requests that are national in scope are being coordinated through Client Relationship and Demand Management who are working with the [National Service Call Centre](#) (NSCC) to have these requests reported. All others should be reported to the NSCC for tracking purposes.

6) Should COVID-19 publication material be posted in buildings?

In an effort to increase awareness on proper handwashing techniques and factual awareness on COVID-ID in general, PFM SL is requesting that property managers post the following:

Elevators and/or common space areas: [Know the Facts About Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\)](#)

Washrooms: [Get The Upper Hand on Germs Poster](#)

7) Should hand sanitizers be installed within our assets?

During a March 6, 2020 presentation to a Director General Interdepartmental Committee, PFM SL committed to enhancing our proactive measures by installing hand sanitizers (where availability exists) outside tenant space (ie building entryways).

Hand sanitizing stations installed and maintained within tenant space should be done so via tenant service/additional building service and based upon availability.

8) Are PSPC buildings operating during the COVID-19 pandemic?

While social-distancing measures are being imposed across the country and non-essential federal employers are teleworking, PSPC buildings remain open. Life safety systems continue to operate normally with completion of mandated and lifecycle maintenance.

In response to concerns about contractors in buildings, a communication to clients was disseminated indicating that occupants should not prevent or obstruct maintenance or project work from being carried out or contractors from entering the space as the work being performed is necessary.

9) What should I do if a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified in an asset that I manage?

Employees or their managers should report all suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 immediately to PSPC's [National Service Call Centre](#). Due to privacy laws, employees should remain anonymous; manager names and general work area should be used for investigation and follow up.

PSPC property managers or their service providers should report all suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 following the 10A Critical Incident Reporting protocols.

Based on advice from PHAC, evacuation of the building is generally not required, however, this is an employer decision and not a PSPC decision and will also depend upon the cleaning and disinfection product(s) being used and their application method. Employers should notify the building's Occupational Safety and Health committee (OSH) as part of their employer responsibility for direction on how to further prevent the spread of disease.

PSPC or their service provider should react quickly in mobilizing cleaning contractors for required disinfecting processes. It is imperative that PSPC or their service provider work with the employer to design and implement an appropriate disinfection plan which may include (but not limited to):

- employee's and surrounding workspaces
- elevator control panel and buttons
- horizontal surfaces on in boardrooms
- door handles/knobs
- frequently touched horizontal surfaces in stairwells and landings
- water taps, dispensers, door plates, counter tops, and flush valves in the washroom.
- washroom partitions, doors & door latches.
- kitchen and lunch room areas including appliances, sinks/faucets and furniture.

Please note that reactionary measures in response to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 are to be funded by the client organization as a tenant service/additional building service.

10) What is the process for cleaning/disinfecting after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is reported?

When performing cleaning and disinfection as a result of a suspected or confirmed case, TSSL has confirmed the following two stage process should be followed.

It is important to engage the health and safety committees and employer representatives when performing these cleaning and disinfection activities so that they are aware of the products and application methods being used in the work space. Some employees may have increased sensitivity to the products being used. As such, their employers need to be aware of products being applied in the workplace so that they can evaluate the need for alternative work arrangements.

A. Cleaning:

Cleaning products remove germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces by using soap (or detergent) and water. Cleaning does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

B. Disinfection:

Disinfecting products kill germs on surfaces using chemicals. Health Canada has provided guidance that a solution of 1 part bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite) to 9 parts water can be used for disinfecting most surfaces. Health Canada has also published a [list of hard-surface disinfectants](#) effective against coronavirus (COVID-19). These should be reviewed by cleaning contractors to ensure their disinfection agents conform to the recommendations.

A disinfectant can be applied either by a manual method or mechanical sprayer (eg. electrostatic).

The product (disinfection chemical and application method) technical sheet **MUST** be consulted to ensure proper product application. Key elements to review include:

- Dilution
- Appropriate usage
- Application methods
- Product dwell time

The product Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) **MUST** be consulted to ensure proper safety measures. Key elements to review:

- personal protective equipment (PPE) for the person applying the treatment (employer responsibility)
- active chemical ingredients
- Occupants not wearing PPE are to vacate the area while treatment is being performed
- Determine ventilation requirements for the space before occupants return

11) Is an electrostatic sprayer required for applying disinfectant?

The electrostatic sprayer can be an acceptable method for application of disinfectant but Health Canada has not provided guidance indicating that it is any more or less effective than traditional disinfectant application processes. As such, the use of the electrostatic sprayer relates to operational considerations (eg. speed of application) as opposed to effectiveness. The electrostatic sprayer is another tool that can be deployed and is likely most useful in situations where there is a large area to disinfect.

12) Who is responsible to communicate to building occupants when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19?

Communication with employees is an employer responsibility.

The Canada Labour Code (CLC) Part II sections 125(1) (s), states that the employer shall "ensure that each employee is made aware of every known or foreseeable health or safety hazard in the area where the employee works"; and (z.11), which states the employer shall "provide to the policy committee, if any, and to the workplace committee or the health and safety representative, a copy of any report on hazards in the workplace, including an assessment of those hazards."

With alternative working arrangements being imposed for many federal employees, the impact on building occupancies, and the ways in which a positive case could be reported (ie by employer, manager, through Public Health case tracing, etc), it would be prudent during this health crisis that PSPC or its service providers confirm with the employer that the building's OSH committee has been notified.

Due to privacy laws, the identity of the person with the confirmed case should remain private.

13) What are the steps involved in preparing PSPC's assets for occupants' return to work once social distancing provisions have been lifted?

Technical Services Service Line and PFM SL are developing guidance in this regard. It is important that PSPC be informed ahead of time of occupants intended date of re-occupancy so that the appropriate measures can be taken to ensure a safe, healthy and welcoming environment for employees.

Reference Material

The following is a list of COVID-19 proactive and collaborative communications, presentations, and publications that PFM SL has used to demonstrate leadership to our building tenants. Please note that this list will continue to evolve as needed.

Item	Action
<p>Communication to property management community to increase cleaning/disinfection to 2X daily on high-touchpoints – March 20, 2020</p>  <p>Coronavirus - Communication on Er</p>	<p>For non PSPC employees, please refer to the Federal-Provincial-Municipal COVID-19 Resources GCwiki</p>

<p><u>Communication to client community on increased cleaning protocols - March 23, 2020</u></p>  <p>Coronavirus - Communication to Cli</p>	<p>For non PSPC employees, please refer to the Federal-Provincial-Municipal COVID-19 Resources GCwiki</p>
<p><u>Communication to clients and contractors regarding projects - March 2020</u></p>  <p>COVID-19 - Message to Occupants and Cor</p>	<p>For non PSPC employees, please refer to the Federal-Provincial-Municipal COVID-19 Resources GCwiki</p>
<p><u>List of hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus (COVID-19)</u></p>	<p>For Information</p>
<p><u>Public Health Agency of Canada guidance on cleaning and disinfecting of public spaces</u></p>  <p>cleaning-disinfecting-public-spaces.pdf</p>	<p>For Information</p>
<p><u>Presentation - PSPC COVID-19 Preparedness - March 6, 2020</u></p>  <p>Coronavirus Disease 2019 - PFM SL Prepar</p>	<p>For non PSPC employees, please refer to the Federal-Provincial-Municipal COVID-19 Resources GCwiki</p>
<p><u>COVID-19 Communication to Employers via CRDM – March 3, 2020 - bilingual</u></p>  <p>Coronavirus - Communication to err</p>	<p>For non PSPC employees, please refer to the Federal-Provincial-Municipal COVID-19 Resources GCwiki</p>

<p>Know the Facts About Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)</p>	<p>For posting in building elevators</p>
<p>Get The Upper Hand on Germs Poster (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety)</p>	<p>For posting in washrooms</p>
<p>COVID-19 Communication on Cleaning Protocol – February 4, 2020</p>  <p>Coronavirus - Communication on cl</p>	<p>For non PSPC employees, please refer to the Federal-Provincial-Municipal COVID-19 Resources GCwiki</p>
<p>Communique to Cleaning Contractors regarding COVID-19</p>  <p>PFMSL Cleaning Contractor Commun</p>	<p>For non PSPC employees, please refer to the Federal-Provincial-Municipal COVID-19 Resources GCwiki</p>
<p>General Flu Season Communication to Building Occupants – January 2020</p>  <p>Flu Season - Message to Building Occupants</p>	<p>For non PSPC employees, please refer to the Federal-Provincial-Municipal COVID-19 Resources GCwiki</p>
<p>Public Health Agency of Canada Infectious Disease</p>	<p>For Information</p>
<p>Government of Canada COVID-19: Outbreak Update</p>	<p>For Information</p>
<p>Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety - Coronavirus Fact Sheet</p>	<p>For Information</p>

Enquiries

Building-specific enquiries should be directed to the real property team assigned to that building.

General enquiries on this document should be directed to the Director, Property and Facilities Management Services Directorate.