

# Safe at Work: COVID-19 Office Building Toolkit



## We're here to help.

In these unprecedented times, some regions remain in quarantine, while others are beginning to reopen after weeks of shutdown. We're still coming to terms with what society and workplaces will look like, and managers are concerned about keeping colleagues safe from COVID-19, while serving customers and core needs.

Facility managers are tasked with preparing office buildings for returning employees. They need to ensure they have the right equipment and products in place to institute a high standard of hygiene, as well as the right cleaning protocol to help remedy colleagues' concerns about infection.

For more than 50 years, we at Tork have been – and continue to be – committed to improving hygiene in establishments around the world by developing and producing complete hygiene solutions and digital cleaning software.

With this guide, we want to share our expertise and provide concrete guidelines on how to execute appropriate hand hygiene and surface cleaning to help you and your colleagues stay well and keep your business operating.

We hope you can reopen your offices in a responsible and sustainable way, keeping yourself, your colleagues and customers healthy and safe.

Sincerely,

**Anna Königson Koopmans**

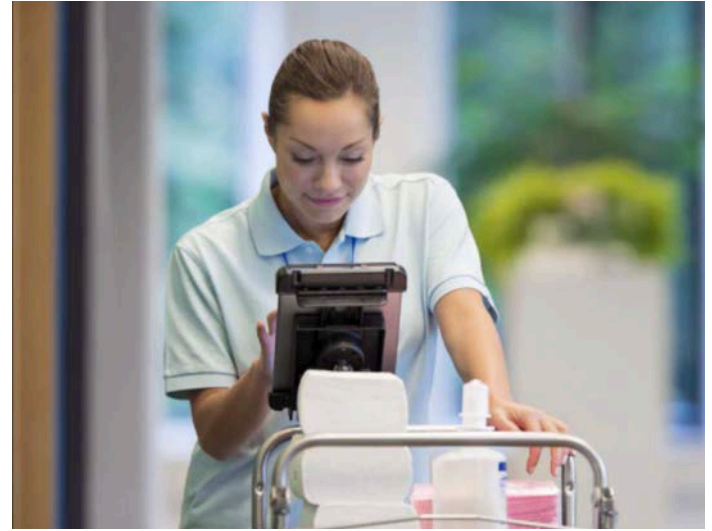
Marketing Director – Office Buildings  
Essity Professional Hygiene



## COVID-19

As office buildings begin to reopen, facilities staff are concerned about preventing the spread of COVID-19 and ensuring sick employees stay home. COVID-19 can spread through droplets produced when an infected employee coughs or sneezes. It may also spread through contaminated surfaces or objects.

But following proper hand hygiene protocols, practicing routine cleaning and disinfecting procedures, and optimizing dispenser placement in your facility can help reduce the spread of COVID-19. This toolkit provides the resources you need to help you reinforce best practices in your office during this outbreak and beyond.



### How can COVID-19 spread in your office building?



**Through the air  
by coughing and  
sneezing**



**Close personal contact,  
such as touching or  
shaking hands**



**Touching an object or  
surface with the virus on  
it, then touching your  
mouth, nose, or eyes**

# Hand hygiene

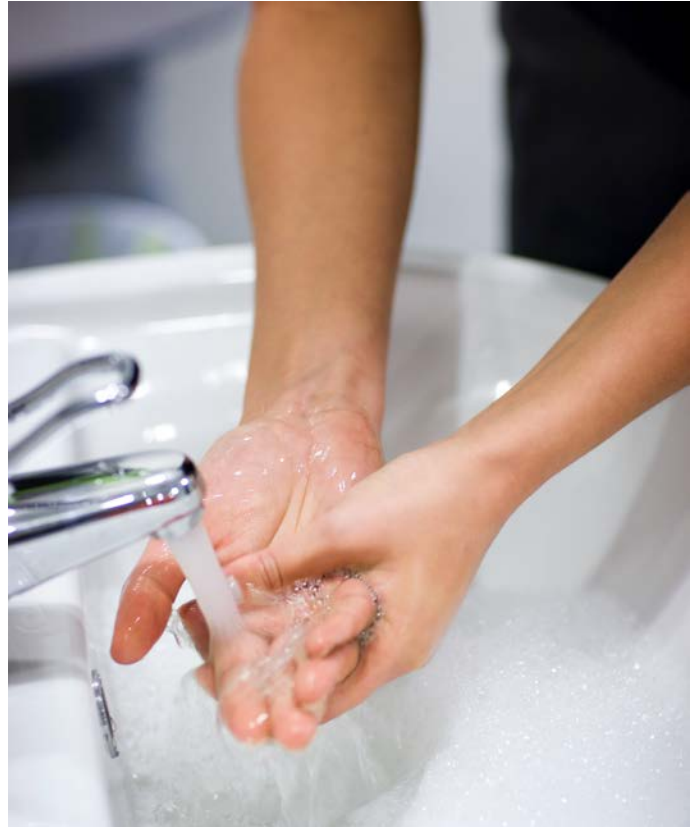
About 70% of offices today have open-plan seating, which makes it challenging to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19. In an office setting, we touch multiple surfaces – such as our keyboards, computer mice and phones – that can be contaminated with a pathogen.

That's why it's more important than ever to practice proper hand hygiene. Employees should wash their hands frequently and properly throughout the day, but especially:

- After nose-blowing, coughing or sneezing
- Before and after preparing food and eating
- After using the toilet or touching trash

Ensure that you provide your employees with a clean, well-stocked handwashing facility and hand sanitizer.

You can promote proper hand hygiene in your facility in several ways, including posting signs near the sinks, restrooms and other high-traffic areas in the facility. Below are some tools and information to encourage proper handwashing and disinfecting techniques among employees.



## Resources

**Handwashing procedure**

Wash your hands with soap, water and paper towels

For more information visit [tork.us](https://www.tork.us)

**Handwashing procedure**

[Download](#)



**Hand Sanitizing**

Disinfect your hands

For more information visit [tork.us](https://www.tork.us)

**Hand sanitizing**

[Download](#)



# Surface cleaning

Office workers can contract COVID-19 by touching surfaces contaminated with the novel coronavirus, so high-touchpoints should be frequently cleaned and disinfected to help reduce the spread of infection. Here are some cleaning tips for different areas within your building:

- **Overall:** High-traffic areas with surfaces being touched often should be prioritized and cleaned frequently. Use disposable cleaning cloths and change them frequently. Make sure your cleaning staff has effective cleaning equipment and gear to protect themselves. Make disposable wipes for cleaning available so employees can clean specific areas when needed.
- **Reception:** Wipe high-touch surfaces such as door handles, touch screens and elevator buttons frequently. Keep wiping solutions close by to make cleaning a swift and smooth task.
- **Office:** Clean shared high-touch equipment such as keyboards, computer mice, printers and phones often and ensure that surface cleaning is carried out regularly. Provide disposable wipes for cleaning so employees can clean their personal space when needed.
- **Restrooms:** Begin cleaning less dirty surfaces and end with the toilet and the floor. Use more than one wipe to prevent spreading germs. Mops and sponges can harbor microorganisms, so cleaners should consider disposable solutions.
- **Breakrooms:** Clean the least dirty surfaces first and the floor last. Greasy or oily surfaces need to be cleaned with hot water and professional cleaning detergents before being sanitized.

Below are some additional resources to help you ensure that your office building remains safe for the people who work there.

## Resources

**Hygiene issues in an open office environment**

It is becoming increasingly evident that cleanliness and hygiene in the workplace is no longer just a matter of nice to have, but is a vital factor for productivity. With more and more offices converting to open concept, people are becoming more frequently sharing facilities and technology, and thereby bringing more hygiene risks than before. As many people, especially younger generations, are also becoming more health-conscious, ensuring a clean and safe work environment for employees becomes more important for possible results and current talent.

Offices are getting more open and less fit to more health environments, this is leading to increased hygiene concerns and needs of around the world. New data from the global COVID-19 (coronavirus) health situation and insights from the Tork Cleanroom show that today's office need to accommodate proactive hygiene solutions, enabling employees to take control over workplace hygiene. Here we set out the steps and trends that will help ensure this new hygiene solution can give a competitive edge in a market where offices are often open concept.

**Open plan offices have both upsides and downsides**

Recent 70% of offices in the US and 73% in the UK have been open-plan offices and while open concept offices have several advantages in a collaborative environment, they do require a higher level of performance and management hygiene strategy with solutions designed for the health and safety environment.

A number of studies have found a correlation between the number of people working in an open and the risk of infection due to bacteria. This is the first study showing open-plan offices are more likely to spread disease.

**Download**

**Tork cleaning for health checklist**

- Put on protective gloves and attire.
- Empty trash and recycling bins—replace liners and make sure to sanitize inside and outside of the waste bins as needed.
- Washroom Cleaning**
  - Clean and sanitize all touch surfaces with a sustainable green cleaning solution. Use a new wipe for each area to reduce cross-contamination.
  - Replace all dispensers to ensure proper hygiene and hand-washing practices can be achieved.
- Mop the floor using a sustainable cleaning solution, with special attention to areas around the toilets and sinks. To reduce cross-contamination consider disposable cleaning options.
- Dust all surfaces including doors, partitions, picture frames, table and chair legs, air vents, blinds and window sills. This will reduce allergens as well as improve indoor air quality.
- Polish and clean high shine surfaces such as glass/mirrors, chrome, steel with sustainable cleaning solutions.
- Floor Care**—move furniture and fixtures as needed to reduce accumulation of allergens and improve indoor air quality.
  - Vacuum carpeted areas with vacuums equipped with HEPA filters.
  - Sweep and mop hard surfaces using sustainable cleaning solutions.

For more information visit: [torkusa.com](http://torkusa.com)

**Download**

**The Value of Data-Driven Cleaning for the Facility Services Industry**

**Introduction**

As the built environment sector opens up to the world of data technology, cleaners need to know to know. The best way to understand the value of data is to understand the value of data technology. The value of data technology is not just in the amount of data generated, but in the way it is used to improve operations. The value of data technology is not just in the amount of data generated, but in the way it is used to improve operations. The value of data technology is not just in the amount of data generated, but in the way it is used to improve operations.

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**Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19**

13 March 2020

As a result of the World Health Organization (WHO) declaring the outbreak of a new respiratory disease in Wuhan, China to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, WHO issued travel advice to all of its 194 member states (WHO 2020) and WHO is also monitoring the spread of the novel COVID-19 virus.

Other countries with WHO COVID-19 health emergency status are also advised to follow their own advice for their own surface and objects, such as desks, tables or telephones. People could catch COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces or objects, and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. If they are standing within one meter of a person with COVID-19 they can catch it by breathing in droplets coughed out or exhaled by them in other words, COVID-19 spreads by contact with the, most common, influenza-like COVID-19 respiratory and contact. However, some people experience more serious disease than others, especially older people. About 80% of people who catch COVID-19 are 65 years or older. Those under 65 people with weakened immune systems and people with conditions such as diabetes, heart and lung disease are also more vulnerable to serious disease.

This document gives advice on:

1. Simple ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your workplace
2. How to manage COVID-19 in your workplace through cleaning & hygiene
3. High-touch surfaces and other high-touch surfaces
4. Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19 in your community
5. Simple ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your workplace

The best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in your workplace, such as desks, tables and telephones, is to clean them frequently with a suitable cleaning solution. Employees should still doing these things now, even if COVID-19 has not arrived in the community where they live. These are simple but effective ways to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 in your workplace.

• Make sure your workplace is clean and hygienic

**Learn more**



Think ahead.

## Healthier buildings

As employees return to the office, their safety and wellbeing is a top priority for all of us. Facility managers can help manage the risk of infection by promoting good hand hygiene and cleaning more frequently and differently from before.

### Provide cleaning and hygiene solutions

Employees themselves will be more proactive in ensuring surface hygiene, so provide solutions that allow employees to clean keyboards and other shared office surfaces when needed.

### Make operational adjustments

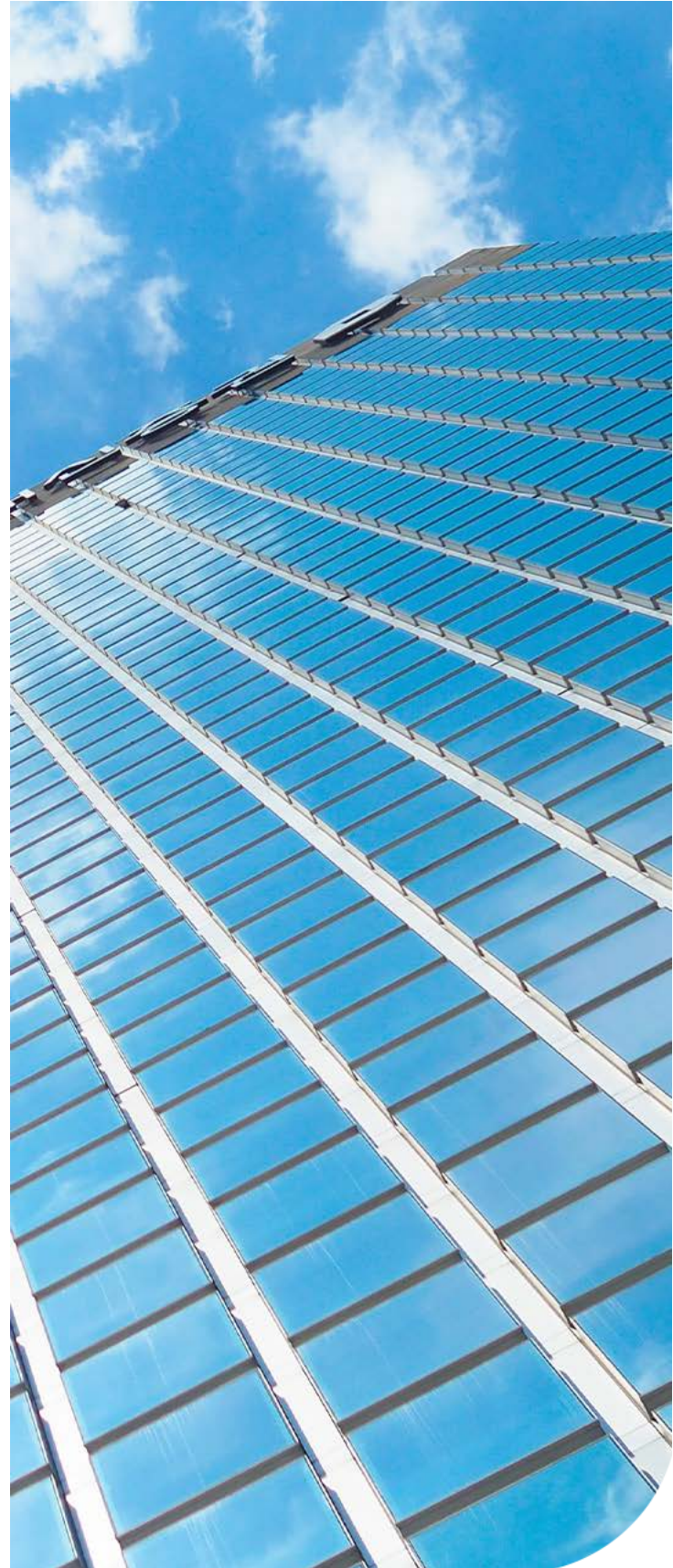
Make operational adjustments to limit the contact between workers in your office building at any one time by:

- **Extending office hours and asking employees to come into the office in shifts.** Add time between shifts to reduce contact and to clean high-touch surfaces.
- **Staggering arrival and departure times.** Reduce the volume of people entering and exiting areas such as the lobby, elevators and break rooms.
- **Alternate days between working remotely and on-site.** Only half the workforce would be in the office on any given weekday.
- **Staggering workstations.** Where possible, stagger workstations in the office to physically separate workers.
- **Limiting in-person group meetings.** Meetings should be held virtually as much as possible. For necessary in-person meetings, employees should practice physical distancing and proper hand hygiene.

### Encourage use of protective equipment

Ensure that protective equipment is available where and when needed, such as face masks and paper hand towels for those who develop a runny nose or cough at work, along with closed bins for hygienically disposing of them.

For facility managers and service providers, high-quality office hygiene is the new standard. We have an opportunity not only to meet but exceed this expectation and to enable employees to take an active role in workplace hygiene.

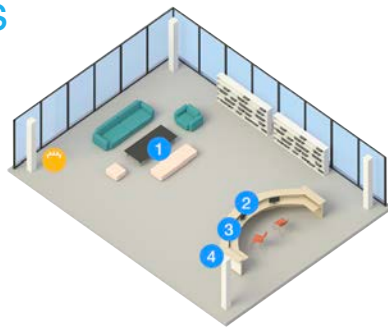


# Dispenser placement recommendations

As employees return to the office during the COVID-19 pandemic, you can reinforce proper hand hygiene through optimal hand hygiene dispenser placement. Make sure to place hygiene equipment in easily visible and accessible areas where there's a natural flow of traffic. Employees should not have to go out of their way to access those dispensers. While we understand that every office is unique, here are some guiding principles for areas in your office space.

## Reception areas

- 1 Napkins
- 2 Sanitizer
- 3 Facial tissue
- 4 Waste bins



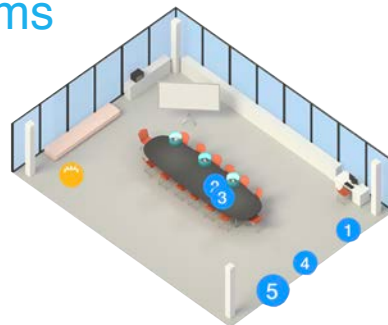
## Restrooms

- 1 Toilet paper
- 2 Hand towels
- 3 Soap
- 4 Waste bins
- 5 Toilet seat cover
- 6 Sanitizer
- 7 Facial tissue



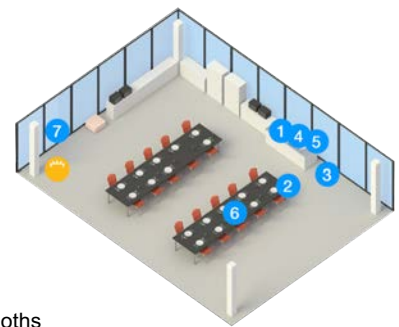
## Conference rooms

- 1 Hand sanitizer
- 2 Napkins
- 3 Facial tissue
- 4 Wiping and cleaning cloths
- 5 Waste bins



## Breakrooms and kitchenettes

- 1 Soap
- 2 Sanitizer
- 3 Waste bins
- 4 Hand towels
- 5 Wiping or cleaning cloths
- 6 Napkins
- 7 Facial tissues



## Office areas

- 1 Sanitizer
- 2 Waste bins
- 3 Facial tissue
- 4 Wiping and cleaning cloths
- 5 Napkins



## Office hygiene

For more information about the importance of hand hygiene and cleaning in your office building during the COVID-19 outbreak and beyond, visit our "Office Hygiene" resource page.

[Learn more](#)