



ENHANCED INDUSTRY-WIDE HOTEL CLEANING & SAFETY GUIDELINES



THE SAFE STAY INITIATIVE

The COVID-19 public health emergency that began in 2020 represented a unique challenge for the hospitality industry, which was already committed to the safety and health of its employees and guests. AHLA convened a Stay Safe Advisory Council, drawing from all segments of the hotel industry, to develop strategy and guidelines for a unified industry commitment to enhanced cleaning measures and safety.

With the guidance of the Advisory Council, [AHLA released its first Stay Safe Guidelines on May 4, 2020](#). The Safe Stay initiative represented a new level of focus and transparency for an industry that had always prioritized rigorous standards for cleanliness and safety, with guidance on employee and guest health, employee responsibilities, cleaning products and protocols, and physical distancing. Designed to adapt to changing conditions, the guidelines evolved, and were [revised most recently in August 2022](#). The COVID-19 public health emergency formally ended on May 11, 2023.

The end of the public health emergency, however, has not changed the hotel industry's commitment to enhanced health and safety measures. AHLA's members continue to embrace the Safe Stay guidelines as a standard for protecting employee and guest health. Although COVID-19 presented unique challenges, it was not the first public health risk the industry has faced, nor will it be the last. These updated Safe Stay guidelines are broadly applicable, and will help hotels protect their employees and guests.

We thank the Safe Stay Advisory Council for their leadership in developing these guidelines; our medical consultant, Dr. Louis Tripoli, for his hard work and expertise; and our Platinum Partner, Ecolab, for continuing to serve as an information resource.

Employee & Guest Health and Safety



Employee Vaccination Information

Please refer to the CDC's most recent guidance on [Staying Up to Date with COVID-19 Vaccines](#) and to the CDC's recommendations for [Promoting \(Influenza\) Vaccination in the Workplace](#).

Please refer to the [EEOC's What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#).



Face Coverings & Other Protective Steps

The CDC provides [guidance for the use of facemasks and other personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#). Local and state laws may apply.



Washing Hands & Hand Sanitizer

Housekeeping staff should clean hands or change gloves between cleaning guest rooms. When possible, employees should wear gloves for added protection and sanitation efforts while being mindful of unintentional cross-contamination. Proper hand hygiene, in accordance with CDC guidelines, should be followed before and after removing the gloves.

If not wearing protective gloves, all employees should follow [CDC guidance regarding handwashing](#) and use of hand sanitizer. [CDC guidelines](#) provide recommendations for employee procedures and protocols regarding hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer. Washing hands with soap and water is the preferable method. Employees should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds, or use hand sanitizer when a sink is not available, after any of the following activities: using the restroom sneezing, touching the face, cleaning, smoking, eating, drinking, accepting items from a guest (ID, cash, credit card, key card), taking a break, before a shift, and as needed throughout the shift.

In situations where soap and water are not available, alcohol-based sanitizer is recommended. Hand sanitizer dispensers should include [no less than 60% alcohol content](#), where available, and be touchless where possible.

Added attention should be given to ensure that adequate soap products are available in restroom sinks, employee washing stations, and other areas for hand washing. As available, dispensers should be placed at key guest and employee entrances and contact areas.



Signage

[The OSHA Job Safety and Health: It's the Law poster](#) informs workers of their rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Federal law requires all covered employers to display the poster in a conspicuous place where workers can see it.

[Some states have their own workplace safety and health programs](#), and these states may have their own safety and health posters and signage requirements.

Cleaning & Disinfecting Products and Protocols

Following your normal routine cleaning, you can disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects using a product from [EPA's list of approved products](#) that are effective against all strains and variants of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 disease, or alcohol solutions with at least 60% alcohol in accordance with CDC requirements for use and effectiveness against viruses, bacteria and other airborne and bloodborne pathogens. For more information, please refer to the [CDC guidelines on disinfecting buildings and facilities](#). Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product.

Cleaning Facilities and Common Areas

Surfaces frequently touched by multiple people should be cleaned and disinfected at least daily. More frequent cleaning may be required based on level of use and infection risk, including but not limited to front desk check-in counters, bell desks, elevators and elevator buttons, door handles, public bathrooms, stairwells, vending machines, ice machines, room keys and locks, ATMs, escalator and stair handrails, gym equipment and shower areas, pool seating and surrounding areas, dining surfaces and all seating areas. For more information, please refer to the CDC's [When and How to Clean and Disinfect a Facility](#).

Guest Rooms

The frequency of room cleaning during a guest's stay will be based on guest requirements. Cleaning and disinfecting protocols will require that particular attention be paid to high-touch areas and hard non-porous items including television remote controls, toilet seats and handles, door and furniture handles, water faucet handles, nightstands, telephones, in-room control panels, light switches, temperature control panels, alarm clocks and luggage racks.

In anticipation of individual concerns of guests, housekeeping should not enter a guest room during a stay without the guest's specific request or approval. Housekeeping should maintain the practice of cleaning and disinfecting rooms thoroughly following check-out.

Laundry

Sheets, towels, and food & beverage linen are the items that are in closest contact with hotel guests, and should be washed in accordance with [CDC guidelines](#), including washing items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Where possible, launder items using the warmest permissible water setting for items and dry items completely. Items should be collected, processed and replenished in accordance with established industry best practices, including avoiding the vigorous shaking of dirty linens and limiting contact while being transported to the laundry facility. In addition, hotel staff should use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), training, and hand hygiene to ensure their safety, and the safety of their colleagues and guests. In the case of a known monkeypox infection, please refer to [CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting](#).

Back of the House

Cleaning and disinfecting of all high-touch areas should happen in accordance with industry standard guidelines. Handwashing stations and access to hand sanitizer should be convenient and highly visible. AHLA's [Hospitality Law Database](#) provides links to individual state laws governing housekeeping, which may also be relevant.

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Cleaning & Disinfecting Products and Protocols (continued)



Food & Beverage

Hotels should provide food & beverage service on property in accordance with the [CDC's guidance on food safety](#).



Meeting and Events

All meetings and events should take place in accordance with state and local laws.



Indoor Air Quality

Hotels can improve indoor air quality through ventilation and filtration. Ventilation relies on air flow from out-of-doors to inside. Filtration filters disinfect the air that is already within a facility or space.

The [Safe Stay Indoor Air Quality Checklist](#), created with the assistance of AHLA Allied+ Member Carrier and Delos, identifies six elements of properly functioning ventilation systems that deliver acceptable indoor air quality:

- ✓ **Service.** Execute deferred maintenance tasks on air handling equipment, conduct a building systems inventory, and recommission as required.
- ✓ **Filtration.** Check all filters and change old filters where re. quired. Inspect filter racks for airtightness and potential bypass; upgrade to MERV 13 or better filtration efficiency as able.
- ✓ **Controls.** Enable economizer mode, schedule ventilation two hours before and after occupancy, disable demand control ventilation.
- ✓ **Ventilation.** Inspect and repair all ventilation dampers and control devices, ensuring no obstructions and full range of motion; maximize ventilation rates as equipment allows.
- ✓ **Monitoring.** Enable basic fault detection and diagnostics for air handling equipment as able; conduct a one-time air quality audit for regularly occupied areas.
- ✓ **Supplemental Air Treatment.** Install portable air cleaners with suitable clear air delivery rate in areas with higher occupant densities, or where social distancing may be difficult.

While this guidance is scalable from small to large buildings, these recommendations might not be feasible for some facilities. In general, facility managers should prioritize common areas, meeting and event space, and multi-occupant back- of-house areas.

Refer to these resources for additional information:

- ✓ [OSHA guidance on Indoor Air Quality](#)
- ✓ [US Environmental Protection Agency Indoor Air Quality guidance](#)
- ✓ [CDC recommendations on Ventilation in Buildings](#)

Note that [California](#) and [New Jersey](#) have their own regulations on indoor air quality.



Legal Disclaimer

This information is intended solely for the purpose of providing the hotel industry with top-line health and safety guidance during the reopening phase of the economy. The information provided is obtained from publicly available sources, including federal agencies and governmental entities, member companies, other leading trade associations and consultants.

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