



# AHLA's COVID-19 Operations FAQs

Got a question?  
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**Q: What is the recommended SOP for hotels if a previous recent guest is suspected to have been exposed to the virus?**

A: Increase frequency of hard surface disinfection using an EPA-registered disinfectant with an emerging viral pathogen claim. Disinfect all hard surfaces, not just high touch points. Carefully read and follow label directions.

are what the bullet points look like:

- It is recommended to close off areas used by the ill persons and wait if practical before beginning cleaning and disinfection to minimize potential for exposure to respiratory droplets. Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area. If possible, wait up to 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- For isolation guidance see [CDC's website](#) or [Ecolab's guide for hospitality](#).

**Q: Is it correct that handwipes need to be 60% by volume to prevent the spread of germs?**

A: Alcohol-based hand sanitizers can quickly reduce the number of microbes on hands in some situations, but sanitizers *do not* eliminate all types of germs. The CDC recommends washing hands with soap and water whenever possible because handwashing reduces the amounts of all types of germs and chemicals on hands. If soap and water are not available, using a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can help you avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. More information can be found on the [CDC's website](#).

**Q: Does the CDC have any guidelines for caring for a guest if they become ill at our hotel?**

A: Be prepared to support any afflicted guest with family calls and information. Remember, good customer service in this kind of crisis situation is extremely important. A toll-free or dedicated emergency hotline (in appropriate languages) should be set up to keep employees informed about business operations during a local COVID19 outbreak. Employees should be encouraged to use the hotline or contact their manager or supervisor for updates and information.

**Q: Can you advise as to what agency we should be reporting to if we have confirmation of a guest or employee who has tested positive for Covid-19? Is there a procedure that can be shared?**

A: Anyone with a concern about an infected guest or employee should immediately contact their state or local health department for further instructions, which can be found [here](#).

**Q: What precautions should front desk and housekeeping staff take to protect themselves and guests?**



A: Repeatedly, creatively, and aggressively encourage employees and others to take the same steps they should be taking to avoid the seasonal flu. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid exposure.

Perhaps the most important message employers can give to employees is to stay home if sick.

In addition, instruct your workers to take the same actions they would to avoid the flu. For example:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. • Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- For more information, consult our [Prevention & Preparedness Resource guide](#).

**Q: Should we have any special protocols for cleaning coverlets or bedspreads in a hotel room, or handling linens differently?**

A: There currently isn't evidence that respiratory viruses like COVID-19 are spread through textiles, linens or bedding. Because droplets may carry disease, proper infection prevention protocol for changing and cleaning linens and bedding is recommended.

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**Q: How should we respond if an employee tests positive for virus?**

A: You should send home all employees who worked closely with that employee for a 14-day period to ensure the infection does not spread. Before the employee departs, ask them to identify all individuals who worked in proximity (three to six feet) with them in the previous 14 days to ensure you have a full list of those who should be sent home. When sending the employees home, do not identify by name the infected employee or you could risk a violation of confidentiality laws. You may also want to consider asking a cleaning company to undertake a deep cleaning of your affected workspaces. For more information, consult our [Prevention & Preparedness Resource guide](#).



**Q: What should we do if our property is interested in support as medical relief center?**

A: In an effort to support communities across the country during this unprecedented public health crisis, AHLA announced 'AHLA's Hospitality for Hope Initiative' to connect hotel properties with the health community, struggling to find housing and support as the COVID-19 public health crisis grows. Properties that are interested in joining can find more information on [our website](#) and [sign up here](#).

**Q: If transmission from surfaces to humans is limited and only theoretical, what is the benefit to incurring additional costs and increasing cleaning frequency and/or using special cleaning agents?**

A: The CDC continues to recommend routine cleaning and disinfection as a best practice to reduce the risk from COVID-19. Further they acknowledge that there are many disinfecting products that feature kill claims for viruses similar to coronavirus. Disinfectant products must be used according to the directions for use on the product label, and it is a violation of Federal Law to use them for off-label applications or uses. It is important that the surface remains wet for the specific contact time to ensure efficacy and this can be impacted by the method by which the disinfectant is applied.

**Q: Can the virus be spread in chlorinated pool water?**

A: CDC guidance suggests there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread to humans using pools and hot tubs. Proper operation, maintenance, and disinfection (e.g., with chlorine and bromine) of pools and hot tubs should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19. Increase frequency of disinfection of common high touch points in the pool and spa area. People who are infectious should not be using public areas such as pools, spas, jacuzzi. High-touchpoint surfaces should be disinfected regularly. Follow standard procedures for maintaining your pool, spa or jacuzzi facilities. There is currently, no evidence of transmission through this route.

**Q: Should hotels close common areas like pools, lobbies, and other spaces?**

A: Ecolab recommends following standard cleaning procedures, as well as the following:

- Increase frequency of hard surface disinfection using an appropriate EPA-registered product with an emerging viral pathogen or coronavirus claim. Refer to product label for directions for use.
- Consider closing non-essential public gathering areas such as bar, fitness center and pool to limit transmission.
- Consider providing alcohol-based hand sanitizers in public areas especially near touchpoints.
- Provide Personal Protective Equipment (e.g., gloves, gowns) as directed by local and federal authorities for employees and infected individuals.
- Follow all guidance as directed by public health authorities.

**Q: If my property has to close, what are the proper steps to ensure it will remain safe?**



A: [Click here](#) for a step by step guide by property type, provided by Petra Risk Solutions.