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## **Gear Cleaning and People Protection – Coronavirus**

How to clean gear and protect employees and customers during the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic are frequent questions we hear. We are not medical or healthcare professionals but here we'll share some thoughts and tips from some professional sources.

### **Prevention**

The first line of defense in protecting both employees and customers is not getting exposed to the virus in the first place.

- Symptoms of COVID-19<sup>1</sup>
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath
  - Chills
  - Repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Headache
  - Sore throat
  - New loss of taste or smell
- Urge employees to self-monitor and stay home if they show any of the symptoms.
- When communicating with customers before they arrive, urge them to protect themselves and others by not joining you if they are showing symptoms or have possibly been exposed to someone who has been diagnosed or has symptoms.
- If a customer comes showing any of the symptoms, you will be wise to politely ask that they postpone their trip with you.

### **Remediation**

How the virus spreads<sup>2</sup>

- It's thought to spread by person-to-person contact.
- When they are within 6 feet of one another.
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Those droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

Common sense steps for protection<sup>2</sup>

- Frequent hand washing, with soap and water, for 20 seconds.
- Encourage that in the boathouse and office.

1 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

2 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

3 [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fhome%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fhome%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html)

4 <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2020/03/why-soap-preferable-bleach-fight-against-coronavirus/>



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- On trips, when serving food, set up a handwashing station and supply hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol content. Have employees wear disposable gloves when fixing and serving food.
- Social distancing, keeping 6 feet apart, is hard to do in our types of communal outdoor activities, but encourage it as much as possible. Work it into pre-trip talks.

### Cleaning and Disinfecting

What is currently known about transmission of the virus:

- “Based on what is currently known about the novel coronavirus and similar coronaviruses that cause SARS and MERS, spread from person-to-person with these viruses happens most frequently among close contacts (within about 6 feet). This type of transmission occurs via respiratory droplets. On the other hand, transmission of novel coronavirus to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented.”<sup>3</sup>
- This is very important. What they’re saying is at this time, March 26, 2020, transmission of the virus hasn’t been seen from contaminated surfaces.
- That being said, that kind of transmission may be possible, especially if a person, after touching that contaminated surface then puts the hand on eyes, nose or mouth.
- So, out of an abundance of caution, you will want to do some cleaning and possibly disinfecting, to protect both employees and customers.

### The Difference Between Cleaning and Disinfecting<sup>3</sup>

- **Cleaning** refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. Cleaning does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.
- **Disinfecting** refers to using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface *after* cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

### Cleaning

- This can be as simple as using soap and water, just as with washing hands. Some experts believe it’s as effective as using disinfecting chemicals to prevent the spread of the virus.<sup>4</sup>
- If you’re using the gear in whitewater there’s going to be some natural “washing” of the surfaces of boat, paddles, etc during a trip.

1 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

2 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

3 [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fhome%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fhome%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html)

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- At the end of a trip some scrubbing with soap and water may be all that's needed. Wetsuits and technical outerwear can be washed with a product such as [Gear Aid Revivex Wetsuit and Drysuit Shampoo](#).
- With larger gear like boats and paddles, soap, water and rags or brushes can be used.
- With smaller items like helmets, PFDs and apparel you can set up a multi bucket/barrel washing line, like in dishwashing. Pre-rinse, warm soapy water, one or two freshwater rinses and possibly even a disinfecting rinse.
- Employees should wear gloves when doing cleaning and thoroughly wash hands after removing gloves.

### Disinfecting<sup>3</sup>

- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned with soap and water before disinfecting.
- Diluted household bleach can be used for appropriate surfaces. Look on the bleach container to see if it's still within it's Use By Date. Prepare a solution by mixing 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water, or 4 teaspoons per quart of water. **Note that chlorine can be hard on neoprene and technical outerwear materials.**
- [These EPA-approved products](#) are expected to be effective against COVID-19, based on data for harder-to-kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
- Certainly, employees need to take precautions, wearing gloves, goggles, etc, as necessary, to protect themselves from these chemicals.

We hope this information is helpful as you navigate this upsetting period in our businesses, our country and our personal lives. By working together we'll get through this and hopefully soon get back to more normal times.

Thank you for your business with us and best of success to you and your employees!

Your Friends at NRS

1 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

2 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/prevention.html>

3 [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fhome%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fhome%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html)

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