

Cleaning/Disinfecting/Operating Vehicles Safely During a Pandemic

How to Sanitize a Car

Employees who utilize company vehicles as part of their daily duties are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness of the car. While it is always important to keep the car interior clean throughout the standard workweek, it's even more critical that proper sanitization steps are followed during the COVID-19 outbreak.

At a minimum, clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces inside the car at the beginning and end of each shift. Doors and windows should remain open when cleaning the vehicle. For additional employee safety when cleaning and disinfecting the car interior, individuals should wear disposable nitrile or rubber gloves.

Getting Started: What to Clean With (and Avoid):

A list of recommended solutions can be found at [EPA's Registered Antimicrobial Products for Use Against COVID-19](#). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for concentration, application method and contact time for all cleaning and disinfection products. Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol are a proven disinfectant and are also safe to use on most car interior surfaces. Microfiber cloth does a great job of trapping dirt and prevents scratches. Use cleaners designed for the specific surface being cleaned (for porous vs. non-porous surfaces).

What to Avoid When Cleaning a Car Interior:

- Don't use bleach or hydrogen peroxide on the inside of the car.
- Don't use scented wipes or wipes containing bleach.
- Don't use ammonia-based cleaners on car touchscreens or dashboards, as they can damage anti-glare and anti-fingerprint coatings.
- Never combine cleaning chemicals, as doing so may lead to toxicity.
- Don't use excess soap & water on cloth seats. It takes a while to dry and could soak into the cushion beneath, causing mold.
- If leather or synthetic gloves are used instead of chemical (nitrile or rubber), it is important to know these gloves cannot be disinfected.

Where to Focus:

Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces in the vehicle at the beginning and end of each shift by wiping down:

- Car keys and fobs
- Exterior and interior door handles
- Center console and cup holders
- Driver and passenger armrests and seat belts/seat adjusters
- Headrests and seat pockets
- Instrument panel, gear shift and control knobs
- Steering wheel, mirrors and radio microphone
- Transported items placed in the trunk or rear cargo hold
- All other devices used during the employee's shift

After Cleaning the Car Interior:

- Dispose of gloves and other disposable PPE used for cleaning.
- Wash hands immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Launder clothes worn during cleaning afterward using the warmest appropriate water setting and be sure to dry items completely.
- Wash hands again after handling laundry.

During Vehicle Operation:

- Wash your hands before and after driving.
- Wear gloves when possible outside of your vehicle, especially when fueling.
- When possible, use contactless payment methods.
- Consider using your knuckles rather than fingertips to touch common use contact areas.
- When finished driving the vehicle for the day, thoroughly wipe down the interior with disinfectant wipes or other appropriate cleaning solutions.

When Cleaning/Disinfecting is Not Feasible:

- If disinfecting solutions are unavailable or incompatible with vehicle surfaces, a final countermeasure is the use of rubber or nitrile gloves during vehicle operation only if wearing gloves does not hamper the driver's ability to operate the vehicle controls safely.
- The use of gloves reduces the probability of transmitting germs; thus, reducing or eliminating the need to clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces.

Group Transportation

- When sharing is necessary, assign smaller groups (1-3 employees) to use one shared vehicle and coordinate the cleaning process, so there is no overlap in shift changes. This way, employees can maintain social distancing as much as possible.
- The use of larger vehicles, such as vans, is recommended when feasible to allow greater social distancing.
- Additionally, drivers should practice regular hand hygiene, avoid touching their nose, mouth, or eyes, and avoid picking up multiple passengers who would not otherwise be riding together on the same route.
- The CDC recommends that individuals wear cloth face coverings in settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas with significant community transmission.

Additional Resources for Sanitizing Vehicles

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/disinfecting-transport-vehicles.html

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-for-ems.html

Loss Control Resources from AmTrust Financial

For COVID-19 tips and other workplace safety resources, please visit:

<https://amtrustfinancial.com/loss-control>

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