



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6
1201 ELM STREET, SUITE 500
DALLAS, TEXAS 75270

Dear University and College Representatives,

The Environmental Protection Agency is reaching out to you to provide important resources as you move forward with your efforts to resume school reopening within your respective school. The EPA realizes this is an extremely challenging time for schools and since several school reopenings have involved the use of products that may not be effective against the coronavirus, the purpose of this email is to provide you with helpful tools and resources to support your reopening efforts. Over the past few months, you have likely had many planning discussions with key staff, local and state health officials, and your State Departments of Education to develop your initial reopening plans. Given that the landscape around the management of the coronavirus is ever changing, it is likely that you will continue to make modifications to your current reopening plans and strategies, as new challenges with the effective containment of the virus emerge.

In addition to enhanced social distancing strategies and adhering to the guidelines implemented by your local and state health officials, a central feature for the effective containment of the coronavirus in your schools will be the implementation of effective disinfecting and sanitation practices as well as the selection of effective and properly tested disinfection products. Paramount to this effort, to reduce exposure to students and staff, is focusing on disinfecting high-touch surfaces. These high-touch surfaces include tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, etc. The effective disinfection of these surfaces will depend upon the choice of the disinfecting products that are used and that the person applying the disinfectant follows the label instructions. This includes making sure that the surface contact time for the product is sufficient to destroy the coronavirus. To that end, all products that claim to be effective against the coronavirus must be properly tested and registered with the EPA and must also have an EPA registration number. Since there are numerous illegal products in the marketplace that have not been tested and may not be effective protecting students and staff from the coronavirus, the EPA's May 2020 Compliance Advisory, "What You Need to Know Regarding Products Making Claims to Kill the Coronavirus Causing COVID-19" is linked here and contains detailed information regarding product testing and registration: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-05/documents/coronavirus-compliance-advisory.pdf>. Also, access to the current EPA-CDC guidance on proper disinfecting to create the healthiest school environment for students may be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

All of the disinfecting products that are effective against the coronavirus, and registered with the EPA, may be found at this EPA website: <https://www.epa.gov/listn>. This information is updated regularly as new disinfecting practices and products are identified. The EPA's registration process ensures products are effective, safe, and properly labeled. The EPA will not register a product claiming to be effective against coronavirus until it has determined that the product will not pose an unreasonable risk and it will be effective when used according to the label directions. The effectiveness of these products depends on following all label directions including heeding the recommended contact time, which is the amount of time the product needs to remain wet on a surface. Please note that children should not apply disinfectants. Disinfectants bear a child-warning statement, so keeping disinfectants out of reach of children is part of following the label directions.

Please be aware that the EPA does not routinely review the safety or efficacy of pesticidal devices (unlike chemical pesticides which the EPA publishes on List N), and therefore cannot confirm whether, or under what circumstances, such products might be effective against the spread of coronavirus. Pesticidal devices (ozone generators and UV lights among other devices) making such claims have NOT been reviewed and may not be able to make claims against coronavirus. These devices have not been tested for efficacy or safety for use against the virus causing COVID-19 or harder-to-kill viruses.

We also encourage the Facility Management and Custodial staff to utilize the information found in the resource list below and on the attached flyer. This information provides valuable insight into disinfecting best practices, to guide their decision making as they consider the needs for improvements or revisions to their initial sanitization and disinfecting protocols.

- To preview the National Pesticides Information Center Disinfectant Safety During the COVID-19 Pandemic webinar, follow this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=epSQQTAMRc4>
- EPA's coronavirus disinfection frequently asked questions (FAQ's) webpage: <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/frequent-questions-about-disinfectants-and-coronavirus-covid-19>
- EPA's infographic on disinfectants can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-04/documents/disinfectants-onepager.pdf>
- The Healthy Green Schools webinar on School Reopening in the era of COVID-19 can be accessed here: <https://www.healthygreenschools.org/events/covid-19-k-12-school-reopening/>
- CDC Reopening guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Schools: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
- FDA Updates on Hand Sanitizers Consumers Should Not Use: <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/fda-updates-hand-sanitizers-consumers-should-not-use#products>

We sincerely thank you and appreciate all of the hard work you and your staff are doing to keep school facilities safe and healthy for students and staff. In keeping with our mission to Protect Human Health and the Environment, we are here to support your efforts to safely reopen colleges and universities in our EPA Region 6 States (AR, LA, NM, OK, TX). Please share the resource list in this letter and the attached flyer with school staff and decision makers charged with these responsibilities. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to Ken McPherson on our staff at EPA Region 6. You may contact him at mcperson.kenneth@epa.gov or 214-665-6754. Ken will work with our team here to provide a response to your inquiry.

Thank you and best wishes for a wonderful school year.

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Director

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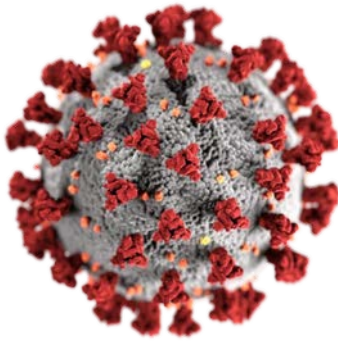
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Assurance Division
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Reopening Schools-Disinfectants

The EPA's latest guidance and frequently asked questions about COVID-19, including more information on disinfectants and Indoor air quality can be found on the [EPA Coronavirus website](#). Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces like schools requires you to:

- Develop your plan,
- Implement your plan, and
- Maintain and Revise your plan.

The EPA and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#) can help to create a plan.



When using a disinfectant remember to:

- [Check List N](#) to see if your product is EPA-approved for use against SARS-CoV-2,
- Read and follow the directions on the label,
- Follow the contact time to ensure effectiveness
- Safely store the product out of reach of children when finished, and
- Use the EPA and CDC [Cleaning and Disinfecting Decision Tool](#).

All of the hyperlinks above can be reached at the EPA's Coronavirus website:
[epa.gov/coronavirus](https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus)

Remember that using disinfectants is just one part of limiting the spread of COVID-19. Physical distancing, washing your hands and other daily practices can help reduce the risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. More information on how to protect yourself can be found on the [CDC Coronavirus website](#).



Know the difference between cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing.

- Cleaning physically removes germs and debris
- Sanitizing lowers the number of germs on a surface
- Disinfecting chemically kills germs on a surface

More CDC guidance websites:
[Preparing for a Safe a Return to School](#)
[Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#)
[Child Care, Schools, Youth Programs](#)
[FAQs for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents](#)