

## Healthy Schools: Planning Ahead

Ensuring that school is a healthy place to learn and work involves extra steps these days. As we enter the summer maintenance season and look to next fall, schools are mapping out those action steps now. This issue of Healthy Schools News aims to help, by providing authoritative resources. Here you will find COVID-19 guidance, tips on maintaining healthy indoor air, and guidance for addressing stagnant water in your plumbing.

### Reopening Schools – CDC and EPA Guidance

Reopening America requires all of us to move forward together by practicing social distancing and other [daily habits](#) to reduce our risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces like schools will require you to: 1) develop your plan; 2) implement your plan; and 3) maintain and revise your plan. Here are resources to help you do that.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and EPA have jointly developed [guidance](#) for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, including schools.

- InfoGraphic: [Cleaning and Disinfecting Decision Tool](#)
- Full Guidance: [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes](#)

CDC also offers these guidance documents related to COVID-19 and schools.

- Child Care, Schools, Youth Programs: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
- Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Including Schools: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
- FAQs for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools-faq.html>

EPA's latest guidance and [frequently asked questions](#) about COVID-19, including topics such as disinfectants and indoor air concerns, can be found on the [EPA coronavirus website](#). As your custodial and facilities staff ramp up cleaning and disinfecting protocols, keep these principles in mind:

- Verify that your disinfectant product is on [EPA's list of disinfectants for use against SARS-CoV-2](#), the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Train cleaning/maintenance staff on cleaning products, protocols and procedures. Always read and follow product labels.
- [CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfection for community facilities](#) emphasizes extra focus on high touch surfaces, common areas, and shared electronic equipment.

**GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING & DISINFECTING**  
PUBLIC SPACES, WORKPLACES, BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS, AND HOMES

**1 DEVELOP YOUR PLAN**  
DETERMINE WHAT NEEDS TO BE CLEANED. Areas unoccupied for 7 or more days need only routine cleaning. Maintain existing cleaning practices for outdoor areas.  
DETERMINE HOW AREAS WILL BE DISINFECTED. Consider the type of surface and how often the surface is touched. Prioritize disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.  
CONSIDER THE RESOURCES AND EQUIPMENT NEEDED. Keep in mind the availability of cleaning products and personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate for cleaners and disinfectants.

**2 IMPLEMENT**  
CLEAN VISIBLY DIRTY SURFACES WITH SOAP AND WATER prior to disinfection.  
USE THE APPROPRIATE CLEANING OR DISINFECTANT PRODUCT. Use an EPA-approved disinfectant against COVID-19, and read the label to make sure it meets your needs.  
ALWAYS FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS ON THE LABEL. The label will include safety information and application instructions. Keep disinfectants out of the reach of children.

**3 MAINTAIN AND REVISE**  
CONTINUE ROUTINE CLEANING AND DISINFECTION. Continue or revise your plan based upon appropriate disinfectant and PPE availability. Dirty surfaces should be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection. Routinely disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily.  
MAINTAIN SAFE PRACTICES such as frequent handwashing, using cloth face coverings, and staying home if you are sick.  
CONTINUE PRACTICES THAT REDUCE THE POTENTIAL FOR EXPOSURE. Maintain social distancing, staying six feet away from others. Reduce sharing of common spaces and frequently touched objects.

Follow guidance from state, tribal, local, and territorial authorities.

For more information, please visit [CORONAVIRUS.GOV](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

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## Maintaining Healthy Indoor Environments in Schools

Indoor air quality, or IAQ, is an important part of healthy school environments. As you would at any time, employ the strategies in EPA's [IAQ Tools for Schools](#) and [IAQ Tools for Schools Preventive Maintenance](#). These documents give you tips on:

- **Routine HVAC Systems Maintenance:** Ensure school HVAC systems are operating properly, with outdoor ventilation air maintained at or above design minimum values. Employ filtration and gas-phase air cleaning strategies to further improve IAQ, in conjunction with source control strategies. Change filters regularly and ensure condensate pans are draining.
- **Communications:** Develop a communications plan with a clear process for addressing occupant concerns. Share your IAQ preventive maintenance program's intent, activities, results, and next steps with your entire school community.
- **Staff Training:** IAQ Tools for Schools Webinars provide school district staff with the knowledge needed to start, improve or sustain an IAQ management program. View the [web-based trainings](#).



## Maintaining or Restoring Water Quality in Buildings with Low or No Use

Many schools have not been occupied for a long time. Closing buildings for weeks or months reduces water usage. This can lead to stagnant water inside your plumbing. That stagnant water can become unsafe to drink or otherwise use. EPA recommends taking [proactive steps](#) to protect your students and staff. Minimize water stagnation during closures, and address building water quality before you reopen. EPA guidance:

- [Maintaining or Restoring Water Quality in Buildings with Low or No Use](#)
- [Checklist: Restoring Water Quality in Buildings for Reopening](#)



Healthy School NEWS is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10. Region 10 includes the states of Washington, Idaho, Alaska and Oregon and the tribes within those boundaries. For general information about school environmental health or to provide feedback on this newsletter, please contact Andrea Lindsay at [lindsay.andrea@epa.gov](mailto:lindsay.andrea@epa.gov).

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