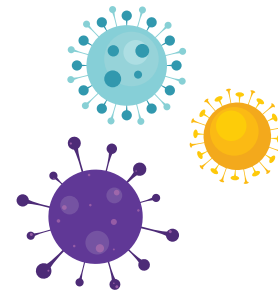


Disinfectants & Surface Sanitizers

in Schools and Child Care Programs

Providing a safe and healthy environment for students and staff is a priority for schools and child care programs. The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) has put together the most commonly asked questions about using disinfectants and surface sanitizers to provide clarification about proper use while ensuring compliance with the Healthy Schools Act.



Do cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting mean the same thing?

No. These terms mean different things. [Cleaning](#) physically removes dirt, germs, and other debris from a surface. [Sanitizing](#) kills germs on a previously cleaned surface and lowers their number to a safe level, as judged by public health standards. [Disinfecting](#) kills a greater amount and wider range of germs than sanitizing.



Is training needed before using disinfectants and surface sanitizers at a school?

Yes. A California law called the [Healthy Schools Act](#) has a training [requirement](#) for anyone applying pesticides, including [disinfectants and surface sanitizers](#), at a public K-12 school or licensed child care center. Family day care homes are exempt. DPR provides free Healthy Schools Act training courses [online](#) or in a [group training kit](#). Additional chemical hazard training may be required by Cal/OSHA.



Can foggers, fumigators, wide-area sprayers, and electrostatic sprayers be used to apply disinfectants at schools?

Yes, but **only** if the disinfectant product label specifically includes directions for use with fogging, fumigating, wide-area spraying, or electrostatic spraying equipment. Always use the disinfectant product according to the directions on the label.



What kind of personal protective equipment is needed to apply disinfectants?

The label of the disinfectant will tell you what [personal protective equipment](#), or PPE, is required to safely mix and apply the product. Different products require different PPE, and it may change depending on how the product is applied.



How should bleach be used properly at schools?

Only EPA-registered disinfecting bleach should be used. Not all bleach products are intended for disinfecting, like [laundry bleach](#). Check the label for directions on how much to use to disinfect. Do not mix bleach with any other cleaning products as it can be dangerous and ineffective. Always follow the label directions for effective use and to protect yourself and others.



What can be used to disinfect things like toys, art supplies, and books?

Some disinfectants will destroy paper material like books and may not be effective on textiles. Check the label for the materials that a disinfecting product can be used on. If an object cannot be disinfected, consider removing it from use and consult public health guidance for the amount of time before it can be safely reintroduced.



How can disinfectant wipes be used properly?

Disinfectant wipes are pesticides and must be used according to label directions. Like all disinfectants, they are only effective if the surface remains wet for the time it takes to kill the germs. Look for “contact time” on the product label, use a timer to keep track, and be prepared to use multiple wipes. Never use disinfectant wipes on the body. Disinfectant wipes cannot be used by students as indicated by the “Keep Out of Reach of Children” statement on all pesticides.



What can students use to help clean?

Cleaning is an important step before sanitizing or disinfecting. If allowed by the school, students can help clean with non-pesticide products such as baby wipes or soap and water. It is illegal for children to use disinfectants and surface sanitizers because they are [antimicrobial pesticides](#). “Keep Out of Reach of Children” is on all pesticide labels, which means that children cannot use any pesticide.



Can household ingredients be mixed to make effective disinfectant solutions?

No. Making and using your own disinfectant solution can be dangerous and ineffective. Only EPA-registered disinfectants should be used. Follow all label directions to protect yourself and others.



More questions? Contact us!