

Professional Cleaners Ask Questions About Combatting the Coronavirus

ISSA/GBAC coronavirus webinar provides answers

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Professional cleaners concerned about the effects coronavirus could have on their facilities participated in special webinar yesterday morning sponsored by ISSA and the [Global Biorisk Advisory Council® \(GBAC\)](#), a division of ISSA. The webinar provided an opportunity for GBAC to outline its cleaning and disinfecting protocols as well as answer any questions.

“We’re learning day-to-day about this coronavirus, we’re all going to be the ones on the front line,” Patty Olinger, GBAC executive director, told webinar participants before she and GBAC’s panel of forensic operators/forensic restoration specialists answered their cleaning and disinfecting questions.

Many listeners had questions about the best cleaning products to eliminate the coronavirus. The GBAC panel advised they read the label of their preferred cleaning product, then check the manufacturer’s website, as many manufacturers have updated their product information website to indicate effectiveness against the new virus.

When asked about specific chemicals, such as hydrogen peroxide, Paul Meechan advised that hydrogen peroxide with a dilution ratio of 7% or more will kill coronavirus. “What you buy in a regular store for household use is 3% dilution, so you need to purchase the commercial type,” he said.

Olinger said you can use bleach to eliminate coronavirus, but it needs a five-minute contact time on the surface. “There is no disinfectant you can spray on and wipe off immediately, it needs a dwell time,” she said. “Read labels, I can’t stress that enough.”

When asked about the effectiveness of disinfectants used in electrostatic sprayers, the panel gave the same advice to read the product label and consult the manufacturer's website. The panel also answered questions about ultraviolet light technology, pointing out that not all the manufacturers of these systems have made claims as to their effectiveness against coronavirus. One system that has confirmed effectiveness advises a treatment time of one hour.

"If you choose this method you need to realize the process takes a long time and only affects the areas the light touches," Olinger said. Other panel members pointed out that workers cannot be in the room for long periods while UV technology is in use, and those that are will need to wear eye and skin protection.

When questions turned to measures professional workers can take to protect themselves from the virus, the panel recommended hygiene measures similar to protecting oneself from other less-exotic illnesses.

"Use normal precautions like you would for the flu," said Meechan. "Wash your hands for 20 seconds using soap and water."

Meechan said alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water are not available, but users must be sure to rub the solution on their hands for 30 seconds.

The panel also recommended taking commonsense precautions when around someone who is coughing and sneezing. "You have to protect what we call your holes—the eyes, the nose, the mouth, and any cuts in the skin," said Gavin Macgregor-Skinner, who recommended wearing face masks when around an obviously ill person. "Focus on not touching your face and protecting your holes if you're around a person coughing and sneezing."

[Learn more](#) about coronavirus.