

The five critical security elements of disinfecting should serve as the foundation for any training program focused on infection prevention protocol. One of these five critical security elements is pre-cleaning. To better understand the importance of pre-cleaning, we have compiled some important frequently asked questions. If you have any specific questions, please contact an expert at Charlotte Products by emailing [experts@charlotteproducts.com](mailto:experts@charlotteproducts.com).

### **What is the difference between cleaning and disinfecting?**

Cleaning removes dust, soil, debris and dirt from a surface. This is achieved through a process of scrubbing, washing, and rinsing a surface and can be achieved with any general purpose cleaner or soap. Disinfecting destroys or inactivates bacteria and viruses that are identified on a product's label when applied according to the product's label on surfaces.

### **Can I just spray disinfectant everywhere like I see in the news?**

During the pandemic, we are often shown images of custodial crews coming into spaces in PPE with misters just indiscriminately spraying disinfectant all over the room. These images should not reflect the way buildings are implementing their infection prevention programs in reality. If you are going into a space and spraying everywhere with a disinfectant without cleaning first, then you are failing at disinfecting.

### **Why do I have to clean before I disinfect?**

The reason for cleaning surfaces before disinfecting is that when you clean a surface, you remove soil and contaminants that would otherwise interfere with a disinfectant's efficacy. In other words, if you apply a disinfectant to a surface that has viruses and dirt, the disinfectant may not destroy all viruses present on the surface because the dirt gets in the way.

### **What products should I choose for cleaning and disinfecting?**

Be sure to choose a disinfectant from the EPA N List and from Health Canadas' List of Disinfectants with evidence for use against COVID-19. When it comes to choosing a product for cleaning, a neutral PH general purpose cleaner is acceptable.

## Can I use a disinfectant to pre-clean surfaces?

You absolutely do not need to use a disinfectant to pre-clean surfaces, unless the disinfection protocol dictates it. The cleaning performance of a general purpose cleaner is higher because it is focused on detergency as opposed to disinfectant claims. Disinfectant is often more expensive than general purpose cleaners and usually has harsher ingredients. It is important to use disinfectant sparingly for these reasons.

## Why is it safer to use a cleaner?

Disinfectants are more aggressive because they must deactivate or destroy the bacteria and viruses that they claim on their labels. This requires an active ingredient, such as quaternary ammonium or hydrogen peroxide. Active ingredients in disinfectants often have negative effects on human health and the environment. General purpose cleaners contain ingredients that are less harsh and toxic. Using general cleaners when possible will improve wellness, because there will be less harmful effects on your employees' health. This will reduce employee absences in the long run, contribute to fewer eye, skin or respiratory irritants.

## Do you have cost saving tips?

Use general purpose cleaners to clean, followed sparingly by disinfectant. General purpose cleaners are less costly. With higher dilution ratios for general purpose cleaners, that also means less plastic in the landfill. The RTU cost is lower too. At Charlotte Products, we believe in carefully removing organic matter and sparingly and thoughtfully using a disinfectant to remove viruses and bacteria. It's good for the bottom line and the environment.

### 5 Critical Elements of Disinfectant Security

*Disinfectant*  
**SECURITY ELEMENTS**

- 01**  
Always use a registered product. Read and understand the label.
- 02**  
Dilute properly regardless of the dilution method. Verify PPM.
- 03**  
Always pre-clean surfaces.
- 04**  
Dwell Contact Time.
- 05**  
Potable water rinse on food contact surfaces and pre-school toys.