



# Making Your Offices Ready: WHO Guidelines for Office Sanitization



[www.workinsync.io](http://www.workinsync.io)

# Introduction

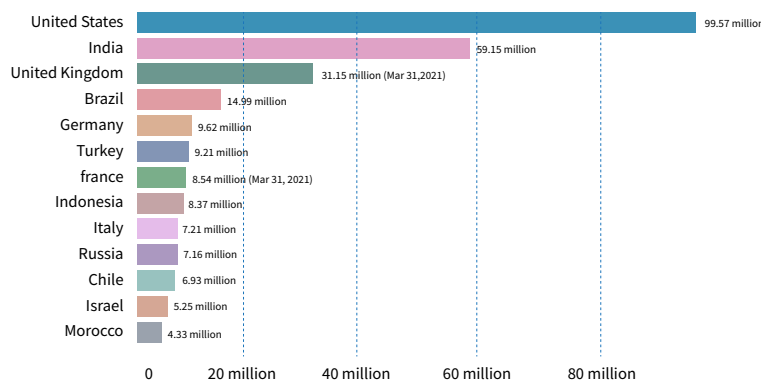
COVID-19 has changed our definition of cleanliness. It is no longer about a heap of dust in the corner. It is about guarding ourselves against a highly contagious virus.



*According to the World Health Organization (WHO), touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching your ear, mouth or nose, increases the risk of spreading the virus.*

## Number of people who received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, Apr 1, 2021

Total number of people who received at least one vaccine dose. This may not equal the number of people that are fully vaccinated if the vaccine requires two doses.



Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data-Last updated 2 April, 10:10 (London time)

As employees return-to-office, the attempt to clean and disinfect the workplace becomes pivotal. Even though vaccination efforts are underway, taking added precautions to ensure complete office sanitization can hurt no one. Here are a few guidelines released by WHO on how to clean and disinfect your workplace.



**Cleaning and  
Disinfecting  
are not the  
same thing!**

Cleaning is the process of using soap and water to remove dirt from surfaces and objects. It doesn't necessarily kill germs.

Disinfecting with chemicals kills germs on surfaces and objects. It might not be that effective in removing dirt.

# The Sanitization Process



- Step 1:** Clean all high-contact surfaces and objects with soap and water to remove dirt
- Step 2:** Use a disinfectant to rid the surfaces and objects of the virus
- Step 3:** Repeat Step 1 & 2 every 24 hours

Sodium hypochlorite (also known as household bleach) at a recommended concentration of 5-9%.

**Which disinfectants are most effective?**

Ethanol-based products (or commonly called rubbing alcohol) at a recommended concentration of 70-90%.



## Precautions

Select the disinfectant and its concentration carefully to avoid damaging surfaces and minimize toxic effects

Never combine disinfectants such as bleach and ammonia as they can release potentially fatal gases

Keep the windows open to ensure proper ventilation. Use disinfectant solutions in well-ventilated areas but without direct sunlight

Throw away gloves or masks after cleaning and wash your hands immediately after using any disinfectant

Store your disinfectant in an opaque container with the lid tightly closed to avoid spills and accidents

The minimum recommended personal protective equipment when disinfecting offices include rubber gloves, waterproof aprons, and closed shoes. Eye protection and medical masks may also be used for protection against chemicals and strong odors.



## Sanitizing Workplaces: Best Practices



Now before you go about wiping the office virus-free, you should plan. And plan well. Here are some of the best practices you can adopt.

### Develop Your Plan

Determine all the areas that need to be just cleaned; and surfaces that need proper disinfection

Any area that has been unused for 7 or more days can be cleaned with only soap and water

Prioritize disinfecting high-contact surfaces like doorknobs, light switches, desks, and chairs

For any electronics, use disinfectant wipes

Disinfect common areas such as elevators, lobbies, bathrooms, cafeteria, and meeting rooms daily

Have an abundant supply of all the cleaning products and equipment (gloves and masks)

### Implement Your Plan

1. Read safety instructions on disinfectants before using them
  2. Clean the office when no one is around (Best time: After hours. Why let employees sit in a room smelling of bleach!)
  3. Clean once every 24 hours
- P.S. Develop a response plan in case an employee tests positive. Ensure to ventilate the room properly before undertaking the cleaning and disinfecting process.

## What about Outdoor Areas?

Well-ventilated places reduce the spread of the virus. Also, the presence of dirt or rubbish will inactivate the disinfectant, and manual cleaning to physically remove the virus is not feasible. So, continue routine cleaning! However, if you have an outdoor seating arrangement, you can follow the same cleaning and disinfecting procedures.

### Always Remember



Educate your housekeeping crew to recognize COVID-19 symptoms



Develop policies to protect them and provide all necessary safety equipment, including masks and gloves



Promote regular and thorough hand-washing by employees. It is our responsibility to reduce the risk of infecting surfaces and objects



Adopt a hybrid workplace model to maximize the safety of your employees



Go contactless with the entry and exit to your workplace



Implement hoteling and hot desking practices to maintain social distancing protocols



Leverage technology. Apply QR codes to every nook and corner of your workplace to make the sanitization flow seamless

“ Simple precautions and planning can make a big difference.  
Action now will help protect your employees and your business. ”

- World Health Organization

Need help with automating the sanitization workflow at your office?

Visit [www.workinsync.io](https://www.workinsync.io) to learn more.