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Large Residential and Multifamily Residential Buildings:

COVID-19 Disinfection and Social Distancing Guidance

There is currently widespread transmission of COVID-19 in Massachusetts. Owners and managers of multi-family or large residential properties in Lexington should take actions to reduce the risk of virus transmission in their buildings, with particular attention to lobbies and shared facilities. This guidance is intended for owners, managers, and facilities staff. Additional guidance for owners/managers may be found here:

https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/Housing/documents/HUD_Multifamily_Corona_QA_FINAL.pdf.

Staff Precautions

SICK EMPLOYEES MUST STAY HOME. No staff should be allowed to enter the residential building, at any time, if they have symptoms of **body ache, fever, cough, and/or nausea**. Employers should educate staff and workers to recognize symptoms of COVID-19. Find out if employees are healthy before they show up at work. Follow reporting protocol for sick employees.

- Employees should wash their hands frequently with soap/water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Social Distancing

- Building occupants from different households **should keep a six-foot distance from each other** in common areas.
- CDC recommends wearing a facemask to protect yourself and others when outside of your home, **particularly if you must come within 6 feet of someone (e.g. elevator, lobby).**
- Staff should ensure, using signage and regular checks, that the six-foot social distancing rule is strictly observed in all common areas. For instance:
 - **Elevators should be limited to 1-2 people at a time.**
 - Tenants, staff, and visitors should **not** gather—even in small groups—in common areas, such as laundry rooms, game rooms, and lobbies.
 - Staff who interact directly with tenants and visitors **should keep a six-foot distance.**
 - **Package delivery:** Leave packages outside the tenant's door. No in-person delivery. For larger buildings, take steps to minimize contact between delivery services and tenants.
- We recommend temporarily closing all unnecessary amenities, including lounges and fitness rooms, in the building.
 - In shared facilities that do remain open (laundry rooms and lobbies), staff should increase cleaning during this time with an emphasis on all high-touch surfaces (see next section).

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Work with your custodial or maintenance staff to identify and prioritize potentially contaminated surfaces.

Identify all high-touch surfaces (both public access and employee-only areas) for **twice-daily cleaning or more for the most highly touched surfaces**. Conduct a team walk-around to document targets and create a checklist.

- **We recommend 3-4 times daily cleaning** of front door panels, doorknobs and lobby counters.

Common High-Touch surfaces	Personal High-Touch Surfaces
Lobby or office door knob Doorknobs to shared space Elevator buttons (all, inside and outside) Washers and dryers in Laundry Room Apartment amenities Concierge desk/ Service counter Conference tables, but not personal desks Bathroom sinks, faucet handles, flush knobs Water fountains Railings Utensil dispensers (in cafeterias or common kitchens)	Keyboard and mouse on desks Laptop keyboards Mobile phones and desk phones Office doors Chair hand rests Staff refrigerator doors Cabinet or storage shelf doors and handles Pens Eyeglasses Dishes and cups Fax machines and printers touch points

- **Most common disinfecting agents are effective.** For the most active high-touch surfaces it is best to rely on disinfection agents that contain bleach (1:50), H₂O₂ (1:11) or alcohol (65%+).
 - 1/3 cup bleach per gallon of water **OR**
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

For the list of EPA-registered products for use against COVID-19, see the following link:
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

- Double-check for **proper preparation and concentration** according to label. **Never mix chemical products and always wear gloves when handling bleach.** All disinfectant preparation should be done outside or with plenty of ventilation indoors.
- **Clean visible dirt from surfaces before disinfection** and make sure disinfectant can remain on surface for **long enough to kill microbes** as directed on product. Bleach expires and decomposes over time. Check the expiration date and prepare dilutions for each use.
- **Work from standardized spreadsheet or checklist** for continuity during staff hand-offs. Additional CDC guidance may be found here:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>

Laundry Facilities

- Shared laundry facilities (high-touch points) should be disinfected **2-4 times a day**.
- Drying on high heat for **45 minutes** will kill the virus, which is fragile and easily destroyed. Hang drying delicate items outside is fine. Detergents with bleach are preferred, but not strictly necessary.
 - Towels should be washed separately, as they can host higher pathogen loads.
- Dryer exhaust does not pose a risk of spreading the virus if set to higher temperature.

- Contaminated clothes (used by/around a sick person) should be washed with detergent on the highest temperature and kept separately from laundry of well household members. Well household members can combine clothes in laundry loads, as long as laundry is washed with detergent at high temperature.
- Communal machines should be empty-washed with dilute bleach solution **twice a day**, ideally.
- Encourage residents to use laundry room during off-hours and establish a maximum occupancy that will allow social distancing.

Custodial Staffing and Supplies

- Identify additional staffing capacity and supplies needed to complete twice-a-day coverage of all high-touch surfaces (especially where the public has access).
- If your building does not have custodial services during the day, consider contracting daytime services or asking other employees and residents to volunteer their time.
- Make sure any cleaning staff, custodial contractors, and resident volunteers use gloves, long-sleeve pants, and shirts to protect themselves from exposure to cleaning products.
- Take an inventory of cleaning supplies to determine when you will run out. Supply chains are unreliable and the use of alternative products may be needed, so plan ahead.
- Consider using more widely available liquid disinfectants and detergents with warm water since they will be easier to restock. Use disposable wipes (alcohol, bleach) only when other disinfectants will not work so supplies last longer.

For product list, see: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Ventilation

- No special ventilation precautions are strictly necessary for residential buildings. The main transmission pathway of the coronavirus is person-to-person with close contact (6 feet or less).
- Though it is plausible for the virus to linger in the air in confined spaces (e.g., in elevators and crowded common areas), there is not strong evidence that the virus can spread through HVAC systems in a residential building. However, if tenants/staff seek greater assurance, we recommend:
 - Installing high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters for the HVAC system in the building. The HEPA filter can filter out 99% of particles larger than 0.3 μm which can significantly reduce the risk of aerosol transmission
 - Increasing outdoor ventilation by opening windows is strongly encouraged, but may increase allergic symptoms, so encourage anyone with a history of allergies to medicate.

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Adapted from guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Cambridge Department of Public Health

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