How to Keep Living Spaces Clean

Wood Furniture Care and Maintenance Guide
Since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, keeping living spaces safe has become top of mind for everyone. End users are asking for guidance about the best way to clean and disinfect our wood furniture, especially in senior living communities.

As you seek to prevent the spread of infection, how do you clean and disinfect wood furniture surfaces while not harming the finish? How do you endeavor to protect your residents, while also protecting your furniture investment?

Our goal with this brochure is to answer these questions, providing you with easy-to-follow suggestions to keep wood furniture in your facilities clean, disinfected, and beautiful.

The Natural Beauty of Wood

Wood is unrivaled for the warmth, character and natural beauty it offers to both residential and commercial interiors. The decorative grain patterns, rich finishes and organic quality of wood brings an emotional comfort to spaces and gives a home-like feel to commercial interiors.

To maintain and enhance wood’s natural beauty and help it last, wood furniture needs proper care. Our products are finished with two to three coats of lacquer for extra depth and long-lasting durability. The finish protects the wood and adds to its beauty. While no finish is indestructible, with the proper care the finish will last for many years.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website, the primary and most important mode of transmission for the coronavirus is airborne through close contact from person-to-person. Based on data from laboratory studies on COVID-19 and what we know about similar respiratory diseases, it may be possible for a person to contract COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this isn’t thought to be the main way the virus spreads.
Frequently-Touched Surfaces

According to the CDC, “Most surfaces and objects will just need normal routine cleaning. Frequently-touched surfaces and objects will need to be cleaned, and then disinfected, to further reduce the risk of germs on surfaces and objects.”

Owners and operators of senior living facilities and other commercial buildings responsible for the well-being of its occupants should evaluate their facilities to determine what surfaces are “high touch.”

High-touch furniture items may include tabletops (i.e. dining room, activity room, library areas) and chair arms, seats and the tops of chair backs where hands frequently touch. Bar carts, buffets, chair side tabletops and drawer pulls may also be high-touch items in a senior living community.

Cleaning & Disinfecting are Not the Same

It is important to understand that “cleaning” and “disinfecting” are not the same. “Cleaning” involves the use of soap and water to physically remove dirt, germs and other impurities from surfaces. According to the CDC, cleaning does not kill germs, but by removing them, cleaning lowers the amount of germs on a surface, and thus reduces the risk of spreading infection.

To “kill” pathogens involves the use of an EPA-approved disinfectant. Again, the CDC notes, “This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.”

Disinfectants Tested by H Contract

It is outside the scope of H Contract’s expertise to identify which EPA-approved disinfectant best kills the coronavirus. But to determine which disinfectants are compatible with the finishes of our wood products when used as directed, H Contract engaged an independent lab to conduct tests in accordance with BIFMA HEALTHCARE FURNITURE DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR CLEANABILITY. The lab’s testing exceeded the BIFMA requirements by leaving the disinfectants on the finishes four times longer than the test required. Due to the wide variety of disinfecting products on the EPA list, it was not possible to test all of them. The lab tested a variety of popular and readily available products.
Disinfectant Test Findings

Below is a list of EPA-approved disinfectants found to be compatible with the wood furniture surfaces:

- **Fantastik® Multi-Surface Disinfectant Degreaser** – EPA Registration # 89900-3; Dwell Time: 5 minutes; Active Ingredient: Quaternary ammonium.

- **Formula 409® Cleaner Degreaser Disinfectant** – EPA Registration # 67619-10; Dwell Time: 10 minutes; Active Ingredient: Quaternary ammonium.

- **Lysol® Multi-Surface Cleaner, Brand New Day (variety of fragrances)** – EPA Registration # 777-89; Dwell Time: 3 minutes; Active Ingredient: Quaternary ammonium.

- **Ecolab® Peroxide Multi Surface Cleaner and Disinfectant** – EPA Registration # 1677-238; Dwell Time: .5 minutes; Active Ingredient: Hydrogen peroxide

- **MonoFoil D® Dual-Action Disinfectant** – EPA Registration # 90856-4; Dwell Time: 3 minutes; Active Ingredient: Quaternary ammonium.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Based on the testing, disinfectants containing Sodium Hypochlorite (Bleach) or Alcohol (Ethanol/Isopropanol) are not recommended for use on our furniture as they will degrade the finish.

In addition to cleaning, wood benefits from occasional polishing. Just as one’s skin can dry out and may need moisturizing, so too does wood. We recommend that our clients occasionally polish our wood furniture to return essential minerals and oils to the surface. It is important to avoid products that contain wax or silicone, as these products can produce a build-up that may alter the clarity of the wood finish. H Contract recommends Guardsman® Anytime Clean & Polish to bring luster back to the wood surface. While it is not a disinfectant, Guardsman® Anytime Clean & Polish is also a cleaner, and can be used to clean your furniture instead of the soap and water regimen described above.

Due to the wide variety of fabrics specified on H Contract seating products, please contact textile manufacturers directly for their cleaning and disinfecting guidelines.

Best Practices for Cleaning and Disinfecting

Follow these best practices to clean and disinfect our wood furniture surfaces:

- **Identify “high-touch” surfaces.** Determine which surfaces are “high touch” (frequently-touched) surfaces.

- **Clean.** Mix a solution of mild dishwashing detergent and fresh, clear water - 1 tablespoon of dish soap to 1-1.5 quarts of water. Use a clean, soft, non-abrasive cloth (i.e. cotton or micro-fiber). Wring the cloth out so that it is lightly damp. Rub the surface gently with the grain of the wood. Then dry the surface with a dry, soft, non-abrasive cloth.

- **Disinfect.** Apply one of the listed disinfectants according to the manufacturer’s instructions for use, including dilution and dwell time. Always use a clean, soft, non-abrasive cloth to wipe on the product. Be sure to spray the solution on the cloth and wipe; do not spray solution directly on the surface.

- **Remove disinfectant residue.** After leaving the disinfectant on for its required dwell time, remove any residue from the surface by using a clean, damp, soft, non-abrasive cloth. Use water to dampen the cloth and frequently rinse and wring out the cloth.

- **Cleaners and disinfectants in one.** Some of the products that performed well in the testing are cleaners and disinfectants in one. That is, they clean and disinfect at the same time. If using a cleaner/disinfectant combination product, follow the manufacturer’s instructions, including dilution and dwell time, and remove the residue as discussed above.