



A Union of Professionals

# COVID-19 Resources for School Bus Personnel

## Best Cleaning and Disinfecting Practices for Buses

MARCH 23, 2020

While we all need to do our best to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, it is important to emphasize that a “more is better” approach is not the best response to this pandemic. Follow guidelines on proper application of product use, including dilution requirements and dwell time, or the time that disinfectants need to remain on the surface in order to be effective at killing the virus.

### ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

- Ventilation of the bus while cleaning and disinfecting is key. Open those doors and windows!
- Wear the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) as specified by the product safety data sheet (SDS) while cleaning and disinfecting and wash hands thoroughly after each work session.
- If new products are introduced, workers should be given training on these new chemicals and their proper use, access to the SDS of the product, and the PPE needed for safe use of the product.
- Clean high-contact surfaces first and most frequently, including buttons, handholds, pull cords, rails, steering wheels, door handles, shift knobs, dashboard controls and stanchions.
- Consider requesting the district to provide disinfecting wipes for quick disinfecting between cleanings and rides as a good way to limit the spread of germs.
- Consider requesting the district to put hand sanitizer dispensers in buses as another way for riders and drivers to clean their hands when they aren't able to do so with soap and water.

*Best practices continued on next page*

---

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of 1.7 million professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

Randi Weingarten  
PRESIDENT

Loretta Johnson  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

Evelyn DeJesus  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT



## Cleaning protocols for school bus personnel/contractors include:

- High-touch areas, including buttons, handholds, pull cords, rails, steering wheels, door handles, shift knobs, dashboard controls and stanchions, should be cleaned more frequently.
- Dust- and wet-mopping vehicle floors.
- Removing trash.
- Wiping heat and air conditioner vents.
- Spot cleaning walls and seats.
- Dusting horizontal surfaces.
- Cleaning spills.
- The interior of each vehicle should be cleaned and either swept or vacuumed thoroughly after each morning and evening route and/or at least once each day.

## Further guidance:

### CLEAN AND DISINFECT SURFACES AND OBJECTS THAT ARE TOUCHED OFTEN.

- Follow your school's standard procedures for routine cleaning and disinfecting on the bus. Typically, this means daily sanitizing of surfaces and objects that are touched often, including seatbacks, steering wheels and railings. Immediately clean surfaces and objects that are visibly soiled. If surfaces or objects are soiled with body fluids or blood, use gloves and other standard precautions to avoid coming into contact with the fluid. Remove the spill, and then clean and disinfect the surface.

### KEEP ROUTINE CLEANING AND DISINFECTING PRACTICES IN PLACE.

- Most viruses are relatively fragile, so standard cleaning and disinfecting practices are sufficient to remove or kill them.

- Special cleaning and disinfecting processes, including frequently using room air deodorizers and fumigating, are not necessary or recommended. These processes can irritate the eyes, nose, throat and skin, aggravate asthma and cause other serious side effects.

### CLEAN AND DISINFECT CORRECTLY.

- Always follow label directions on cleaning products and disinfectants. Wash surfaces with a general household cleaner to remove germs.
- Rinse with water and follow with an Environmental Protection Agency-registered disinfectant (**bit.ly/EPA-disinfectants**) to kill germs. If a surface is not visibly dirty, you can clean it with an EPA-registered product that both cleans (removes germs) and disinfects (kills germs) instead.
- Be sure to read the label directions carefully, as there may be a separate procedure for using the product as a cleaner or as a disinfectant.
- Disinfection usually requires the product to remain on the surface for a certain period of time (e.g., letting it stand for three to five minutes). When an EPA-registered disinfectant is called for, be sure to follow the label directions on the disinfectant for dwell time—the amount of time necessary for the disinfectant to reside on the surface. Also, make sure the surface remains wet during the dwell time to properly disinfect and kill the germs. All nonporous surfaces should be disinfecting by EPA-approved products known to kill the COVID-19 virus.

## Worker protections:

- If new products are introduced, workers should be given training on these new chemicals and their proper use, access to the safety data sheet of the product, and the personal protective equipment needed for safe use of the product.
- Anyone who uses cleaners and disinfectants must be trained to read and understand all instruction labels and understand safe and appropriate use. This might require that instructional materials and training be provided in other languages. Pay close attention to hazard warnings and directions on product labels. Cleaning products and disinfectants often call for the use of gloves or eye protection. For example, proper gloves should always be worn to protect your hands, and windows and doors should be open to provide as much ventilation as possible.
- Workers should follow cleaning product labels for use, including dilution requirements and dwell times, and have ample amounts of ventilation while using the products, including having the doors and windows kept open to maximize airflow to ventilate school bus vehicles.

## Ways for bus drivers to work in the event of school closures:

- In some areas of Washington state, bus drivers are delivering meals to students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch while school is canceled. This is one idea that will allow for bus drivers to still work and get paid while schools are closed.
- What are some other ideas you have to keep bus drivers engaged in work if schools are closed?

**For additional information, contact Amy Bahruth with AFT Nurses and Health Professionals at 202-879-4731 or [abahruth@aft.org](mailto:abahruth@aft.org).**