

Quick Tips for **Cleaning & Disinfecting Floors**

COMBATING THE VIRUS THAT CAUSES COVID-19



Tennant Company is dedicated to providing information and insights to help facilities make informed decisions about cleaning and disinfecting floors. While floors have traditionally been considered a non-critical environmental surface, the COVID-19 pandemic is requiring all facilities to consider taking extra precautions against the virus that causes the disease. [A New England Journal of Medicine study¹](#) published in March 2020 shows that this virus can live for up to 72 hours on some non-porous surfaces. In order to reduce the potential for virus transmission, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that floors are regularly cleaned and then disinfected with chemicals that have been registered with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and are listed for use to control the virus.

Cleaning and Disinfecting: Know the Difference



Floor cleaning is the physical removal of soil, debris, and organic substances from a surface. Cleaning is an important step in the disinfection process. Auto-scrubbers can be used to perform this important task between disinfection processes while people are present, since cleaning solution is applied to the floor and quickly removed to prevent slip-fall accidents.



Floor disinfecting is the use of chemical solutions that eliminate pathogens and disease-causing microorganisms. These chemicals require a dwell time of up to 10 minutes (times vary) to do their job. This task is performed after cleaning and when an area can be closed off as the floor remains wet for at least the required dwell time.

Tips for Disinfecting Floors to protect against COVID-19

- Before cleaning the floor, remove loose soil, debris and other substances.
- Use a Tennant auto-scrubber to complete a thorough floor cleaning, which removes stubborn soils and organic materials that can be hospitable to microorganisms. Allow floors to completely dry before continuing.
- Select an EPA-approved disinfectant and ensure the chemical you choose is approved for use on your particular flooring type. The EPA maintains a [list of registered disinfectants](#) that meet the EPA's criteria and can be used to control the virus that causes COVID-19².
- Always wear appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when preparing and using a disinfectant solution.

- Prepare the disinfectant solution according to label directions. Carefully follow directions for use, including contact times, to ensure effectiveness.
- Always restrict foot traffic while treating areas and use appropriate safety protocols, such as placing barricades and using prominent safety signs, to avoid slip and fall accidents while floors remain wet.
- Apply the disinfectant with spray applicators, mops or Tennant auto-scrubbers operating in a mode that allows solution to remain on the floor for the necessary dwell time. If using a Tennant auto-scrubber:
 - Set the auto-scrubber to double-scrub by raising or removing the squeegee
 - Set solution flow on lowest possible solution flow rate
 - Scrub at a rate to distribute disinfectant across scrub path
- Ensure the disinfectant remains in contact with the floor surface for the required time, allowing surfaces to air dry following application.
- Drain tanks of remaining disinfectant solution immediately after use. Rinse floor machine with water using conventional scrubbing to remove any product residue inside to reduce the potential for chemical interaction issues†.
- Additional cleaning processes can be used between disinfection cycles to create a clean and safe environment for customers, guests and employees.
- Even when used as directed, using disinfectant in an auto-scrubber may cause premature wear and additional service calls as disinfectants can be more damaging than detergents.
- Using a disinfectant without adequate contact time on the surface creates a false sense of safety and wasted funds. Traditional use of auto-scrubbers put solution down and recovers it in 2-3 seconds. This is not long enough to achieve efficacy.

Tips for Cleaning & Disinfecting Tennant Auto-Scrubbers

- Cleaning floors may result in contamination of Tennant auto-scrubbers with the virus that causes COVID-19. Tennant recommends routine cleaning and disinfecting of equipment surfaces and parts.
- Before selecting a cleaner or disinfectant, review labels to determine if the chemistry is compatible with the auto-scrubber surfaces and parts. Some disinfectants, just like some cleaning products, can corrode metals, plastics and types of rubber.
- Thoroughly clean all hard, non-porous surfaces of the machine. After cleaning, allow time for surfaces to completely air dry prior to disinfection.
- Thoroughly apply the disinfectant by wiping or spraying and carefully follow contact time and PPE instructions.
- If some surfaces cannot be reached via wipe or spray, it may be necessary to disassemble and immerse the parts in disinfectant.
- Wipe and rinse equipment with water to remove disinfectant residues from machine, paying specific attention to the scrub deck, squeegees and other areas prone to chemical corrosion in order to reduce the potential for damage to your equipment. Take care not to spray electrical components of the machine.



1. The New England Journal of Medicine: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMc2004973>

2. EPA List of Registered Disinfectants: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Tennant Company is committed to working with industry partners to keep our communities clean, safe, and healthy. We salute you for the essential work you are doing to maintain your facilities to control the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for your help in protecting your community.

Please [contact us](#) with any questions.