

ISSA Tip Sheet

May 20, 2020

Building Service Contractor Advice for Post-COVID-19 Cleaning & Disinfecting Protocol Adjustments

As you prepare to help facilities reopen after COVID-19-related closures, your customers and their stakeholders will want reassurance you have done the best possible to reduce the risk of contracting the virus in their building(s). You will need to evaluate what increased cleaning is necessary within their facility to meet their occupant protection goals. You also will need to negotiate how to accomplish their goals and what additional investment may be necessary.

Communicating with Customers Regarding the Best Approach

Customers are currently being exposed to a tremendous amount of information, news, and questions around COVID-19. Not all of it is accurate or helpful. Even for professionals in the field, making sense of what is being shared is difficult.

As a cleaning and disinfecting professional, helping the customer understand what is being done, and why, is very important.

- Revisit the original standards and scope of work for the facility. Then ask the customer to define their goals and desired outcomes when asking for adjusted cleaning or disinfecting services.
- Make them aware of why cleaning is important (e.g., removal of soil, preparing surfaces for disinfection).
- Explain to them the purpose of disinfection (e.g., deactivation of the virus, making surfaces safe) and what it takes for the disinfectant to work (e.g., concentration, dwell time, application).
- Communicate the implications these task requirements have on scope of work, such as slowing how much work an employee can cover in the same amount of time as traditional tasks.
- Make the customer aware of the reality of the limitations (e.g., one-time application, re-contamination) and discuss the role the customer can play in limiting (re)contamination (e.g., hand hygiene) and frequency of cleaning and disinfection.
- Have a written COVID-19 cleaning and disinfection “info sheet” available for your specific services, which you can share and use for your conversation with the customer.
- Always be prepared to share the safety data sheet, usage instructions, efficacy data (proof to back your claims), and relevant government registrations for any chemicals or technology you are recommending. This will reinforce that you have chosen the right approach meant for their specific surfaces and needs.
- Offer proof that the people executing cleaning tactics in their facility are trained in the use of the technology recommended, the correct use of PPE required and work practices needed if there is exposure to human blood, bodily fluids, or other potentially infectious materials.
- After assessing the customer’s specific need (e.g. heightened cleaning frequencies, added routine disinfecting, or need to address a potentially contaminated area), discuss your plan of action with the customer and why it meets the prior points. Have written guidance from a third-party cleaning industry authority such as ISSA or GBAC® (Global Biorisk Advisory Council), that references the tasks you are proposing. This can provide added credibility to your expert decision.

Your cleaning and disinfecting services are essential for providing an important public health purpose. As such, following professional steps in carrying out your services are also very important. Here are a few steps for consideration:

- Every cleaning and disinfection job should be preceded by a documented risk assessment. This process allows you to identify any hazards on the job, how to deal with them (mitigation), and what process you will follow, including the type of application, chemicals, and all necessary personal protective equipment.
- The written risk assessment is part of your due diligence and should be discussed with the customer because it sets the stage for your updated scope of work and resulting work order. In addition, it provides reassurance to the customer demonstrating your professional services.
- Provide a checklist that outlines the cleaning and disinfecting steps you are taking for the specific job. This checklist will help your staff follow the correct procedures in the correct order and can be signed off at the end of the work, creating an actual documented record of your completed work. Provide a copy to the customer.

It is your responsibility as a cleaning industry professional to offer responsible choices to customers that meet their needs. If a customer mistakenly requests services higher than they need, it is your responsibility to advise them of what the correct level should be. Selling overkill services during a pandemic is professionally unethical and can damage your long-term customer relationship.

If the goals a customer communicates for increased cleaning and disinfecting cannot be accomplished with the staff and budget currently available, you will need to have a conversation with them to align expectations. You need to outline what they can afford and what it would take to accomplish their increased goals. Then discuss options to narrow the gap.

You may need to discuss what is the consequence to their business if individuals who tested positive are traced to their facility or if their employees become sick, and they will need to weigh the cost/benefit of their choices. For useful data to help justify increased investment in cleaning activities, visit www.issa.com/valuetips.

When increasing or reprioritising tasks from the original scope of cleaning work, always document the changes and set timelines for evaluation and adjustment.

As with any crisis scenario, communication between you and your customer can be the difference between success and failure. Even if mistakes are made, if proper quality control measures and communication are in place, you can come out with a stronger customer loyalty for having shown that you have their best interest at heart.

To further show your commitment to your customer's success, you also can educate them about ISSA's GBAC STAR facility accreditation. This program assesses that the facility has met 20 criteria for the most relevant protocols any business should implement to best protect occupant health, whether during routine business operations, a pandemic or a heightened cold and flu season.

Your key employees can take the specialized GBAC Fundamentals Online Course: Microbial Warrior Workshop to ensure they are aware of the basic cleaning and disinfecting principles needed to develop some of the 20 protocols required by GBAC STAR. By going through this training and then offering to help your customer achieve GBAC STAR accreditation, you show that your solutions are of the highest calibre and able to gain them international recognition. For more details on the GBAC course and the GBAC STAR program, visit www.gbac.org.

The decisions you make to provide responsible service and put public health first, during this time of uncertainty and constant change, will inevitably lead to a long-lasting impression and gratitude. For more tips on quality management and service delivery, download ISSA's Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) at issa.com/standard.

Your expert support will help customers properly align cleaning and disinfecting as a key tool to enable their businesses to more quickly recover from this pandemic's economic impact and provide their employees or customers with confidence to return to routine activity. The steps you take now can improve and sustain their occupants' health and productivity long after this pandemic has subsided and increase the ongoing value of clean for their business bottom line.

Previous Tip Sheets:

- Tip Sheet: [Personal Protective Equipment](#)
- Tip Sheet: [Risk Assessment](#)
- Tip Sheet: [Using Disinfectants](#)
- Tip Sheet: [How to Clean & Disinfect Healthcare Environments](#)
- Tip Sheet: [Facility Managers – Questions to ask when reopening facilities](#)

Other links of interest:

- [Coronavirus: Prevention and Control for the Cleaning Industry](#)
- [World Health Organization \(Who\) Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)

[VISIT GBAC'S WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

About ISSA

As the leading trade association for the cleaning industry worldwide, ISSA is committed to helping its members change the way the world views cleaning. The association provides members with the business tools they need to promote cleaning as an investment in human health, the environment, and an improved bottom line. For more information about ISSA's Europe, Middle East and Africa regional support, visit www.issa.com/emea or send an email to emea@issa.com.

About GBAC

ISSA's Global Biorisk Advisory Council is comprised of international leaders in the field of microbial-pathogenic threat analysis, mitigation, response and recovery. GBAC provides training, guidance, certification, crisis management, assistance and leadership to government, commercial and private entities looking to mitigate, quickly address biological threats and real-time crises, and/or recover from such events. For more information about ISSA's GBAC division, visit www.gbac.org.