

# How to Use Chemicals Safely



In the era of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), your organization or your household may be using stronger chemicals for disinfecting surfaces. This fact sheet reminds you how to use chemicals safely and compliantly.

## Workplace Tips



### Ensure Easy SDS Access

Make sure anyone working with hazardous chemicals can easily find and understand Safety Data Sheets (SDSs).



### Wear the Right PPE

Always inspect and wear required or SDS-recommended personal protective equipment when handling chemicals.



### Use Labels

Label all secondary containers with necessary product, supplier, hazard, and precautionary information.



### Provide Training + Maintain Inventory

Account for hazard communication training and keep your chemical inventory updated.

## Sanitize? Clean? Disinfect?

These three terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but they mean different things. You'll need a combination of all 3 to control the spread of germs.



### Sanitize

**Reduce germs.**

If soap and water are not available, using a sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol can lower the number of germs to safer levels.



### Clean

**Remove germs.**

Cleaning physically removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces and it lowers the risk of spreading infection.



### Disinfect

**Kill germs.**

Disinfectants use chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. The EPA has a [list of disinfectants](#) that meet its criteria for use against COVID-19.

## Household Tips



### Use Original Containers

Keep chemical products in their original bottles or containers. Do not use food containers to store chemical products.



### Always Read the Label

Always read the label before using a product that may be poisonous.



### Never Mix Products

Never mix household products together. For example, mixing bleach and ammonia produces toxic gases.



### Ventilate + Wear Protective Clothing

Open windows and wear protective clothing (gloves, long sleeves, long pants, shoes) if you use chemicals.