



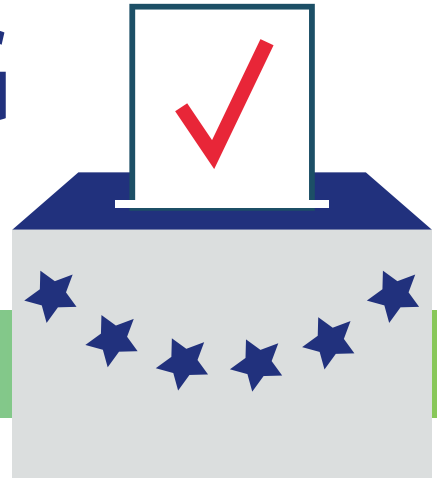
COVID-19

PAST THE PEAK

Saginaw County  HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ELECTIONS/POLLING LOCATIONS

COVID-19 Guidance



The novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is spread from person-to-person most frequently among close contacts (within 6 feet). This type of transmission occurs via respiratory droplets. Transmission of coronavirus in general occurs more commonly through respiratory drops than through contact with contaminated surfaces, although evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials.

Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illness in election polling locations.

Purpose

This guidance provides recommendations on the routine cleaning and disinfection of polling location areas and associated voting equipment. It suggests that action taken by polling station workers can reduce the risk of exposure of COVID-19 by limiting the survival of the virus in the environment. This guidance may be updated if additional information becomes available.

Definitions

- Community setting (e.g. polling locations, households, schools, businesses) encompass most non-health care settings and are visited by the general public.
- Cleaning refers to the removal of dirt and impurities including germs from surfaces. Cleaning alone does NOT kill germs, however, it can decrease the number of germs and therefore reduce the risk of spreading the infection.
- Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces. It is recommended to clean a surface and then disinfect the surface to further reduce risk of spreading the infection.

Saginaw County  HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Actions Election Officials Should Take

- Encourage voters to use voting methods that minimize direct contact with other people and reduce crowd size at polling stations, such as absentee ballot voting. This should particularly be taken in to consideration for high risk populations such as those 65 years of age and older.
- Screen all poll workers prior to beginning election work shifts. Ask all poll workers upon entry:
 - **Have you tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?**
 - If the person answers “yes” do not allow entry into the polling location.
 - **In the past 24 hours have you experienced fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, chills, or new onset of diarrhea?**
 - If the person answers “yes”, deny entry and encourage them to speak with a healthcare provider.
 - **If the person answers “no” to both of the questions above, allow entry and have them sign in.**
- Ensure hand washing stations are available for frequent use. Ensure bathrooms at polling stations are supplied with adequate soap, water, and drying materials so visitors and staff can wash their hands.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for use before or after using voting machines or the final step in the voting process. Consider placing the alcohol-based hand sanitizer in visible, frequently used locations such as polling booths, desks, entrances, and exits.
- Incorporate social distancing to the greatest extent possible. Social distancing strategies increase the space between people and decrease the frequency of contact to reduce the risk of spreading disease. Keeping people at least 6 feet apart is ideal and should be carefully considered when designing polling location flow. Polling locations should:
 - Increase distance between voting booths.
 - Limit nonessential visitors. For example, poll workers and voters should not bring children or other nonvoting family members with them.
 - Put up signage and remind voters upon arrival to leave space between themselves and others. In addition to signage, consider floor markers (tape, stations, etc.) to space people waiting in line to vote or how they should move through the polling location for physical distancing.
- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces.
 - Common surfaces such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, desks toilets, faucets, sinks, etc. should be cleaned throughout Election Day.
 - Disinfect voting associated equipment (voting machines, tables, keyboard, writing utensils, voting sleeves) after each use.
 - Disinfect surfaces that will be used by multiple voters or poll workers. A list of products with [EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims](#) is available. Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against the virus that causes COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, use of personal protective equipment).
 - Ensure disinfection wipes are available for voters to disinfect any shared equipment or services such as pens/markers used for voting or consider disposable equipment.
 - Consider using voting sleeves that can be disinfected, made of hard surfaces such as plastic vs. porous surfaces such as cardboard.
 - Consider wipeable covers for electronics and be sure to follow manufacturer’s instructions for guidance on appropriate products for electronics.
 - If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or spray containing at least 70% alcohol to clean voting machine buttons and touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.