

USING GLOVES IN THE WORKPLACE

Employers should complete risk assessments to see if gloves are a necessary precaution for them.



Will wearing gloves prevent the spread of COVID-19 in my workplace?

Coronavirus can survive on surfaces for varying amounts of time. Wearing gloves can provide a barrier from coronavirus if worn properly but can also give a false sense of security.

Coronavirus spreads through tiny droplets when someone coughs, sneezes, and talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Gloves won't protect you from getting infected this way.

Also, if you touch something where a contaminated droplet has landed, with or without gloves, and then touch your face, you can still get sick. The best protection is to follow public health guidelines:

- Avoid touching your face
- Wash your hands regularly
- Stay at least six feet away from other people

Should my employees wear gloves?

Currently there is no specific guidance from CDC for workers about wearing gloves. OSHA provides [guidance](#) for specific groups, and stresses that **employers should conduct their own hazard and risk assessments**, and implement adequate controls (e.g., gloves or other PPE).

While conducting hazard and risk assessments, employers may want to consider:

- **What is the risk level for each task?** Certain tasks may be more risky and it may be decided that glove use is appropriate. For example, workers may need gloves when implementing protocols for cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.
- **What is the available supply of gloves?** How often would gloves need to be changed and how many gloves are available?
- **What hand hygiene options are available?** Where and how often can employees wash hands or use hand sanitizer? Are more breaks possible? When developing staff schedules, consider options for additional short breaks to increase the frequency with which staff can wash hands with soap and water. Alternatively, consider providing alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol so that workers can frequently sanitize their hands.
- **What training do employees have on glove use?** The CDC has guidance on [how to remove gloves](#).
- **If gloves are not deemed “necessary,” are individuals more or less likely to touch their face when wearing gloves?** For example, do employees feel a false sense of security or does having gloves remind them not to touch their face?

If hazards are deemed high enough to warrant required glove use:

Proper training needs to be in place. Without training on the correct way to remove gloves, hands may become contaminated. For contact transmission, it is important reiterate that a person does not become infected *through* their hands. They are only infected if their contaminated hand, whether gloved or not, touches other parts of the body such as their nose, mouth or eyes.

There is concern whether gloves are beneficial for workers at lower risk of exposure due to the following:

- Gloves act like bare hands; once contaminated, it is easy for cross contamination to occur.
- Glove change and hand hygiene is required to break any cycle of contamination similar to how handwashing/hand hygiene is required for bare hands.
- Gloves should be replaced when they are torn, soiled, or there is excessive sweating from hands.
- Hands should be washed before putting on new gloves and after removing gloves.

What should I do if I want my employees to wear gloves?

Gloves can be a good practice, if used in combination with other preventive measures, with proper training, and following these guidelines:

- **Always wash your hands** before and after wearing gloves.
- **Clean any surface you might have touched** with your gloves on, such as your counter tops, keypads, phone, keys, wallet, eyeglasses, or door handles.
- **Employees cannot wash hands with gloves on or apply hand sanitizer to gloved hands.** Gloves are

one time use, and washing or sanitizing gloves can degrade gloves and make them less effective.

- **Throw away used disposable gloves**, and wash fabric gloves with soap and water before using them again.
- **Be careful to avoid contamination** when taking gloves off. Avoid touching the inside of a glove or your bare hand with the outside of a dirty glove.
- **Don't touch your face**, especially your nose or mouth.

What is the proper way to remove gloves?

The key to removing gloves is to not touch the exterior of the gloves which may be contaminated. The CDC has a [diagram](#) on how to remove gloves safely or your employees could watch this video to learn the proper way to remove gloves [Glove Removal Video](#).



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