

Key Elements of Environmental Cleaning in Long-Term Care Facilities



In partnership with
**Antimicrobial Stewardship
and Environmental
Cleaning Task Force
(AMSEC) of Rhode Island**



Hand Hygiene and Personal Protective Equipment

- Perform hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub or wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly soiled.
- Perform hand hygiene before entering and after exiting every room, before donning gloves, after removing gloves, and after contact with waste or bodily fluids.
- Gloves are not a substitute for hand hygiene. Remove gloves before cleaning your hands, before exiting every room, when going from a dirty task to a clean task, and when they are damaged or visibly soiled.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)—gloves, gowns, masks/eye protection—based on standard precautions, transmission-based precautions, or when needed to safely clean and disinfect.
- Follow proper donning and doffing procedures to prevent contamination.



Supplies and Equipment

- Perform regular inventories and inspections of supplies and equipment to ensure availability.
- Keep cleaning carts organized and adequately stocked.
- Stock only what is needed—avoid overloading—and keep clean and dirty items clearly separated to prevent spreading germs.
- Inspect equipment before use: check for damaged tools, frayed cords, and broken handles. Do not use damaged equipment. Follow your facility protocol for removing it from use.
- Clean and disinfect reusable equipment after each use and store it in designated, secure, clean locations.
- Never store personal items, food, or beverages on or in cleaning carts.



Products and Disinfectants

- Clean surfaces first to remove dust, dirt, spills, and some germs with water and detergent before disinfecting, which kills germs not removed during cleaning. A one-step detergent-disinfectant can do both at the same time.
- Follow use instructions to verify if two products are safe to use together—for example, do not mix bleach with any other disinfectant.
- Decide what PPE you will need to do your work safely and prevent the spread of germs.
- Before using products, review the manufacturer's instructions, Safety Data Sheets, and organizational policy.



Procedures and Technique

- Follow a standardized sequence: top-to-bottom, clean-to-dirty. Pay special attention to high-risk areas, such as frequently touched surfaces (e.g., bedrails, handles, buttons).
- Clean bathrooms last, after completing room cleaning.
- Follow room-specific cleaning protocols for routine, discharge, and terminal cleans.
- Clean and disinfect shared equipment (e.g., wheelchairs, blood pressure cuffs, thermometers) after each use to prevent the spread of germs.
- Develop a process to show if equipment has been cleaned and disinfected. For example, keep clean equipment labeled ("tagged and bagged") in a designated, clean location.
- Promptly clean and disinfect blood and body fluid spills. Use an EPA-registered disinfectant and follow your facility's protocol. Follow transmission-based precautions and use appropriate PPE as indicated.



Waste Management

- Biomedical waste, such as sharps, requires special handling. Follow local regulations and facility policy.
- Handle waste carefully to avoid spills or injuries. Wear appropriate PPE when handling any waste.
- Transport waste using designated routes and containers according to the facility's protocols.



Monitoring and Quality Assurance

- Perform routine, standardized monitoring of environmental cleaning and disinfection as a best practice. Methods include direct observations and fluorescent markers.
- Participate in facility audits and inspections and report issues, missed areas, or supply shortages promptly.
- Ensure all EVS staff, including contracted staff, receive proper training and competency validation to maintain consistent, high-quality cleaning practice across the facility.