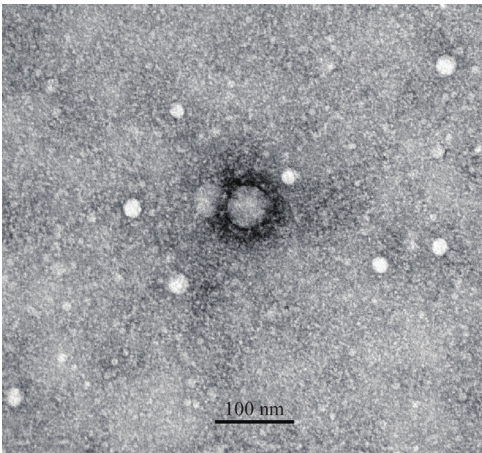


# PORTABLE SANITATION AND COVID-19

These are unprecedented times. COVID-19 is sweeping the world, and portable sanitation companies are on both the front lines and the first line back, doing their best to serve customers and the public.

The information that follows on the next few pages is correct as of Tuesday, March 17, 2020. The PSAI will issue periodic email updates throughout this challenging time.

## New Information about Transmission of COVID-19 via Fecal Matter



A virus particle with typical morphology of coronavirus was observed using electron microscopy after inoculating stool suspension into Vero cells.

The Chinese Centers for Disease Control (CCDC) has published a study that indicates it may be possible that the COVID-19 virus can be passed to workers through fecal matter.

According to CCDC:

“These results confirm that COVID-19 patients have live virus in stool specimens, which is a new finding in the transmission routes of 2019-nCoV. In addition to close contact and contact with respiratory secretions of patients, the virus can also be transmitted through the potential fecal-oral route. This means that stool samples may contaminate hands, food, water, etc., and may cause infection by invading the oral cavity, respiratory mucosa, conjunctiva, etc. This virus has many routes of transmission, which can partially explain its strong transmission and fast transmission speed.”<sup>1</sup>

These findings supplement what we already knew. The virus lives a long time outside the human body and can be transmitted easily.

What is new in this finding is that workers pumping human waste can possibly ingest the virus if, while pumping, fecal matter becomes airborne and is inhaled or ingested. This risk is in addition to the already-known risks of becoming infected by getting the virus on a hand or face and then into the mouth. To counter these risks the PSAI strongly advises:

- All workers who are pumping units should wear face masks or face shields while cleaning as well as the regular minimum PPE of hard hats, waterproof gloves, boots with steel or composite toes, and eye protection.
- All hard hats, gloves, and eye/face protection should be sanitized daily with solutions of bleach, hydrogen peroxide, or other approved cleaners (see short list and link to a fuller list below).
- The compartments in/on trucks where gloves are stored between uses should be sanitized at least daily with one of these cleaning solutions.

Global COVID-19 case numbers are reported by the World Health Organization (WHO).

<sup>1</sup> [China CDC Weekly, “Notes from the Field: Isolation of 2019-nCoV from a Stool Specimen of a Laboratory-Confirmed Case of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)”](#)

## Laundering Clothing Worn for Cleaning Portable Units

Do not wear clothes worn while cleaning portable units in public areas or for multiple days. Take precautions so that whatever gets on the clothing—whether it's COVID-19 or anything else—is not transferred to furniture, upholstery, or other surfaces. The CDC recommends the following laundry procedures:

- Use gloves when handling dirty laundry, or be sure to wash hands afterwards.
- Do not shake dirty laundry. This will minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.
- Launder items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry them completely. A portable sanitation worker's clothes can be washed with other people's items.
- If the laundry is not done right away, clean and disinfect the clothes hamper according to the PSAI's guidance for surfaces. If possible, place a bag liner that is either disposable or can be laundered inside the hamper.



- As usual, gloves worn while cleaning hand wash stations and portable restrooms should be different (two pair minimum) and stored separately to avoid cross-contamination.
- Clothing worn while cleaning portable units should be removed and laundered immediately. (See sidebar for laundering tips.)

## Effective Cleaning Products and Durations

The PSAI has previously issued guidance on cleaning products. See the [March 4 issue of Association Insight](#) for details. In addition to this, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have now issued a more comprehensive list of cleaners and the duration of time they must be used to kill COVID-19. [Download it here.](#)

### Common Elements Found to Work against COVID-19

Active Ingredients	Contact Duration	Formulation Type
Quaternary ammonium	10 minutes	Dilutable
Glycolic Acid	10 minutes	Impregnated Materials
Sodium hypochlorite (8.5%)	5 minutes	Dilutable
Octanoic acid	2 minutes	Dilutable
Phenolic	10 minutes	Dilutable
Peroxyacetic Acid (Peraclean 15)	1 minute	Dilutable
Hydrogen Peroxide (OxyRes concentrate)	5 minutes	Dilutable
Quaternary ammonium; Ethanol	1 minute	Dilutable

Note that the EPA list online is not exhaustive, and many products not named on it contain the ingredients listed. Check your cleaning products to ensure they include at least one of the ingredients needed to kill the COVID-19 virus (you can also double check for the EPA registration number), and be sure you are training your team to leave them on surfaces long enough to be effective.

## Critical Supplies

There is a significant demand for hand sanitizer, soaps, sinks and toilet paper. Here is what we know at this time.

- **Suppliers of hand sanitizer** are quoting anywhere from 2–8 weeks to obtain shipments. Some have told the PSAI they are trying to make sure the supplies that are available are sent where they are most needed, and most suppliers are allocating the inventory they receive. Their intention is to spread the goods around so everyone can get by and hoarding is minimized.

Due to the time involved in manufacturing, and also in light of anticipated supply chain issues with obtaining raw ingredients, portable sanitation companies can expect difficulties in obtaining unlimited hand sanitizer for several months. All manufacturers are working hard to come up with alternatives quickly and will make whatever they get available as soon as they have it.

- **Soaps** are in better supply at this time. There may still be a lag in some areas, but expect wait times that are shorter. This could change if raw materials become harder to get.
- **Hand wash stations** are in high demand. At least one manufacturer has added a second shift to dramatically ramp up production of these units, and another is also increasing the number of sinks being produced. Estimated time to market for both is around 4-6 weeks.
- **Toilet paper** is available from various suppliers, though deliveries may be held up due to trucking and personnel issues in some areas. There is no indication there will be an actual shortage of toilet paper at this time, though hoarding and theft could complicate things in some areas.

### How Companies Are Coping

While the situation varies widely at this time, with very populated areas and those with higher incidences of infection seeing greater disruption than other areas, it is clear COVID-19 will impact our industry for some time to come. Some of the more common things the PSAI is hearing include:

- Theft of hand sanitizer liquid/gel and, in some cases, the entire sanitizer station are becoming more frequent. Toilet paper theft is also occurring. One company is dealing with this head-on. They are offering additional services but also letting customers know they are responsible for equipment theft. Check out the sample letter to customers below for more information.
- With the cancellation of most large events, portable sanitation companies are losing business and making contingency plans to cover for the lost income.
- Workforce adjustments are occurring to ensure that not everyone gets sick at once. One supplier company, for example, has about half its workforce at the office and the other half working remotely. Whether you do this or take some other measure, be sure you are ensuring business continuity for your firm.

The PSAI is offering weekly virtual roundtables beginning Thursday, March 19. During these virtual meetings we will share more coping ideas in real time. Be sure to [register for the sessions weekly](#) and send your topics to [karleenk@psai.org](mailto:karleenk@psai.org) so we can get them on the agenda.

Above all, take care of yourselves and your employees. People are frightened and no one has any experience with this kind of situation. If you have an Employee Assistance Program through your payroll company, make sure your team knows how to access it. While this crisis too will pass, you want to emerge from this challenging time stronger and more solid as a company. So take the time to look after your own feelings and those of your staff. You'll be glad you did.

The PSAI is here to help!



# SAMPLE COVID-19 LETTER TO CUSTOMERS



Dear [Customer],

We are reaching out today regarding several measures related to COVID-19 and your portable sanitation service from [Company Name].

First, we want to assure you that we are focused on ensuring your portable equipment is as safe as possible under the present conditions. Our service technicians are trained and certified by the Portable Sanitation Association International (PSAI). This means we are obligated to service our equipment thoroughly, inside and out, according to PSAI guidelines.

The toilet tanks are pumped and refilled with water and deodorizer on a weekly basis. We also wash the exterior and interior unit walls, floors and all of the surfaces inside and outside of the toilet tank each time we provide service. When our technicians are finished with each toilet, it is as close to germ- and virus-free as it is possible for any surface to be.

In these days of COVID-19, though, it is important to realize that once people start using that restroom unit, there is no way of assuring cleanliness until the next scheduled service day. To deal with this, many companies like yours are stepping up their service schedule to reduce the risk. If you would like to increase the service of your units to multiple time per week, give us a call and we will be happy to discuss the options with you.

[Company Name] has always offered hand sanitizer dispensers and refills for your job sites. In fact, most construction companies request them, and we are always glad to provide them for your workers. If you are already utilizing this service, then it is business as usual. However, if you do not currently offer them and would like to add hand sanitizers to your existing sites, please let us know and we will provide them while supplies last.

We also offer hand wash sinks. Each hand wash station can accommodate up to 150 uses before it needs to be serviced. We currently have these in stock if you would like to add this service to your site.

During times such as a natural disaster or pandemic, we see the best and worst in people. While there are heroes everywhere, there are some wrongdoers too. Some of our customers have notified us that people are stealing hand sanitizer refills and toilet paper out of the restroom units on their sites. If this happens to you, we are more than happy to replace the supplies for you.

However, the additional costs of replacing stolen supplies will be billed on your next invoice. We look forward to working with you on how to keep these supplies safe when no one is on the job site.

We will continue to provide the excellent service you are accustomed to throughout the current crisis and beyond. Should you need any further assistance from us, please contact our office so that we may better serve you.

Thank you for your time and most importantly, thank you for your business.

Sincerely,

John and Jane Doe  
Company Name Founders