Components of a Green Cleaning Program

- Green cleaning products and high performance cleaning equipment and practices.
- Commitment and participation of the building community.
- Measurable goals and objectives used to evaluate the cleaning program.
- A green cleaning plan that stresses quality routine maintenance and attention focused on high traffic areas.
- Written step-by-step cleaning procedures and policies for custodial staff.
- A comprehensive custodial training program.
- Education of facility community on cleaning activities.
- Communication within the building community.

Disease Transmission

Droplet transmission occurs when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks and releases small infectious drops that land on another person. Droplet transmission occurs over short distances (generally less than 6 feet).

Airborne transmission occurs when droplets from coughing or sneezing quickly dry out and the very fine particles remain airborne and infectious, which another person inhales. Pathogens can be carried over long distances (greater than 6 feet) and can affect people that have not had face-to-face contact with the infected individual.

Contact transmission can be direct or indirect. **Direct contact transmission** occurs when pathogens are transferred from an infected person to another person through direct skin-to-skin contact such as hand shaking or other intimate contact like kissing. **Indirect contact transmission** occurs when an infected person contaminates an object with pathogens, for example, by touching or sneezing on the object and another person then touches the same object resulting in the transfer of pathogens from the contaminated surface onto hands. Objects that are handled or touched repeatedly by many people are more likely to be involved in indirect contact transmission.

Pathogen Survival on Surfaces

- The length of time pathogens survive on surfaces is dependent on many things.
- Thorough cleaning can remove pathogens from surfaces, thus limiting the potential for disease transmission.
- Surfaces which are touched often are likely to be re-contaminated when infected people touch them, so cleaning frequently is important.

Sanitizers and Disinfectants

- **Sanitizers** reduce the number of microorganisms to safe level on inanimate objects.
- **Disinfectants** eliminate many or all pathogenic microorganisms on inanimate objects.

Using Sanitizers and Disinfectants

- Proper cleaning will effectively reduce the amount of microorganisms on surfaces. In most cases, the use of disinfects and sanitizers may not be required.
- Before applying sanitizer or disinfectant to a surface, the surface must be thoroughly cleaned.
- Target the use of sanitizers and disinfectants on surfaces that are touched often.
- The treated surface must remain wet with disinfectant for a specific time (contact time) for the product to be effective. Contact time is product specific and usually noted on the product label.
- Disinfectants and cleaning agents should not be mixed unless the manufacturer labels indicate it is safe to do so.
- Manufacturers' directions regarding personal protective equipment (PPE) use must be followed at all times. Chemical protective gloves and protective eyewear are considered standard for cleaning activities.
- Some disinfectants are ineffective against certain microorganisms. Consult the product label to find information on the specific microorganisms that the product will help control.
- Air sanitizer products do not reduce disease transmission and are not recommended.

Considerations When Deciding to Implement Enhanced Cleaning

- Is there significant illness within the community due to communicable disease?
- Does the disease spread easily by indirect contact (contact with contaminated surfaces)?
- What is the rate of illness among building occupants? The spread of illness may occur at higher rates in certain building populations such as kindergarten and elementary children, which may warrant enhanced green cleaning in the specific areas they occupy.
- Are the rates of absenteeism high?
- Can school nurses help ill students and staff?
- What are facility characteristics?
- Are products necessary for an enhanced green cleaning program available?
- Are janitorial staff properly trained and are the necessary resources available to accomplish enhanced cleaning tasks?
- Where can levels of clean be relaxed to permit custodial staff to focus cleaning efforts on high-touch areas?
- What administrative and engineering control measures can be implemented alongside enhanced green cleaning?
- Do public health agencies recommend specific actions?

Enhanced Green Cleaning Guidance to Reduce the Spread of Communicable Disease

Worker Safety

- Be aware of chemicals used in the work place.
- Make sure all containers are properly labeled and secured.
- Never mix products unless following manufacturer instructions.
- Read and understand Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).
- Read and understand the facility's written Hazard Communication Plan.
- Always wear the appropriate PPE for handling products.
- Use an automated chemical dispenser/dilution system whenever possible to create accurate dilutions.
- Never operate equipment without proper training.
- Always wash hands with soap and water after removing protective gloves and at the end of each shift.

Contract (Temporary) Cleaning Services

- If temporary and contract cleaning services or employees are used they should be familiar with and agree to implement the facility's green cleaning and enhanced green cleaning programs.

Returning to Standard Green Cleaning

- The green cleaning plan should identify how to determine when routine green cleaning activities will be resumed.
- Before returning to routine green cleaning, a trusted community spokesperson should inform the community that enhanced cleaning has been completed or is no longer required.

Communication

- The Green Cleaning Team should communicate consistent and accurate information to the entire community during an outbreak.
- Key information to communicate includes: facts on the disease, recommended behavioral controls; other control measures that are being implemented; enhanced cleaning activities initiated due to the outbreak; assurance that the cleaning methods and products utilized are effective.
- New York State Education Department, local health departments or New York State Department of Health (DOH) can offer guidance to help develop an effective communication strategy or specific materials for the situation.

Ways to Control the Spread of Disease

- **Behavioral Controls** are habits that minimize the spread of pathogens and are generally the most effective measure in preventing the spread of communicable disease.
  - ❒ **Frequent Hand Washing**: Wash hands before eating or handling food, after sneezing, coughing or nose blowing, after touching a contaminated surface.
  - ❒ **Respiratory Hygiene**: Cover coughs and sneezes with the corner of elbow and disposing of tissues immediately after use.
  - ❒ **Personal Practices**: Do not touch eyes, nose or mouth; do not share items such as towels and razors; limit close contact with individuals; avoid public places when sick.
- **Administrative Controls** reduce exposure through established policies that are followed, examples include:
  - ❒ Staggering lunch schedules to reduce crowding;
  - ❒ Monitoring student health and sending ill students home;
  - ❒ Suspending sporting events or other gatherings; and
  - ❒ Initiating enhanced green cleaning.
- **Engineering Controls** are physical changes to the environment that reduce exposure to pathogens, examples include:
  - ❒ Automatic doors;
  - ❒ Sneeze guards over food in lunch lines; and
  - ❒ Motion-activated lights, faucets, and hand dryers.

Changing Cleaning Routine during an Outbreak

- **High touch (non-porous) items that may require additional cleaning, such as:**
  - ❒ Door handle, push plates, and handrails;
  - ❒ Kitchen/bathroom faucets;
  - ❒ Light switches;
  - ❒ Handles on equipment (e.g. athletic equipment);
  - ❒ Buttons on vending machines and elevators;
  - ❒ Children's toys; and
  - ❒ Shared telephones, computer keyboards/mice, photocopy machines.
- **Frequency of cleaning is dependent on:**
  - ❒ How frequently the surface is touched;
  - ❒ The amount of soil present; and
  - ❒ The capacity of the surface (non-porous versus porous) to hold and transmit microorganisms.

SUSTAINABLE STATE OPERATIONS
New York Actions Global Impacts

For additional information, visit the New York State Green Cleaning Program website at: Greencleaning.ny.gov
Or contact the OGS Environmental Services Units at: 518.408.1782