

Cleaning Guidelines for Unregulated Substances

Last update: February 2025

Follow these cleaning procedures after a person has used unregulated substances or left behind substance use supplies (ex. spoons, pipes, needles).

Do not use these guidelines for cleaning up large amounts of loose unregulated substances (powders or liquids). Follow your hospital's internal procedures for chemical spills.

- ✓ **Wait until 70 minutes have passed** (at 4 air changes per hour) for smoke or airborne substances to clear. It may take less time if air changes are higher.
- ✓ Make sure you have **training on cleaning procedures** before starting.
- ✓ If you send materials away for cleaning, you have a duty to inform others of potential hazards.
- ✓ **Always wear nitrile gloves** when touching surfaces which might have been exposed to unregulated substances. Do not use gloved hands to eat or touch your face/eyes. You do not need respiratory protection unless your hospital requires it.
- ✓ **Determine how large of an area to clean.** When in doubt, clean a larger area instead of a smaller one.
 - If a person cooked, injected, snorted, or ingested substances, clean the space immediately around where they used.
 - For smoking, consider the airflow and layout of the room to determine how far smoke may have travelled.
- ✓ **Decide which cleaning product to use.** Follow your hospital's guidelines on what products to use.
- ✓ **Check the safety data sheet** if using chemical cleaners (ex. bleach or high concentration hydrogen peroxide) for information on what PPE to wear. You do not need additional PPE (beyond gloves) when using low concentration peroxide wipes.
- ✓ **Use two-step decontamination.** Wipe surfaces twice with a new wipe each time.
- ✗ **Do not dry sweep or dust.** This can cause substances to get into the air and be inhaled.

For more information:

- WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line for health and safety assistance: 1-888-621-7233
- Contact harm.reduction@bccdc.ca for more information on this guidance.