Personal Protective Equipment

Recommendations for Cleansing Reusable Mechanical PPE

Brought To You by Ansell | Aug 02, 2021

With the increased demand for PPE over the last year and a half, Ansell recognizes it is important to consider ways to sanitize or launder reusable Mechanical PPE to extend their useful life and help to prevent the spread of the virus.

Mechanical PPE such as HyFlex® gloves and sleeves help prevent industrial workplace mechanical risks like lacerations and abrasions, and are designed to withstand long-term use and multiple cleaning and disinfecting cycles unlike limited-use PPE, which cannot endure washing as it is likely to compromise the integrity and increase the risk of exposure.

How Clean is "Clean" and What Methods are Available?

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised a growing question of how to effectively cleanse gloves and sleeves that provide mechanical risk protection. Ansell's expert team has prepared the following guidelines for those who are investigating proper methods for cleaning, sanitizing and/or disinfecting their reusable hand and arm PPE, taking into consideration the potential impacts on structure, integrity and protective performance of HyFlex® and other mechanical protection gloves and sleeves.

There are several ways in which PPE "cleansing" can be executed, each requiring separate methods and each having different degrees of effectiveness and challenges:

Method	Cleaning	Sanitization*	Disinfecting
What is it?	The process of using detergent and water to physically remove germs and dirt from PPE.	The process of reducing the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements	The process of using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects.
Benefits	Cleaning removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects.	Sanitizing reduces viral contamination by 99.9%	Disinfecting does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection. Reduces viral and microbial contamination by 99.9%

Method	Cleaning	Sanitization*	Disinfecting
Procedure	Follow proper laundering guidelines for Mechanical PPE‡ These instructions typically involve washing machines, warm water, detergents and heated drying	STEP 1 Remove PPE using proper doffing procedure‡ STEP 2 Apply 70-75% isopropyl alcohol** thoroughly by spray bottle on both front and back of the PPE and allow at least 30 seconds of exposure per side STEP 3 Allow at least 10 minutes of drying time before reusing hand or arm PPE	STEP 1 Remove PPE using proper doffing procedure‡ STEP 2 Apply a disinfecting agent† on both front and back of PPE and allow at least 30 seconds of exposure per side *(Follow the instructions on the disinfecting agent's label)* STEP 3 Allow at least 30 minutes of drying time in well ventilated area before reusing PPE
Associated Risk	Avoid using extremely high temperatures when drying (beyond 40°C / 104°F) as this can compromise the structure and integrity of the PPE	IMPORTANT: Execute in a well-ventilated area far away from a flame or spark as alcohol is flammable Do not use 90+% isopropyl alcohol as it evaporates too quickly for cleaning	IMPORTANT: Execute in a well-ventilated area far away from a flame or spark as these chemicals are flammable Some PPE can be damaged by exposure to the stronger disinfectant chemicals such as sodium hypochlorite (bleach) or hydrogen peroxide Some disinfectants are skin irritants which need to be washed off after drying

*Preferred method for decontaminating Mechanical PPE **Ethanol can be substituted for isopropyl alcohol. Do not substitute with methanol †EPA-approved

Sterilization is a more intensive method for cleansing PPE and is typically used in environments which require more rigorous decontamination procedures such as hospitals.

> **REMEMBER! Always wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water after removing PPE**

Inspection Prior to Re-Use

PPE should be inspected thoroughly before use, to be sure they are in good condition with no degradation, tears, or wear that could affect performance. The re-use of any item without having completed a cleansing process is considered inadequate and unsafe. If you observe any defects on the PPE, it should not be re-used and disposed of in accordance with local guidelines.

Disclaimer: Employers must ensure workers are trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace as well as the proper inspection and disposal of regulated waste and PPE. Since Ansell does not control the environment the PPE is stored or used, the cleansing and re-use decisions of Ansell products, whether alone or in combination with additional PPE for an application, is the final responsibility of the user.

Previously Featured on Ansell's Media Center.

Download a PDF of ***Ansell's 2020 Sustainability Report***, which details the company's approach to

sustainability and how it integrates Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) priorities into its three focus areas of ‘Better Society, Better Environment, Better Business.’

Browse Ansell's line of gloves, sleeves and other PPE on MSCDirect.com.