

This article is intended to assist building owners, managers, custodial services and frequent riders in reducing their own and the riding public's exposure to and spread of COVID19 in elevators. General information, advice and suggestions are easy to find; best sourced from recognized authorities like the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO).



Elevators are the safest mode of transportation known to man. But, as confined spaces where we are frequently in very close contact with strangers, they pose a very common risk of exposure to health risks like COVID19. The virus is transferred person-to-person by droplets expelled by an infected person when they talk, cough or sneeze. Face masks greatly reduce but do not eliminate potential inhalation of contagious droplets. Even those who have no symptoms may be unknowingly carrying and spreading the virus.

The greatest risks of exposure with elevators come from:

1. Close contact due to overcrowding; it is difficult to maintain social distance with more than one passenger in smaller, typical residential elevators, or from two to four in larger elevators as are common in office buildings and medical facilities
2. Touching any common surface such as pushbuttons, handrails, panels or floor. Viruses can survive and remain contagious for 24 – 48 hours on many surfaces. Many cases have resulted from touching an infected surface then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

**IF YOU'RE AN ELEVATOR OWNER, MANAGER or CUSTODIAN:**

1. All exposed surfaces and operating devices of the elevator, both inside the cab and at landings, must be thoroughly and regularly disinfected several times daily with ultraviolet irradiation, 75% alcohol or chlorine-containing disinfectants every day. There are over 300 listed on the EPA registry that are proven effective at inactivating the virus. <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
2. Ensure the elevator cab fan is working and turned on to circulate more air.
3. Encourage tenants and visitors to take stairs when possible or be patient and wait for the elevator to have very few or no passengers. Include stairway handrails in the elevator cleaning schedule.
4. Create and post a time log of cleanings (as often seen in public restrooms) to reassure riders that they're entering an attended, low-risk environment.
5. Provide a no-contact dispenser of hand sanitizer and facial tissues near the elevator doorway at landings.
6. If there are known high-traffic times, use ropes or belts, posts, signs or colored tape to make proper distancing visible, and post an attendant to regulate elevator access.

**IF YOU'RE A CURRENT OR WAITING ELEVATOR PASSENGER:**

1. Always wear an approved mask covering nose and mouth, and sanitize or wash your hands frequently.
2. Take the stairs at every opportunity; particularly going down. Hold the stairway handrail for safety but wash or sanitize your hands immediately afterward.
3. Nod and smile to acknowledge others but minimize conversation inside the elevator.
4. Do your best to maintain distancing, cover coughs or sneezes; best on the inside of your elbow, or at least into a handkerchief or tissue.
5. Be courteous, but gently discourage additional passengers, especially in multiples. If another passenger appears agitated, voluntarily exit the elevator at first opportunity and wait at the landing for the next empty car.