



During the COVID-19 response, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided guidelines for laundering soiled clothing and the protection of those who are performing laundering services.

OU departments that perform laundering services or activities should follow these safety guidelines and best practices.

The current guidance from the CDC states the following (ref: [Interim Recommendations for U.S. Households with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)):

- Wear mask
- Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from an ill person and then discard after each use. If using reusable gloves, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID – 19 and should not be used for other household purposes. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.
  - If no gloves are used when handling dirty laundry, be sure to wash hands afterwards.
  - If possible, do not shake dirty laundry. This will minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.
  - Launder items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people’s items.
  - Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above for surfaces. If possible, consider placing a bag liner that is either disposable (can be thrown away) or can be laundered.

#### **Recommendations for OU Laundry Areas**

- Disposable nitrile gloves or reusable utility rubber gloves
- Coveralls or apron to cover employees work clothes
- Disinfecting spray and paper towels or disinfecting wipes (if available)
- Available hand washing facilities and hand sanitizing unit

**General Safety Outlines**

1. Once soiled laundry has been transported to the laundry area, apply gloves and other PPE to handle laundry and sort if necessary.
2. Avoid shaking or “hugging” laundry – as this action can release bacteria, spores, dirt & viruses.
3. Launder items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items.
4. Once wash is complete, ensure to dry items completely through.
  - a. NOTE: For items that are hanging to dry, must be thoroughly dried before wearing
5. Ensure the washer/dryer knobs, handles/doors are disinfected as these can be considered high touch points.
6. Prior to loading up bins, ensure bin has been disinfected appropriately before loading clean laundry. For bins that are cotton/polyester lined, disinfection can be by laundering the liner (if possible), or spraying with disinfectant (Lysol Spray) if available.
7. If using re-usable gloves, wash and hang dry after each use. If using disposable gloves, remove gloves and dispose appropriately.
8. Wash/disinfect hands before exiting area.

For items that cannot be laundered, steam cleaning maybe an appropriate option. These items include, but are not limited to:

- Sofa’s
- Drapes
- Upholstered Chair
- Bed Linens

NOTE: Currently, CDC is not recommending adding any additional disinfectants to laundry. Adding harsh, industrial disinfectants to laundry can damage the clothing and material. Use only detergents, laundry soaps, softeners and bleaches that are appropriate for clothing, on the warmest possible setting and thoroughly drying.