

# Pacific Crest Trail Association

## Protocols for Sanitizing Tools and Equipment

It is imperative that equipment which will be reused by future groups is thoroughly cleaned and sanitized to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Individual items should stay with the same participant throughout the day and be cleaned by the crew leader immediately following the project's conclusion. The following steps should be followed to ensure effective cleaning.

Perform the following steps in a well-ventilated area:

1. **Set-up** washing station(s). This could be at the trailhead, cache or other storage area.
2. **Remove** dirt with a brush. Particulates help bond germs to surfaces and can prevent disinfectant from being effective.
3. **Soak** items in soap and water. If soaking is not possible, items should be bucket-washed until dirt is removed.
4. **Disinfect** hard surfaces using an approved [disinfectant from the EPA-approved list](#), a bleach solution of 5 tablespoons per gallon of water, or an alcohol solution of at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl
5. **Dry** the cleaned surface by allowing time to air-dry, preferably in a sunny location.
6. **Wash** your hands – this is the single most effective thing you can do to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

### Cleaning Materials

Resources available for cleaning stations will vary, but generally, some combination of the following items should be considered. Work with your Regional Representative to ensure PCTA supplies whatever material necessary.

- 5-gallon buckets
- Towels
- Brushes
- Sponges
- External water for washing and buckets
- Spray bottles
- Hand wash station
- Liquid Soap
- EPA-approved disinfectant
- Bleach
- Measuring cups

When using EPA-approved disinfectants, please follow all the instructions on the label, make sure to wear gloves, and use products in a well-ventilated area.

To make a bleach solution using household bleach, mix 5 tablespoons (or 1/3 cup) of unexpired bleach into a gallon of water. Bleach solution remains an effective disinfectant for up to 24 hours after mixing. After that time, bleach solution should be disposed of and re-made. Please note that some bleaches, like ones used for color clothing, will not be suitable for disinfecting.

Sanitizers containing at least 70% isopropyl alcohol (or 60% ethanol) are also effective in disinfecting hard surfaces, and instructions on label should be followed.

### **Special Considerations**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) poses an increased risk of carrying coronavirus because of its close proximity to participants' faces. **PCTA has decided PPE, including hard hats, chaps, safety glasses and work gloves, should be sent home with project participants** and returned when COVID-19 safety protocols are no longer in place. Participants are encouraged to sanitize their own PPE between projects and to follow these protocols when cleaning tools brought from home.

Successfully cleaning tools and equipment relies on vigilant attention to safety protocols such as physical distancing and PPE use, and the removal of dirt, grease, or other impurities that trap germs. Tools are made to get dirty, and it should be expected that they will be covered in grime. Great care should be taken to clean hard surfaces, paying particular attention to cracks in wood, areas where metal interfaces with a handle, and the like. In some cases, the crew leader may choose to ask volunteers to clean and disinfect their own tools. **It is up to you to ensure any items are safe for those who follow!**

### **Resources:**

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/disinfecting-your-home.html>  
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>  
<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-04/documents/disinfectants-onepager.pdf>  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>