

Cleaning PVC Windows – The Right Way to Use Disinfectants



Carefully cleaning surfaces and objects that come in contact with a multitude of hands on a daily basis in order to ensure they are germ-free is an important step to take in the fight against the transmission of pathogens.

During the current coronavirus pandemic, it is of course as important as ever to disinfect door and window handles in both private and public spheres. Disinfecting sprays are utilized frequently and bring with them the possibility that the neighbouring PVC frame may be coated. Some disinfectants may adversely affect PVC surfaces, which is why we have put together this information sheet containing important information for window producers and consumers.

1. Soap, Dish Soap, and Water – Take Your Pick

We generally recommend using **soapy water** or **warm water with a splash of dish soap mixed in to clean PVC windows thoroughly**. Both are capable of getting the surface sufficiently clean and should therefore be the cleaning agent of choice.

2. Alcohol-Based Disinfectants Can Damage PVC Surfaces

When disinfecting contact surfaces, you should use a **water-based disinfectant**. You can also tell if the product is safe for use on surfaces made of materials such as PVC or PMMA by reading the information provided by the manufacturer. The Gütegemeinschaft has performed experiments with some surface disinfectants and can confirm that water-based disinfectants are safe to use on PVC window profiles. Further information is available upon request.

We also recommend **wiping the surface with disinfectant**. Physically working the cleaner into the surface is much more effective than just spraying it on. This also keeps aerosol residue, which could be inhaled and affect health, to a minimum.

Alcohol-based disinfectants¹, especially those used for the hygienic or surgical disinfection of hands, may damage the surface of PVC windows and **therefore cannot be used**. In the case that such a disinfectant touches the window, please quickly wipe it off with lukewarm water and a bit of soap or dish soap.

3. Hand Hygiene – The Best Prevention

Washing your hands with soap and water for at least 20–30 seconds is recommended as a simpler personal contribution that can protect you and others from infectious diseases², in accordance with the WHO's motto from 2017: "Fight antibiotic resistance – it's in your hands"³.

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¹ The main active ingredients in alcohol-based hand sanitizers are 1-propanol, isopropanol (2-propanol) and/or ethanol and water. WHO formulation I modified with 80 % (w/w) ethanol corresponds to 85.5 % (v/v), RKI Bulletin 19.20

² Federal Centre for Health Education BZgA; www.infektionsschutz.de

³ Translated: "Fight antibiotic resistance – it's in your hands", RKI Bulletin 18-19, 17