



NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

ROY COOPER • Governor
MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary
MARK T. BENTON • Assistant Secretary for Public Health
Division of Public Health

MEMORANDUM

March 16, 2020

TO: Local Health Directors and Registered Environmental Health Specialists
FROM: Larry D. Michael, REHS, MPH
State Environmental Health Director
SUBJECT: Implementation of Executive Order No. 116

In response to the identification of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in North Carolina, Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order No. 116 on March 10, 2020. Sections 14, 15, and 18 of this Executive Order directly relate to local health departments. This memo serves as guidance to assist with implementing this Executive Order. The Executive Order is available at the following link: <https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/EO116-SOE-COVID-19.pdf>

Section 14 grants right of entry into public places, under the direction of the NCDHHS Secretary, for the purpose of investigating potential COVID-19 cases or exposures. This right of entry extends beyond the right of entry pursuant to Chapter 130A, for permitted establishments. If a local health department identifies a public place (not subject to Chapter 130A) that was visited by an individual who is under investigation for COVID-19, and if right of entry is considered, they must contact the Environmental Health Section's Emergency Preparedness and Outbreak Coordinator, who will work with the NCDHHS Communicable Disease Branch to determine the type of investigation that is appropriate and that is directed by the NCDHHS Secretary. Please note that when a regulated facility (subject to Chapter 130A) needs to be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with Commission for Public Health rules, Environmental Health Specialists do not need to contact NCDHHS prior to visiting.

This section also grants authority to require a public place to implement cleaning and disinfection measures to help control the transmission of COVID-19. Cleaning and disinfecting should be conducted in accordance with the following CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html#Cleaning> . Facilities should close during this cleaning or provide separation from the contaminated area, as recommended by CDC guidance. Environmental Health Specialists should be available to assess the cleaning methods and for on-site guidance as necessary. Once cleaning and disinfection is complete, the facility or areas should be reopened and appropriate preventive measures, such as an employee health policy, should be put in place.

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Section 15 provides local health departments with authority (in consultation with the Division of Public Health) to waive restrictions related to the type of product or chemical concentration in disinfectant solutions to control COVID-19. Disinfectant at concentrations recommended by the CDC (5 tablespoons bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water) or other disinfectants registered by the EPA for use against novel coronaviruses can be used for high touch surfaces. However, food contact surface sanitizers cannot exceed tolerance limits as specified in 40 CFR 180.940. Any disinfectant solutions that are not labeled for use on food contact surfaces are still prohibited for use on food contact surfaces. A list of products that have been pre-approved by the EPA for use during the COVID-19 outbreak can be found at this link: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Section 18 allows the aid to county formula to be adjusted when resources are being diverted in response to COVID-19. Local health departments should maintain records of resources diverted to COVID-19 response so that aid to county funding can be adjusted at the end of the fiscal year.

While implementing this Executive Order, and during normal environmental health functions, environmental health specialists must take measures to protect themselves and the establishments they are entering. Environmental health specialists must wash their hands upon entering an establishment and should consider disinfection methods for computer screens, pens, or other equipment that is shared with operators during visits and inspections.

Please refer to the NCDHHS website (below) for current information on COVID-19.

For questions or additional information, please contact Veronica Bryant, Emergency Response and Outbreak Coordinator, at veronica.bryant@dhhs.nc.gov or by phone at 919-218-6943, or you may contact me at larry.michael@dhhs.nc.gov or 919-707-5855.

References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina>