

DAN's Quick Guide to Properly Disinfecting Dive Gear

Update – April 24, 2020 – The CDC has updated its recommendations, and some of the cleaning products noted in this article may not be suitable for killing the virus that causes COVID-19. While Steramine is an effective sanitizing product, and some manufacturers recommended it for use on dive gear, it does not appear on the EPA's "List N" and is thus not endorsed for removal of the new coronavirus. For a more up-to-date article that's specific to COVID-19, go to [Disinfection of Scuba Equipment and COVID-19](#).

March 5, 2020 – In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, questions have arisen in the dive community about disease transmission when using rental equipment, especially regulators. With the threat of COVID-19 on everyone's minds, divers want to know what precautions are being taken against the spread of disease. Properly sanitizing equipment is paramount. Keep the following in mind:

In general, equipment can be effectively sanitized by submerging it in a 1% bleach solution or using a cleaning product such as Steramine™ tablets or any other quaternary ammonium compound. Be sure to use these products according to the manufacturer's directions and then rinse the gear with fresh water.

To disinfect equipment to kill the virus that causes COVID-19, a disinfectant on the EPA's List N should be used. Before using a product, check to see if it has been registered with the EPA for use on dive equipment, respirators or the materials these are made of. Alternatively, the CDC recommends a 4:100 bleach solution (1/3 cup of bleach in 1 gallon of water) with a contact time of 1 minute. (A previous edition of this article stated a 10% or 10:100 bleach solution based on information available at that time.)

When using any disinfectant, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions for use. Follow this with a thorough rinse in fresh water, and allow the equipment to dry completely before use.

Products that are commonly used to clean dive gear but are ineffective against the virus that causes COVID-19 include antibacterial and chlorhexidine mouthwashes or sprays. Hot soapy water must be paired with mechanical action such as scrubbing with a soft toothbrush to be effective.

If you're a diver using rental gear and would like to take extra steps to protect yourself from transmissible diseases, thoroughly wipe the following equipment with a household disinfecting wipe and then rinse with fresh water before use:

- Regulator mouthpiece
- Snorkel
- BCD oral inflator
- The inside of your mask

If you do not have access to wipes, you may wish to ask the shop you're diving with to properly sanitize the equipment before you take it with you.

As always, frequent hand-washing (with soap for at least 20 seconds), regularly cleaning high-traffic objects and areas (bathrooms, door handles, countertops, etc.), avoiding contact with people who are sick, and staying home when you are sick are some of the best ways to stop the spread of disease. For more information, see the [CDC's coronavirus page](#).