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Guide to Aircraft Cleaning During Layovers

Airlines should step up their cleaning checklists to make sure aircraft are as healthy as possible

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By Jeff Stripp

While travelers are considering flying again following the COVID-19 pandemic, they're certainly not overlooking your airline's disinfection procedures. The pandemic has created a keen awareness of flight safety and cleanliness more than ever before. It's important that your airline steps up its cleaning checklist and takes advantage of layovers as a time to make sure the aircraft is as healthy as possible. Consider this guide to ensure that your aircraft is taking quality steps for cleaning during layovers.

Consider the Passenger's Needs

While the risk of catching an **infection on an aircraft is minimal**, passengers still want to feel at ease when it comes to health and safety, especially with the ongoing risk of COVID-19. The necessity for a clean atmosphere during air travel is critical as the number of air travelers increases.



The use of face masks is still recommended for airline staff and passengers to offer better virus protection. Passengers may feel overwhelmed during travel and may want a new or extra face mask, and they may also request hand sanitizer and **disinfecting wipes** to keep their seat and personal area clean. Offer extra face masks on board and make sure that you stock up during layovers.

To offer passengers extra peace of mind, don't skip the addition of air purification systems to the aircraft. Many aircrafts are now equipped with vertical air recycling systems that improve cabin air quality and guarantee fresh air throughout the cabin during the entire trip. Be sure to use **HEPA (High-Efficiency Particulate Air) filters**. Even the tiniest viruses, as small as 0.01 millimeter, may be extracted by these filters, which can extract up to 99.999% of them. Because coronavirus viruses have a diameter of 0.08 to 0.16 micrometers, they are quickly filtered by HEPA filters in sections, and every two to three minutes. During layovers, it's important to clean or replace these filters so that you can keep up with your clean air guarantee.

Update Your Cleaning Checklist

It's more important than ever that you make sure your airline isn't skipping any aircraft cleaning tasks. This **cleaning checklist** from Aircraft.Cleaning is a good place to start, and update your own layover cleaning schedule. The cleanliness of airplanes was investigated in a study with **Taylor & Francis Online**, and this study was able to find that three airplane features were held to higher cleanliness standards—food, flight attendants, and the lavatory. Considering this research, here are some checklist items to include for lavatories:

- Empty the trash cans and replace the trash bags
- Toilet bowl and seat should be clean
- Ensure that the basin, faucets, and other surfaces are clean
- Clean the mirror and the changing table
- Clean the interior and exterior door handles and locks, as well as the wall surfaces
- PVC floors should be kept clean
- Refill the soap dispenser
- Toiletry items should be replenished

Disinfect and Protect

While the standard aircraft cleaning procedures should be adhered to, your flight crew will need to add **extra disinfecting and sanitizing steps** to the cleaning checklist. This means you will have to adjust layover times and inflight cleaning frequencies based on the target population, flight duration, number of passengers, and other factors.

Ensure the flight crew is consistently performing deep cleans during layovers. Use approved cleaning products that disinfect and sanitize door handles, lavatory features, and other frequently touched surfaces.

Your aircraft's cleaning staff should double-check these tasks:

- To avoid cross-contamination, use distinct cleaning tools (e.g., rags and mops) for each location and color-code them.
- Avoid damaging aircraft components by rubbing and visibly wetting the surfaces with disinfectant for the entire contact period (also known as "dwell time") recommended on the product label, then removing it.
- Before using any other cleaning or disinfection techniques, apply disinfectant to the floor from front to back, then in the opposite direction.
- Prior to disinfection, thoroughly clean and wipe down all surfaces.
- Remove disinfectant residue that could be hazardous to passengers and flight crew from seat covers and other surfaces. This is especially important when using cleaning and disinfection solutions that can irritate or injure the skin.
- Clean and disinfect the important locations listed below, starting with the cleanest areas first. Begin at the top (i.e., ceiling) and work your way down (i.e., floor).
 - Lavatories
 - Aisles
 - Galley
 - Flight Crew Compartment
 - Cabin and Seats

Use Efficient Cleaning Products

Your airline has a tight schedule and minimal layover times, so it's crucial that you take advantage of cleaning products that offer an exceptional clean at a very fast rate. This means that you'll need bulk disinfecting products that last long and can

quickly be turned into a quality cleaning solution. Handheld and backpack cleaning sprayers are also ideal in order to clean a large space in a shortened amount of time.

Electrostatic Sprayers and Disinfecting Tabs

EvaClean's **electrostatic backpack sprayers** use technology that makes sterilizing and disinfecting any area a more efficient and safer process. This powerful electrostatic cleaning instrument allows the user to target germs and sanitize facilities. Plus, you can benefit from the **handheld electrostatic sprayer** and backpack options. Backpack sprayers are useful for wide coverage areas in larger aircraft, while a handheld sprayer would be more suitable for smaller aircraft.

Whether you choose a backpack or handheld electrostatic sprayer, you'll need the right type of disinfectant to use with the sprayer. We recommend disinfecting tabs such as PURTABS, effervescent disinfection and sanitizing tablets that eliminate the need for harsh chemicals. **PURTABS** dissolve in water to provide a wide range of strengths to fulfill the needs of every facility, including aircraft. While PURTABS can kill 99.999% of bacteria and viruses, they are also significantly gentler on humans, the environment, and surfaces than bleach and alternatives.

Cleaning Systems

When in doubt, use a cleaning system that is all-inclusive, touchless, and guarantees a complete clean on your aircraft. The system begins with PUR:ONE tablets to clean and sanitize, then combines the touch-free and cordless EvaClean Protexus electrostatic sprayer. The **EvaClean System** allows workers and infection prevention experts to standardize their processes, improve efficiency, streamline training, and lower costs while delivering more predictable and repeatable outcomes that outperform traditional disinfection and sanitizing methods.

Safe Travels

It doesn't have to be a chore to be prepared for busy flying seasons and post-COVID travel. Save yourself a headache and ensure safe flying by following this guide to aircraft cleaning during layovers.

*Stripp is the Chief Revenue Officer at **Zogics**, a leading supplier of facility cleaning and disinfecting products to fitness, healthcare, hospitality, education, corporate, and transportation industries.*

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Suggested Links:

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- [AEGIS VES 240 Cleaner-Disinfectant](#) AEGIS VES 240 cleaner-disinfectant is EPA-registered to fight the spread of coronavirus and other pathogens.
- [Scott 24 Hour Sanitizing Wipes Win WOW Award](#) Scott 24 Hour Sanitizing Wipes win 2021 World of Wipes (WOW) Innovation Award at the WOW International Conference.
- [Larson Electronics Far-UV Sanitation Portal](#) The IND-DWG-FUVC-5X-R1-MS-120V-25C Far-UV Sanitation Portal can disinfect 99% of viruses, bacteria, mold, and spores at entry/exit points and in high traffic areas.