Sanitizer vs Disinfectant

EPA states that products used to kill viruses and bacteria on surfaces are registered as antimicrobial pesticides. Sanitizers and disinfectants are two types of antimicrobial pesticides. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates hand sanitizers, antiseptic washes, and antibacterial soaps for use on people.

**Surface disinfectant products** are subject to more rigorous EPA testing requirements and must clear a higher bar for effectiveness than **surface sanitizing products. There are no sanitizer-only products with approved virus claims.** For this reason, sanitizers do not qualify for inclusion on EPA’s List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).

There are many products registered with EPA as both sanitizers and disinfectants because they've been tested using both standards. These products are eligible for inclusion on EPA’s List N because of their disinfectant claims. When using these products, follow the directions for virucidal disinfection, and pay close attention to the contact time, which is how long the surface must remain wet. This can often be several minutes.

**Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pesticide Information:** Pesticide products used to disinfect surfaces or objects must first be registered by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and then by DEC. EPA has activated its Emerging Viral Pathogens Guidance for Antimicrobial Products in order to enable the use of certain EPA-registered disinfectant products against COVID-19. EPA identified products which can be used against the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. EPA strongly recommends following the virucidal use directions with the longest contact time on the product label.

DEC has created a list of products registered in New York State that correspond to the list of products identified by the EPA. The list can be downloaded below:

[DEC List of Products to Disinfect COVID-19](#)

*Information obtained from Bureau of Pesticide Management / Division of Materials Management / NYS DEC*