



CLEMCO INDUSTRIES CORP

# PRECAUTIONS FOR SAFE BLASTING

COVID - 19 PANDEMIC

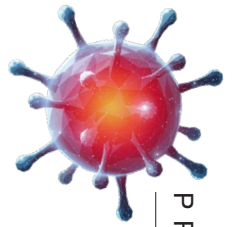
**CLEMCO**<sup>®</sup>  
INDUSTRIES CORP.

# BLAST SAFELY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Clemco's Director  
of Product Safety  
Explains How



By Thomas Enger  
*Clemco Director of Product Safety*  
*MS, CSP, CHMM, CFM*



PRECAUTIONS FOR SAFE BLASTING by CLEMCO

## What I Hope You Already Know

By now I hope everyone has seen the World Health Organization's **Do the Five** recommendations for stopping the spread of the coronavirus:



**Hands:** Wash them often.



**Elbow:** Cough into it.



**Face:** Don't touch it.



**Space:** Keep safe distance.



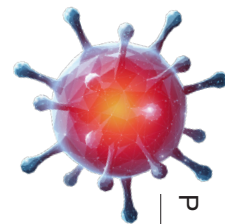
**Home:** Stay if you can.

Of course, if you are ill, stay home. But if you are healthy, you obviously can't blast from home. So when at the worksite, follow the additional precautions discussed in this article—for the safety of you and others.

## Extra Precautions When Using Abrasive Blast Machines

### 1. If you touch it, clean it!

- If you remember anything from this article, it's: *If you touch it, clean (and disinfect) it.*
- In order to kill those invisible viruses, clean with a disinfectant such as an antiviral cleaner, a solution that is 2% bleach, or other Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended disinfectants. Even if a surface you touched looks clean—clean it!
- Clean all parts of a blast machine your hands, body, blast suit, or gloves may have touched. Yes, your blast suit and gloves. The coronavirus could be there and then transfer onto a surface you touched.
- Clean surfaces in the work area you may have touched.
- A handheld orchard sprayer or a basic spray bottle may speed up cleaning.



## 2. Cleaning and disinfecting specifically for after using a blast machine.

After using a blast machine, clean and disinfect:

- Hose
- Remote controls
- Abrasive metering valve
- Isolation valves
- Bags of abrasive that you touched and have not discarded. (Keep moisture from entering the bags.)
- Any other part of the machine you may have touched.
- Any blast machine surface you may have leaned against with bare skin or clothing.
- Any other surfaces you may have touched.

## 3. Blast suits and gloves

- Clean and disinfect the exterior of your blast suit and gloves.
- As best you can, clean and disinfect the interior of your blast suit and gloves and dry them. Air drying may be the easiest.
- **Don't share blast suits and gloves!**

## 4. Respirators

- Every part of a respirator is exposed to a blast operator's exhalations, coughs, and sneezes. **So never share respirators!**
- After the end of each shift, blast operators should clean and disinfect their respirators and all respirator components.
- Operators can clean and disinfect their respirators and respirator components either by hand washing or submersion.
- With either method, use a 2% bleach solution or another CDC recommended disinfectant.

### Hand Washing a Respirator and Its Components

- After using a respirator, break it down into its individual parts, including the suspension system, in-helmet-mounted carbon monoxide monitor if you use one, inner lenses, rubber gaskets, cushions, the cape collar, blast shroud, and other components in or attached to the helmet.
- Next, hand wash the blast helmet and its components with a 2% bleach solution or another CDC recommended disinfectant.
- Allow the helmet and components to air dry.

### Clean by Submerging a Respirator and Its Components

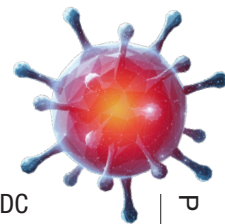
**A Timesaver—Instead of individually hand washing a blast helmet and its components, submerge the helmet with some or all of its components attached.**

### Follow these steps:

1. Detach fabric components, cushions, the cape collar and blast shroud, and the in-helmet-mounted carbon monoxide monitor, if you use one, from the respirator.
2. These detached components should be hand washed and then allowed to air dry.
3. The cushions can be replaced instead of washed. (See the "Note: Cushion Suspension Systems" section below.)
4. Submerge the blast helmet with the components that







are attached to it in a 2% bleach solution or another CDC recommended disinfectant.

5. Gently agitate the blast helmet with its attached components for at least 5 minutes.
6. Remove the helmet with its attached components from the solution and allow to air dry.

#### **Note: Cushion Suspension Systems**

- If a blast helmet has a cushion suspension system, I do not recommend submerging the cushions in a disinfecting solution.
- The cushions may not be dry by the next shift, and long drying cycles could promote mold growth.
- You could hand wash the cushions, but they still may take too long to dry.
- Keeping replacement cushions on hand is an option.
- If you use Clemco's Apollo 600 Supplied-Air Respirator with a DLX Comfort-Fit Suspension System (includes cushions), you can replace the DLX Suspension with Clemco's web suspension system (without cushions). For more information on switching a DLX Suspension to a web suspension, contact Clemco Customer Service and ask about Stock No. 23802.

#### **Note: Web Suspension Systems—No Cushions**

- A blast helmet with a web suspension system can be quicker to clean by submersion because it has no cushions to detach.



- **Did I mention—Never share respirators!**

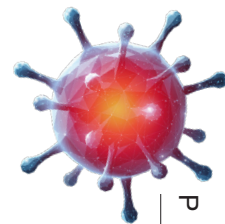
#### **5. Dry surfaces you cleaned with disposable rags.**

If you cannot let equipment air dry, it is important to dry the equipment with disposable rags because:

- The coronavirus can live longer in moist environments.
- Mold can grow in moist environments.
- **Remember: Throw away rags after using them. The virus may be on them.**

## **I don't have time for this cleaning and disinfecting!**

**I know you're all thinking this. And, yes, these precautions will take more time than cleaning procedures followed under normal circumstances. But these are extraordinary circumstances. These additional steps could save your life and others' lives. The preventative steps recommended in this article are simple—maybe not easy, but simple. But they are simply the safe, and right, things to do.**



## Extra Precautions When Using Blast Cabinets

### 1. If you touch it, clean it!

- If you remember anything from this article, it's: *If you touch it, clean (and disinfect) it.*
- In order to kill those invisible viruses, clean with a disinfectant such as an antiviral cleaner, a solution that is 2% bleach, or other Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended disinfectants. Even if a surface you touched looks clean—clean it!
- Clean all parts of a blast cabinet your hands, body, or clothing may have touched. Yes, your clothing. The coronavirus could be there and then transfer onto a surface your clothing rubs against.
- Clean surfaces in the work area you may have touched.
- A handheld spray bottle may speed up cleaning.

### 2. Cleaning and disinfecting specifically for after using a blast cabinet.

After using a blast cabinet, clean and disinfect:

- Switches
- Latches
- Regulators
- Wing nuts
- View window exterior (You, and probably others, have breathed on it.)
- Any other part of the cabinet you may have touched.
- Any blast cabinet surface you may have leaned against with bare skin or clothing.
- Any other surfaces you may have touched.

### 3. Blast gloves

- As best you can, clean and disinfect the interior of your rubber blast gloves and dry them.
- If other operators use the machine, all should have their own set of quick-change gloves.
- **Don't share gloves!** For more information on quick change gloves, contact Clemco Customer Service and ask about Stock No. 28820.



### 4. Dry surfaces you cleaned with disposable rags.

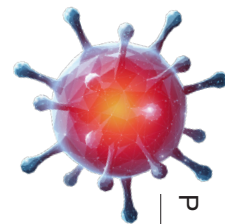
Drying equipment with disposable rags is important because:

- The coronavirus can live longer in moist environments.
- Mold can grow in moist environments.
- **Remember: Throw away rags after using them. The virus may be on them.**

## Extra Precautions When Using Blast Rooms

### 1. If you touch it, clean it!

- If you remember anything from this article, it's: *If you touch it, clean (and disinfect) it.*
- In order to kill those invisible viruses, clean with a disinfectant such as an antiviral cleaner, a solution that is 2% bleach, or other Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended disinfectants. Even if a surface you touched looks clean—clean it!
- Clean all parts of a blast room your hands, body, blast suit, or gloves



may have touched. Yes, your blast suit and gloves. The coronavirus could be there and then transfer onto a surface you touched.

- Clean surfaces in the work area you may have touched.
- A handheld orchard sprayer or a basic spray bottle may speed up cleaning.

## 2. Cleaning and disinfecting specifically for after using a blast room.

After using a blast room, clean and disinfect:

- Door handles
- View windows
- Brooms
- Shovels
- Any other tools or parts of the blast room you may have touched.
- Any blast room surface you may have leaned against.
- Any part of the blast machine you may have touched, such as:
  - Hose
  - Remote controls
  - Abrasive metering valve
  - Isolation valves
- Bags of abrasive that you touched and have not discarded. (Keep moisture from entering the bags.)
- Any other surfaces you may have touched.

## 3. Blast Suits and Gloves

- Clean and disinfect the exterior of your blast suit and gloves.
- As best you can, clean and disinfect the interior of your blast suit and gloves and dry them. Air drying may be the easiest.
- **Don't share blast suits and gloves!**

## 4. Respirators

- Every part of a respirator is exposed to a blast operator's exhalations, coughs, and sneezes. **So never share respirators!**
- After the end of each shift, blast operators should clean and disinfect their respirators and all respirator components.
- Operators can clean and disinfect their respirators and respirator components either by hand washing or submersion.
- With either method, use a 2% bleach solution or another CDC recommended disinfectant.

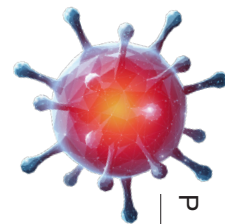
### Hand Washing a Respirator and Its Components

- After using a respirator, break it down into its individual parts, including the suspension system, in-helmet-mounted carbon monoxide monitor if you use one, inner lenses, rubber gaskets, cushions, the cape collar, blast shroud, and other components in or attached to the helmet.
- Next, hand wash the blast helmet and its components with a 2% bleach solution or another CDC recommended disinfectant.
- Allow the helmet and components to air dry.

### Clean by Submerging a Respirator and Its Components

**A Timesaver—Instead of individually hand washing a blast helmet and its components, submerge the helmet with some or all of its components attached.**



**Follow these steps:**

1. Detach fabric components, cushions, the cape collar and blast shroud, and the in-helmet-mounted carbon monoxide monitor, if you use one, from the respirator.
2. These detached components should be hand washed and then allowed to air dry.
3. The cushions can be replaced instead of washed. (See the “Note: Cushion Suspension Systems” section below.)
4. Submerge the blast helmet with the components that are attached to it in a 2% bleach solution or another CDC recommended disinfectant.
5. Gently agitate the blast helmet with its attached components for at least 5 minutes.
6. Remove the helmet with its attached components from the solution and allow to air dry.

**Note: Cushion Suspension Systems**

- If a blast helmet has a cushion suspension system, I do not recommend submerging the cushions in a disinfecting solution.
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- You could hand wash the cushions, but they still may take too long to dry.
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**Note: Web Suspension Systems—No Cushions**

- A blast helmet with a web suspension system can be quicker to clean by submersion because it has no cushions to detach.

**5. Dry surfaces you cleaned with disposable rags.**

If you cannot let equipment air dry, it is important to dry the equipment with disposable rags because:

- The coronavirus can live longer in moist environments.
- Mold can grow in moist environments.
- **Remember: Throw away rags after using them. The virus may be on them.**

**Still think you don’t have time for cleaning and disinfecting?**

I’ll say it again—Yes, these precautions will take more time than cleaning procedures followed under normal circumstances. But these are extraordinary circumstances. These additional steps could save your life and others’ lives. The preventative steps recommended in this article are simple—maybe not easy, but simple. But they are simply the safe, and right, things to do.