

## SAFETY CORNER

There are several issues to consider with regard to reducing the likelihood of disease transmission when using a breath alcohol detection device.

## DURING OPERATION

Staying out of the direct line of the subject's breath flow is obviously a good practice to avoid airborne transmission of disease. Certain instruments are designed to maximize your ability to comfortably position yourself such that you avoid being in the subject's breath flow path while collecting a sample for analysis.

An operator's use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE; gloves, masks or respirators) are additional safeguards which can be considered to further reduce the likelihood of disease transmission while performing a sample collection.

For instruments where you are touching parts of the instrument that the subject has touched or blown on, we agree with the CDC's belief that your first line of defense is to wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based cleaner. If you use an alcohol based hand sanitizer and you are operating a hand held breath analyzer, wait 10 minutes after your hands have dried to perform a breath test. After 10 minutes, residual alcohol from the hand cleaner should have evaporated into the ambient environment, eliminating the possibility of it contaminating a subsequent breath sample.

## DURING INSTRUMENT CLEANING

With regard to cleaning the instrument after use, especially when a known infected person has provided a sample, choose a cleaning product whose label states that it is effective against "Influenza A virus". These products are widely available and can be purchased at drugstores, supermarkets, and home maintenance/repair stores.

Below, we have included a link to a list of disinfectant products for use on hard, non-porous surfaces, such as door knobs, handles, tables, floors, etc. This list was compiled by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which emphasizes that these products are not to be used on the skin or to be taken orally.

More than [500 antimicrobial products](#) (20 pp, 62 K [PDF](#)) are registered by the EPA specifically for use against influenza A virus. This is not a complete list since some products may have different distributor or product names and may not be referenced. The EPA will continue to

update this list as more information becomes available. Approved products specifically have label information which states they provide effectiveness against "Influenza A viruses".

Intoximeters has tested only a small sample of the listed products for cleaning its instrumentation. While many of these products would likely be effective in cleaning and disinfecting the instruments, it is important that any substance used be tested to ensure that it does not discolor or otherwise damage the instrument. As well, if the cleaning material is alcohol based, an adequate amount of time must be allowed after cleaning the instrument (for the alcohol to dissipate) before further subject testing occurs. Waiting to test for ten minutes after cleaning the instrument should be enough time for this to occur.

While Intoximeters does not wish to endorse any single product, we have found that a few products that are offered in single-sheet wipes, appear to be only slightly damp, and would therefore be less likely to drip liquid into the unit.

Other important precautions when cleaning an instrument:

1. Be certain not to get liquid into the sample system (fuel cell, infrared bench or pressure sensor) or onto the instrument's circuit board(s).
2. Do not immerse the instrument in a liquid. Use a moist, but not dripping, cloth to apply the cleaning solution to the exterior surfaces that you wish to clean.
3. Clean exterior surfaces where the subject or subject's breath has come in contact with the instrument.
4. If cleaning internal surfaces of the instrument is required, a factory maintenance technician should be employed to provide this service. Under no circumstances should the user remove case covers to access internal components for cleaning. This may void your warranty.
5. Let the instrument dry completely and then observe a ten minute waiting period before subject testing resumes.

Up-to-date information about the 2009-H1N1 flu is available on [CDC's Web site](#)