

EPA Announces Release of Final Guidance and Methods to Control Public Health Pathogens on Soft Surface Textiles in Non-Residential Settings

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On August 29, 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [announced](#) the release of final [guidance](#) and [methods](#) for evaluating efficacy claims of antimicrobial products registered to reduce [bacteria](#) and [viruses](#) on soft surface textiles. EPA states that throughout the guidance, the term “soft surface textile” refers to a soft, porous, or non-porous surface that includes the outer surface of non-clothing fabrics/textiles in clinical and institutional (non-residential) environments where spot treatment is the primary means of disinfection. EPA states the final guidance to support soft surface textile claims, the soft surface textile bacterial method, and the soft surface textile virus method supersede the interim guidance and methods EPA [published](#) on December 21, 2022. EPA has also published its response to comments received on the interim guidance and methods, which is available [here](#). This guidance and associated test methods address only products with both soft surface textile disinfectant claims and hard, non-porous surface disinfectant claims for clinical and institutional settings (*i.e.*, products that have only soft surface textile claims are not within the scope of this guidance). EPA also states that the new guidance is not intended to apply to claims on products for use on clothing, frequently laundered items, untreated wood, concrete and other hard porous materials, carpet or rugs, or the backing material/stuffing under the soft surface textile (*e.g.*, beyond what can be visibly observed), and the guidance is not intended to address claims against mycobacterium, fungi, yeasts, or bacterial endospores, nor to address claims of residual efficacy on soft surface textiles.

According to EPA, most liquid-based antimicrobial products are registered for use on hard, non-porous surfaces (*e.g.*, stainless steel, glazed porcelain, glass). The revised guidance describes how soft surface textile disinfectant claims may be added to products that demonstrate efficacy on hard, non-porous surfaces in non-residential use -sites such as waiting rooms, hospitals, long-term care facilities, schools, daycares, hotels, office buildings, and retail establishments.

In the revised methods, EPA provides recommended standardized quantitative efficacy test methods for both bacteria and viruses for registrants wishing to add disinfectant claims for soft surface textiles pursuant to this guidance.

The final test methods, guidance, and response to comments document are available at docket [EPA-HQ-OPP-2022-0337](#). The final test methods and guidance are also available on EPA's

Microbiology Laboratory [Antimicrobial Testing Methods and Procedures web page](#) and EPA's [Efficacy Requirements for Antimicrobial Pesticides web page](#).

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