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Disinfecting circulating books

The Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) recommends a 24 to 72-hour quarantine of returned books as the safest and most effective way to disinfect them. A study that is currently in pre-print has just been released showing that COVID-19 will last on surfaces such as cardboard for 24 hours. The study also indicates that COVID-19 lasts on plastic surfaces for up to 72 hours, making this an appropriate time for books covered in mylar or other plastics, as well as other plastic circulating materials, such as CD's and DVD's:

<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.03.09.20033217v1.full.pdf>

Unfortunately, the use of liquid disinfectants is harmful to the books and is **not recommended**. UV ray exposure as a means of sterilization is also **not recommended**. Not only are UV rays harmful to the books, but in [correspondence on the Preservation Administrators' Interest Group list-serv](#), the Chair of the American Institute for Conservation Health and Safety Committee has indicated that [40 minutes of exposure at high doses](#) is required to kill bacteria using UV rays and this will not disinfect places that the UV rays miss during exposure.

Staff should be directed to wear gloves when moving collections into quarantine and remove them immediately afterwards so as not to accidentally touch anything else (like door handles). After removing the gloves, staff should wash their hands for 20 seconds, following [CDC guidelines](#).

If a dedicated quarantine space cannot be established, staff can put the item in a bag until the 24 to 48-hour period is over so staff do not accidentally handle the item during the quarantine period.