

**Touchable geological specimens on public displays and meteorites (survey run through the Curators and Curatrixes affiliated to the Society of Minerals and Museums Professionals and Curatrixes Meteoritical Curators and Curatrixes)**

How often and how to disinfect all the various surface's visitors touch. Are there any recommendations for safely disinfecting geological materials?

**Minerals and rocks:**

- “There are two issues at play: actually, preventing the spread of disease, and making the public feel safe enough to visit. While allowing touch objects and providing sanitizer would prevent spread provided people (including kids) use it correctly, is that “optically” sufficient? If the museum commits to disinfecting specimens, how will that be communicated.”
- “Our plans for reopening are in development, but I've seen plans from several places in State Government that would not have touch specimens or touch screens available for a certain amount of time after a phased reopening.”
- “Yes, I think this is very sensible if access to specimens is to be maintained. It addresses the risk at source, which periodic cleaning of the specimens could never manage. I suspect that we will suspend access to specimens to touch, when we eventually open again to the public.”
- “The only way to be effective in protecting the people is to have someone wiping the specimens down every time they are touched. The virus is going to be most prevalent on a specimen right after it has been touched by an infected person. Another approach would be to have a hand sanitizer dispenser set up near the touch specimens with a sign reminding people to use it after touching the specimens. It would be most effective and encourages visitors to take responsibility for themselves”
- “This is the cleaning technique developed by our Head of Conservation for our “touchable objects”, including rocks and minerals:
  - Spray microfiber cloth with 70% ethanol in water solution until thoroughly wetted
  - Dampen surface of specimen by dabbing the cloth on surface of specimen
  - Allow a minimum 5 minute of dwell time
  - Dry surface with a clean microfiber cloth using a light, lifting motion (not rubbing). In addition, some specimens have been covered, removed or cordoned off to prevent touching of any kind. We've also switched off all touchscreens in the galleries and created a single, one-way path for visitors through the galleries.“
- “Spraying touch specimens twice a day with 60% isopropyl alcohol is very fast. Given most museums have only a few larger specimens to touch, a few minutes twice a week everyone can spare. These touch specimens are very important, especially for children and people new to the field and must not be removed. Typical is quartz, which is quite

resistant to most. You do not choose very sensitive specimens in the first place. In addition, wiping ones a week or twice a month could be given as task to the cleaning/maintenance staff and is no excuse to remove specimens which are so valuable for education. “

**For meteorites:**

- “ The best advice for disinfecting for coronavirus is the same method I would normally use to clean meteorites - ethyl alcohol. I attach a CDC website that recommends 75-80%, (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/hand-hygiene.html> ) but I'm sure you have access to 100%. Note that alcohol is EXTREMELY prone to absorbing water, so you'll want to make sure you have a new bottle that you keep TIGHTLY closed except when dispensing.”
- “I don't think you could clean them often enough to keep everyone safe (it only takes the person before you to be sick) or clean them with anything that wouldn't cause some amount of alteration in the long term. Probably better to turn the touchstones into “lookstones” for right now? If not, you'd probably be better off providing hand sanitizer for people to clean their hands with after touching the stone “