

Piano Technicians Guild

The Corona Virus (COVID-19) is having a major impact throughout the world and that includes the world of the piano technician. The Piano Technicians Guild is making the following suggestions for its members as they work in home and other buildings and facilities.

1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has specific tips for preparation, protection and care. You can view this information at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/protect/index.html
2. Special care should be taken when using disinfectant products on a piano. Our thanks to Greg Cheng, RPT, for his invaluable assistance in developing these recommendations.

General Recommendations

- Use alcohol-based disinfectants, do not use bleach-based disinfectants or any product containing citrus.
- If using a spray or liquid bottle, use a disposable towel like WYPALL L30. Put the disinfectant on the towel and not the piano.
- After use, immediately put the towel or disinfectant hand wipe in the trash and wash your hands as the CDC recommends. Do not use reusable towels or cloths which could spread germs to your kit or the next customer.
- Always follow up with a dry towel and never leave any liquids on the piano or keys.

Keys

The keys are the most important part. Generally speaking, most disinfecting wipes or sprays should be safe to use on the keys. If the keys are dirty, Cheng suggests using Cory Key-Brite to clean and then follow up with the disinfecting wipes or sprays.

Case Parts

Always test the disinfectant in a discrete area before moving forward to ensure there is no adverse reaction. Check to make sure the finish does not come off on the wipe or towel, the finish discolors or changes sheen. If none of this happens after a few minutes, you should be able to proceed.

High gloss polyester is the most durable to almost any store-bought disinfectants. Always do the test first. If the finish is dirty, Cheng suggests Windex or Cory Pre-Polish Finish Cleaner, followed by the disinfectant, then for the final step use the Cory Super High-Gloss Piano Polish. Make sure to always follow up with a dry towel.

Polyurethane and lacquer finishes require a more careful approach. Disinfectant wipes and sprays may be harmful to these finishes. Test an area first. In these cases, Cheng recommends a few drops of hand/dish soap with warm water on a towel. Make sure to always follow up with a dry towel.

For satin pianos always wipe down the piano in the direction of the 'hand rubbed' finish or grain. Going in the opposite direction may result in hazing or scratch marks.

Aged, alligatored, and damaged finishes are a challenge. It is difficult to know what is best to keep the integrity of the finish and still clean thoroughly. Always test an area and proceed with caution.

Cleaning pianos is a gentle process not a scrubbing process. Pressing hard or vigorous scrubbing may lead to scratching or removing the finish. Always proceed with caution and use common sense. Remember to wash your hands after you have thrown away the towels or wipes.

More discussions about COVID-19 and other piano related topics can be found at my.ptg.org.

The Piano Technicians Guild is the world's premier source of piano service expertise. It promotes the highest possible standards of piano service by providing opportunities for professional development, by recognizing technical competence through examinations and by advancing the interests of its members.

Gregory Cheng, RPT is a Registered Piano Technician. Along with servicing in home customers, concert venues, and universities, Greg also specializes in PianoDisc, QRS, Disklavier, Steinway Spirio player systems, rebuilding and polyester/lacquer furniture repair. Greg is currently the General Manager and Chief Technician for Allied Piano & Finish LLC, serving the trade since 1970.