



## UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, DC 20460

### COMPLIANCE ADVISORY

May 2020

## What You Need to Know Regarding Products Making Claims to Kill the *Coronavirus*<sup>1</sup> Causing COVID-19

### Products claiming to kill the *coronavirus* causing COVID-19

The agency will not register a product claiming to be effective against *coronavirus* until it has determined that the product will not pose an unreasonable risk and it will be effective when used according to the label directions. EPA maintains “List N,” which is a list of disinfectants that meet EPA’s criteria for use against the virus that causes COVID-19. While surface disinfectant products on List N have not been tested specifically against *coronavirus*, EPA expects them to kill the virus because they demonstrate efficacy against a harder-to-kill virus or another human *coronavirus* similar to the one causing COVID-19. This list can be found at:

[www.epa.gov/ListN](http://www.epa.gov/ListN).

<sup>1</sup> There are many types of coronaviruses and this advisory addresses the specific virus called SARS-CoV-2 that causes the disease COVID-19. Thus the use of the phrase coronavirus in this Advisory refers to SARS-CoV-2.

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The purpose of the Compliance Advisory is to address concerns related to products being used to disinfect surfaces which include claims to kill and/or be effective against SARS-CoV-2, the *coronavirus* causing the disease COVID-19. For some of these products, those claims have not been reviewed or accepted by EPA and, therefore, may present a risk to consumers, and healthcare providers in particular.

Consumers use disinfectants to clean surfaces. Cleaning products that claim to kill and/or be effective against viruses are pesticides and must be accepted and registered with the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA or the agency) prior to distribution or sale. These products may not be sold or distributed *unless* they have been properly tested and are registered by the EPA. There are additional state registration requirements as well.

1

To find a product on the [EPA List N](#), consumers should check the EPA *registration number* on the product to ensure it is on the list. Please note that just because the product label states that it kills “99.5% of viruses,” this does not necessarily mean that it will kill coronavirus. Consumers’ success in killing viruses depends on following all label directions including heeding the recommended contact time, which is the amount of time the product needs to remain wet on a surface.

### **Devices that claim to kill the *coronavirus***

A pesticidal device is an instrument or other machine that is used to destroy, repel, trap, or mitigate any pests, including viruses (i.e. ozone generators, UV lights, etc). Unlike chemical pesticides, EPA does not routinely review the safety or efficacy of pesticidal devices, and therefore cannot confirm whether, or under what circumstances, such products might be effective against the spread of *coronavirus*. Therefore, consumers should be aware that pesticidal devices making such claims have NOT been reviewed and accepted by EPA. While pesticidal device labels must have an EPA *establishment number* (which identifies where a product was produced), they will not have an EPA *registration number* because they are not subject to the same registration requirements as pesticides.

However, pesticidal devices are subject to certain regulatory requirements under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), one of which is a prohibition of false or misleading labeling claims. Making false or misleading labeling claims about the safety or efficacy of a pesticidal device may result in penalties under FIFRA. Please note that **ozone generators, UV lights and other pesticide devices may not be able to make claims against *coronavirus* where devices have not been tested for efficacy or safety for use against the virus causing COVID-19 or harder-to-kill viruses.** In addition, because EPA does not review these data as part of a registration review process, these claims are not supported by any government review.

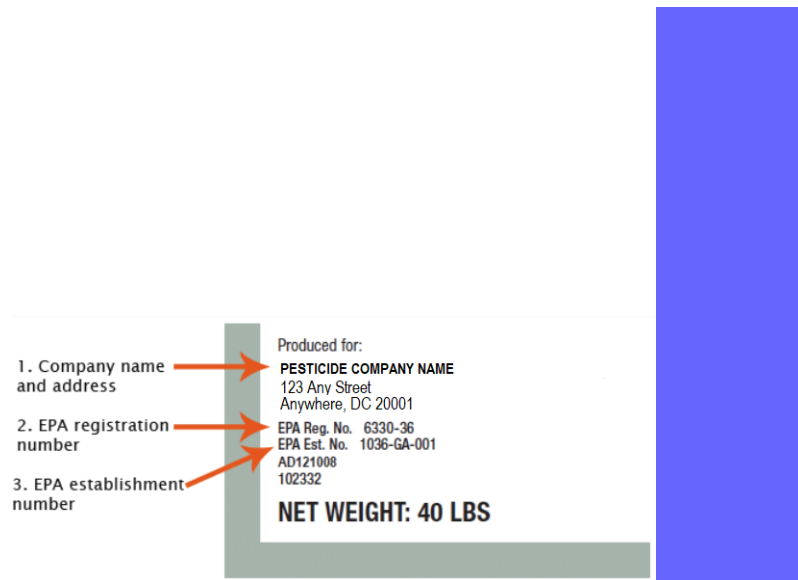
Because EPA does not review or register pesticide devices, these products are not included on List N.

### Human Health Concerns

Products claiming to kill and/or be effective against *coronavirus* that are not registered with EPA, may not be effective against the spread of this pathogen. In addition, because EPA has not conducted a human health risk assessment to determine the safety of these products, the extent to which these unregistered products may result in adverse effects that are harmful to human health is uncertain. Do not use any registered pesticide product in a manner inconsistent with its labeling.

### Compliance Concerns

It is unlawful for any person to distribute or sell a pesticide in the United States making claims to that it will kill a particular pathogen, *unless* that pesticide is registered with EPA and that



particular claim has been deemed acceptable by the agency. EPA is receiving a steady stream of tips/complaints concerning potentially false or misleading claims, including efficacy claims, associated with pesticides and devices. These tips/complaints are being actively reviewed and efforts are being made to identify potentially violative products. EPA intends to pursue enforcement against products making false and misleading claims regarding *coronavirus*. EPA is working with e-commerce platforms to remove/prohibit these fraudulent and/or otherwise inefficacious products from the marketplace. EPA is also coordinating with the U.S. Department of Justice and other federal partners to bring the full force of the law against those selling or otherwise distributing violative products.

**For more information on disinfectants, including Frequently Asked Questions and up-to-date press releases:**

<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>

**For more information on EPA's enforcement actions:**

<https://www.epa.gov/enforcement/covid-19-enforcement-and-compliance-resources>

**For tips and complaints related to products making coronavirus claims:**

<https://echo.epa.gov/report-environmental-violations>

## **DISCLAIMER**

Nothing in this Compliance Advisory is meant to replace or revise any EPA regulatory provisions of any other part of the Code of Federal Regulations, the Federal Register, or the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).