

Information updated 03/27/2020

Friends,

Like all of you, we here at ESS have been very suddenly become incredibly concerned about the spread of COVID-19. I am sure that like me, you all have a lot of love for your employees. So, at this time we are all striving to devise ways to keep our employees, customers and businesses safe. I am constantly trying to think of processes we can implement to prevent the spread of the virus. I truly believe that every little thing each of us does every day will cumulatively make a difference. Therefore, I feel it vitally important to share with you what I have managed to learn about headset disinfection. The object of the game is to safely disinfect as much as possible without accidentally ruining your equipment. Below is a summary of information gathered thus far, and I plan on updating this information frequently on our web site. You can view that information here:

<http://essnashville.com/disinfecting-headsets-best-practices/>

I suggest that you save this in your “favorites” because we are still working on determining alternative methods that are affordable, that are easy to manage and that can be sustained given present supply challenges. We will update this page with new information as we receive it.

#### **Guidance from the manufacturers:**

I have attached the tech bulletins from HME, Panasonic and PAR (PAR purchased 3M’s drive thru communications business late last year). As you can see, both manufacturers favor the use of alcohol wipes or of an alcohol solution to sanitize the headsets. PAR’s bulletin suggests the use of disposable ear pad covers and purchasing extra G5 headset carriers. Since sending out their own bulletin, HME has also sent out information on disposable ear pad covers. I should also note that HME’s bulletin states that a 50% alcohol solution is sufficient, but the CDC is recommending 70%:

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fhome%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/cleaning-disinfection.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Fhome%2Fcleaning-disinfection.html)

#### **Ear pad covers and ear pads:**

Both PAR and HME favor the use of disposable ear pad covers.

Here is PAR’s suggested source for the ear pad covers:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00C7BXWGO/?colid=I35OF716V79L93&colid=3MJ043F4KWZUT&psc=1>

HME has ear pad covers available for \$19 per box of 100 covers. If you would like to call them, their number is 800-848-4468 (but please call ESS 1<sup>st</sup> – see below)

**As of this date, ESS has stock of disposable earpad covers.** I have provided you the alternative sources above because realistically, we may struggle with keeping stock of the covers. We have more orders in queue and will try our best to maintain stock. Coincidentally, late last year, ESS signed up with a manufacturer that normally supplies these covers to schools and colleges. We offer our earpad covers in boxes of 100 for \$16.50 and “master cases” containing twelve (12) boxes (1200 covers total) for \$179.98.

We also have thousands of earpads in stock. 89 cents each, or \$80/100.

**Please call our office 615-340-9033 or email [customerservice@essnashville.com](mailto:customerservice@essnashville.com) to order.** Shortly, we expect to have a web store set up so that customers can more easily order ear pad covers, ear pads and other supplies.

#### **Additional information and suggestions in this challenging time:**

So above are the “official” guidelines from manufacturers, but we here at ESS have recognized that it may be difficult to obtain sufficient supplies of alcohol, alcohol wipes and disposable earpad covers at this time. So, we are offering suggestions for potentially viable alternative methods to use for disinfection. Face it, we are all going to have to be a “MacGyver” at times in the weeks and months ahead.

***At this time, I must include the disclaimer that we here at ESS are not experts at disinfection or sanitizing, and we cannot take any blame or accept any liability for the use or misuse of any disinfection method or solution. We are just trying our best to help in this time of need. We are all in this together! Like you, we are heeding the guidelines from the CDC, our vendors and other reliable sources as we work together to combat the spread of COVID19.***

Please bear these things in mind as you work to disinfect:

- **Make sure the item is dry before use.** It is very important to remember is that as you sanitize the headsets that you don’t inadvertently damage the equipment in the process. It is important to power down the equipment and remove batteries while cleaning. It is vitally important that the equipment be 100% dry before powering on or inserting charged batteries again.
- **Rice may or may not be nice:** Some might try placing equipment in uncooked rice to dry it since this method works well for cell phones and other devices. We do not recommend this without further study because of the potential for rice grains and rice dust to get into the equipment.
- **Mind the gaps! (and holes)** It is also very important to prevent any liquid from entering holes and gaps in the housings and getting onto the circuit boards. For this reason, we believe that disinfecting wipes (such as Lysol) are viable as an alternative to alcohol for sanitizing, but again, it is very important to try to keep liquid from the wipe from getting into the headset equipment circuitry. Specifically, care should be exercised around the microphone holes. Panasonic’s bulletin specifically states, “Under no circumstances should a Panasonic product be directly sprayed upon.”
- **Caution with the batteries:** I must also specifically caution against using a wet wipe of any kind for sanitizing a battery. If the liquid touches the metal contacts on the battery, one could get shocked. PAR has agreed to do some experiments to see if there is a hazard, but I would not want someone to learn the hard way. Most liquids are conductive, so I would be cautious. Panasonic appears to have a similar concern based on the wording in their bulletin.
- **Wash your hands and your earpads!** It would be wise to issue crew people each their own earpads. It is possible to wash earpads in soap and water just as one would do for hands (20+ seconds!). Soap and water washing are definitely good practices to use for earpads, but I would not rely on that solely if the earpad must be shared. For this reason, we have devised a method that can be used to sanitize earpads en masse using commonly available products presently being used by the barber and hair salon industry. Please contact us if you would like details on this procedure.
- **What about bleach?** I have heard anecdotally that some restaurants are using a bleach solution to sanitize earpads. I can’t say how effective that might be since I don’t know what solutions or process they are using. A bleach solution could be very damaging to the equipment if it gets on circuit boards, and could discolor some plastics, so that would not be a good choice to wipe down headsets and other

equipment. HME is specifically recommending against the use of bleach based cleaners.

**What about other cleaning products?** HME's bulletin specifically states that you should avoid using glass cleaners, ammonia based products, abrasive or powered cleaners, peroxide based cleaners, nail polish removers or any other acetone solution. I would heed that guidance for all brands of headsets. Acetone for example will discolor and damage the plastic. HME also recommends against Lysol or comparable disinfecting wipes. I am not sure why, but I will attempt to find out why and will update the info asap. It may be out of concern that liquid from the wipe could get inside the headset and damage circuit boards.

- **Keep the earpads dry too:** Whatever cleaning method you use for earpads, make sure that they are totally dry before use. Damp earpads can chafe.

- **And for all you MacGyver's out there:** Please check with us if you would like to try another kind of disinfection method of your own devising. Again, you don't want to accidentally ruin your equipment. We are exploring viable alternatives and will post those on our web site as the information becomes available.

**Other resources:**

our web site: [www.essnashville.com](http://www.essnashville.com)

PAR Technologies' COVID-19 response web page: [https://partech.com/communications-covid-19/?utm\\_campaign=Drive-](https://partech.com/communications-covid-19/?utm_campaign=Drive-)

[Thru%20Campaign&utm\\_source=hs\\_email&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=85239179&hsenc=p2ANqtz-8DpF0HzhgUfwUD2-ZCMPR6Po1kom7pmsDICu6Y9btLJ60BxRuwJQXNYu-5atmQLBR8VPNrkzHyQMkmyysXDv1kCt61Q&hsmi=85239179](https://partech.com/communications-covid-19/?utm_campaign=Drive-Thru%20Campaign&utm_source=hs_email&utm_medium=email&utm_content=85239179&hsenc=p2ANqtz-8DpF0HzhgUfwUD2-ZCMPR6Po1kom7pmsDICu6Y9btLJ60BxRuwJQXNYu-5atmQLBR8VPNrkzHyQMkmyysXDv1kCt61Q&hsmi=85239179)

Now more than ever, stay safe and healthy out there! Keep calm and wash your hands.

Ann E. Braun

"The Headset Lady"

Owner/President

E.S.S., Inc.

203 McMillin Street

Nashville TN 37203

Office: 615-340-9033

Cell: 615-305-9931

Fax: 615-340-9642

[www.essnashville.com](http://www.essnashville.com)

Need help? Please email us at [customerservice@essnashville.com](mailto:customerservice@essnashville.com)

Live long, prosper, and please try not to touch your face!