



Cleaning/decontamination in non-health care setting: COVID-19

As COVID-19 is a new and evolving risk and Public Health and the government are continually reviewing and updating COVID-19 measures and guidance, it is important to also continually **review/assess all risk assessments**, to ensure that all the COVID-19 risks have been fully assessed and that all required additional control measures and PPE are suitable and sufficient and that the University is in full compliance with the **current** Public Health and government advice/guidelines at all times.

All COVID-19 health and safety guidance has and will be reviewed and updated as required and the current editions will now be posted on the [Health & Safety Website](#).

Health Protection Scotland : [Core COVID-19 Information and Guidance for General \(Non-Healthcare\) Setting](#)

This guidance can be applied to any non-healthcare setting such as:

- workplaces
- offices
- student accommodation

COVID-19 is mainly passed on by person-to-person spread between people who are in close contact with one another and by droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

It can also spread through contact with a surface or object that has the virus on it. Cleaning helps minimise the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Fortunately, normal cleaning methods do kill this virus. Cleaners, caretakers and concierges play an important role in keeping people in their buildings protected, and are on the frontline in the battle against coronavirus (COVID-19) to keep staff, customers, and particularly the most vulnerable safe.

The guidance describes the cleaning required, the appropriate disposal of materials, the cleaning of equipment and hard surfaces, and the personal protective equipment (PPE) that should be worn.

What you need to know

- Cleaning an area with normal household disinfectant after someone with suspected coronavirus (COVID-19) has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.
- If an area can be kept closed and secure for 72 hours, wait until this time has passed for cleaning as the amount of virus living on surfaces will have reduced significantly by 72 hours.
- **Wear disposable or washing-up gloves and aprons for cleaning. These should be double-bagged, then stored securely for 72 hours, then thrown away in the regular rubbish after cleaning is finished.**
- Using a disposable cloth, first clean hard surfaces with warm soapy water. Then disinfect these surfaces with the cleaning products you normally use. Pay particular attention to frequently touched areas and surfaces, such as bathrooms, grab-rails in corridors and stairwells and door handles.
- If an area has been heavily contaminated, such as with visible bodily fluids, from a person with coronavirus (COVID-19), consider using protection for the eyes, mouth and nose, as well as wearing gloves and an apron.

- Wash hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds, and after removing gloves, aprons and other protection used while cleaning.

Background

Experience of new coronaviruses (SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV) has been used to inform this guidance. The risk of infection depends on many factors, including:

- the type of surfaces contaminated
- the amount of virus shed from the individual
- the time the individual spent in the setting
- the time since the individual was last in the setting

The infection risk from coronavirus (COVID-19) following contamination of the environment decreases over time. It is not yet clear at what point there is no risk. However, studies of other viruses in the same family suggest that, in most circumstances, the risk is likely to be reduced significantly after 72 hours.

Personal Protective Equipment

The minimum [PPE](#) to be worn for cleaning an area where a person with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) is disposable gloves and an apron. Hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 seconds after all PPE has been removed.

If a risk assessment of the setting indicates that a higher level of virus may be present (for example, where unwell individuals have slept such as a hotel room or boarding school dormitory) or there is visible contamination with body fluids, then the need for additional PPE to protect the cleaner's eyes, mouth and nose might be necessary. The local Public Health Protection Team (HPT) can advise on this. Non-healthcare workers should be trained in the correct use of a surgical mask, to protect them against other people's potentially infectious respiratory droplets when within 2 metres, and the mask use and supply of masks would need to be equivalent to that in healthcare environments

Cleaning and Disinfection

Public areas where a symptomatic individual has passed through and spent minimal time, such as corridors, but which are not visibly contaminated with body fluids can be cleaned thoroughly as normal.

All surfaces that the symptomatic person has come into contact with must be cleaned and disinfected, including:

- objects which are visibly contaminated with body fluids
- all potentially contaminated high-contact areas such as bathrooms, door handles, telephones, grab-rails in corridors and stairwells

Use disposable cloths or paper roll and disposable mop heads to clean all hard surfaces, floors, chairs, door handles and sanitary fittings, following one of the options below:

- use either a combined detergent disinfectant solution at a dilution of 1,000 parts per million available chlorine

or

- a household detergent followed by disinfection (1000 ppm av.cl.). Follow manufacturer's instructions for dilution, application and contact times for all detergents and disinfectants
- or
- if an alternative disinfectant is used within the organisation, this should be checked and ensure that it is effective against enveloped viruses

Avoid creating splashes and spray when cleaning.

Any cloths and mop heads used must be disposed of and should be put into waste bags as outlined below.

When items cannot be cleaned using detergents or laundered, for example, upholstered furniture and mattresses, steam cleaning should be used.

Any items that are heavily contaminated with body fluids and cannot be cleaned by washing should be disposed of.

If possible keep an area closed off and secure for 72 hours. After this time the amount of virus contamination will have decreased substantially and you can clean as normal with your usual products.

Laundry

Wash items in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Use the warmest water setting and dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an unwell person can be washed with other people's items.

Do not shake dirty laundry, this minimises the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.

Clean and disinfect anything used for transporting laundry with your usual products, in line with the cleaning guidance above.

Waste

Waste from possible cases and cleaning of areas where possible cases have been (including disposable cloths and tissues):

1. Should be put in a plastic rubbish bag and tied when full.
2. The plastic bag should then be placed in a second bin bag and tied.
3. It should be put in a suitable and secure place and marked for storage until the individual's test results are known.

Waste should be stored safely and kept away from children. You should not put your waste in communal waste areas until negative test results are known or the waste has been stored for at least 72 hours.

- if the individual tests negative, this can be put in with the normal waste
- if the individual tests positive, then store it for at least 72 hours and put in with the normal waste

If storage for at least 72 hours is not appropriate, arrange for collection as a Category B infectious waste either by your local waste collection authority if they currently collect your waste or otherwise by a specialist clinical waste contractor. They will supply you with orange clinical waste bags for you to place your bags into so the waste can be sent for appropriate treatment.

Reference:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

https://hpspubsrepo.blob.core.windows.net/hps-website/nss/2973/documents/1_covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>

If you have a  or  **stay at home for 7 days**, if you live alone
stay at home for 14 days, if you live with others, including all household members

new and continuous cough or high temperature

Only use **NHS 111** if your symptoms get worse or are no better after home isolation

Stop the spread of coronavirus



Wash your hands more often and for 20 seconds

Use soap and water or a hand sanitiser when you:

- Get home or into work
- Blow your nose, sneeze or cough
- Eat or handle food



Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze and throw the tissue away straight away



Cleaning an area with regular household disinfectant after someone with suspected coronavirus has left will reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people

The amount of virus living on surfaces will reduce significantly after

72 hours

If an area can be kept closed and secure, wait until this time has passed before cleaning



Wherever possible, wear disposable or washing up gloves and aprons for cleaning. These should be double bagged, then stored securely for 72 hours then thrown away in the regular rubbish after cleaning is finished

If an area has been heavily contaminated, such as with visible bodily fluids, from a person with coronavirus, **consider using protection for the eyes, mouth and nose** as well as gloves and apron



Using a disposable cloth, first clean hard surfaces with warm soapy water

Then disinfect these surfaces with the cleaning products you normally use. Pay particular attention to **frequently touched areas and surfaces**, such as bathrooms, grab-rails in corridors and stairwells and door handles



Wash hands regularly with soap and water, and **after removing** gloves, aprons and other protection used whilst cleaning