

Covid-19 hygiene and surface contamination.

Following hygiene procedures, cleaning surfaces and keeping our hands sanitised are some of the key ways for us to reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19. There is specific government guidance on hygiene in relation to preventing the spread of the coronavirus.

- > Provide additional hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol content with training on correct use and consider providing hand sanitiser points in the building reception and in strategic common parts around the workplace (Dr Asim Yusuf, the chair of the British Board of Scholars and Imams has confirmed that alcohol based hand sanitisers are permissible for use by Muslims)
- > Monitor the extent of use of hand sanitiser. If a 200ml bottle of hand sanitiser is lasting for a few weeks then too little is being used. If it runs out quickly then too much is being used
- > Ensure regular documented checks to ensure hand sanitisers and soap are always topped up
- > Increase the frequency of cleaning busy areas of the workplace
- > Regularly disinfect commonly touched surfaces such as door handles and consider the provision of elbow openers that allow doors to be opened without using the hands

- > Give clear guidelines on using toilet facilities to maximise people adhering to social distancing. This may involve a one in one out process or it could involve the provision of additional temporary facilities. Ensure that the guidelines are recomunicated when government best practice changes
- > Provide paper towels or hot air dryers for hand drying and remove towels.

Hand washing

Employees should be provided with guidance on hand washing and hygiene. Whilst this subject area at first appears obvious, the provision of such information demonstrates that as an employer, you are taking all practical steps to prevent the spread of the virus.

Employees should be instructed to wash their hands for 20 seconds following the NHS advice on hand washing technique that ensures that all parts of the hands and fingers are washed with soap. [nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/) In terms of frequency, they should wash their hands:

- > After using the toilet
- > Before eating or handling food
- > After sneezing, coughing or blowing their nose
- > Before and after treating a cut
- > And when at home, after touching pets.

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General cleaning principles for an infection control programme

A formal cleaning regime will need to be implemented and this should tie in with your Covid-19 risk assessment. Work equipment surfaces will need to have a much greater focus, for example, shared hand tools, interiors of company vehicles, machinery and fork lift truck controls will need to be cleaned between users. Surface areas in busy common parts such as door handles and handrails will need more regular cleaning too. The following points should be considered:

- > Send visitor information and agreements in advance to minimise visitor interaction with your workplace. Even better, make arrangements that mean that business can be conducted without the visitor needing to visit your premises.
- > Give clear guidance to those individuals such as delivery drivers who do need to visit your premises. Ideally send instructions before they arrive so they have minimal interaction with gate house staff and receptionists. Also ensure that hand sanitiser and toilet facilities are available and accessible whilst creating minimum contact with employees.
- > Maintain good housekeeping standards and keep surfaces clean to allow for ease of cleaning.
- > Introduce 'clean as you go' cleaning procedures for work areas such as meeting rooms which are used by different people.
- > Introduce different cleaning frequencies for different areas. A once a day deep clean can be introduced for less used areas and frequently used areas can be subject to more frequent surface cleaning activity
- > Provide cleaners with training on what personal protective equipment to wear, when to clean, where to clean and what cleaning techniques and equipment to wear. The training provision should be documented.
- > Use signage to remind staff when to clean their workstations. Staff should also be provided with training on a signed receipt basis in respect of how they should keep their workstations clean.

Surface cleaning

Your cleaning protocols will need to be changed depending on who has been working in specific areas of the workplace. Further guidance can be found on the gov.uk website at <https://bit.ly/2YlqcZZ> Please ensure that your cleaning schedule follows the following points when an employee with possible or confirmed Covid-19 has been in work area:

- > Cleaning staff personal protective equipment should be a disposable apron and gloves as a minimum. When these are removed the cleaning staff should wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water. The PPE should be disposed of by double bagging, storing for 72 hours and then being placed in the bin for regular waste.
- > If a higher level of virus may be present, eye protection and a face covering should also be worn as well as the PPE mentioned above. An example of this situation would be if an individual with Covid-19 symptoms had used a hotel room.
- > Cleaning staff should be trained on how to put on and take off a surgical mask if a risk assessment for the cleaning activity suggests they should be wearing one.
- > If a person with suspected symptoms has simply passed through a common area of your workplace such as a corridor, normal cleaning of the area is fine.
- > If a person with suspected symptoms has touched surfaces, they should be disinfected. This will include objects contaminated with body fluids and all other high contact surfaces such as door handles, toilets, telephones and handrails.
- > Use disposable cloths or paper towels and a general purpose detergent if the contamination is not heavy. If the contamination is heavier and includes body fluids, use disposable cloths or paper roll and a fresh solution of detergent. Rinse, dry and follow with a solution of detergent with 1000 ppm available chlorine. Alternatively use a combined detergent/chlorine releasing solution with 1000 ppm available chlorine, rinse and dry thoroughly.

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- > Clean the item from the top or the furthest point and follow the disinfectant instructions in relation to dilution, application and contact time. Check your relevant COSHH assessments are up to date too.
- > Double bag personal protective equipment and cleaning items, store the bagged waste for 72 hours in a secure area and then discard the bag in your usual waste bin. If the individual tests negative the waste need not be stored for 72 hours. If your workspace does not permit the storage of waste for 72 hours, arrange for the waste to be collected as a Category B infectious waste by a specialist contractor.
- > Items that cannot be effectively disinfected, like upholstery, should be steam cleaned. If an item cannot be cleaned it should be disposed of.
- > If clothing and bedding is to be washed, the manufacturers instructions should be followed but on the warmest water setting. Do not shake dirty laundry and ensure that any receptacle used for carrying the laundry is cleaned using the steps recommended above.

The issue of cleaning and surface contamination will also need consideration in respect of interaction with third party businesses. If you share your workplace with other organisations, you should agree a suitable cleaning regime with those third party organisations.

Deliveries of goods to your workplace could be contaminated so you will need to consider whether the surfaces of packaging are disinfected or whether they can be stored in a segregated area for 72 hours. If you employees visit third party properties, call ahead and gain information on how the third party is managing infection control at their site. Your travelling employee should also be provided with hand sanitiser to use when leaving the third party site and the personal protective equipment they are provided with should also be considered.

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