



Infection prevention and control advice on cleaning and disinfection in the workplace

This document provides information on routine cleaning and disinfection for non-hospital settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes settings such as offices, workplaces, public areas, government buildings, reception areas, schools, childcare centres and shops. This information is also applicable for when an attendee at the workplace has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

Every workplace should have an established routine cleaning schedule. [COVID Safety Plans](#) help ensure businesses actively mitigate the risks of COVID-19 in line with the best available health advice and this should include protocols to manage cleaning and disinfection following notification of a confirmed COVID-19 case.

General Information

Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) is the virus that causes coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19). The primary way transmission occurs is through inhalation of respiratory droplets or aerosols and direct physical contact with an infected person. There is some evidence to support indirect transmission from contaminated objects and surfaces.

SARS-CoV-2 virus can survive on surfaces for several hours to a few days depending on the amount of virus landing on a surface, the surface type, the temperature and the humidity, however the virus is rapidly inactivated by alcohol, household bleach and other chemicals.

The term 'deep-cleaning' has been loosely used by the media to communicate thorough cleaning *and* disinfection of a public site that has potentially been exposed to the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This terminology is not a quantifiable measure of cleaning and it is not used by the Department of Health Western Australia.

There is no requirement for a certificate of cleaning and disinfection to be issued for the premises to resume routine operations.

Workplaces should have cleaning and disinfection processes documented and readily available for staff to clean their own workspaces daily and a procedure to follow should a staff member be confirmed with COVID-19.

Contracted cleaning staff should be trained by their employer in the appropriate use of cleaning and disinfection procedures, products to be used and in the use of any personal protective equipment (PPE) that may be required.

Cleaning principles

All staff in a workplace should have access to adequate hand washing facilities including soap, water and paper towels, for use when hands are visibly soiled or alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) that contains a minimum of 60% alcohol.

Environmental cleaning is a key element in IPC practice mitigating the risk of transmission of infectious agents. Cleaning is essential to both reduce environmental burden of microorganisms on surfaces and to reduce potential transmission of microorganisms from surfaces to workplace attendees.

It is important to ensure surfaces are cleaned before any disinfection occurs, as dirt and grime can affect how well a disinfectant works.

Cleaning products chosen are to be appropriate for the surface to be cleaned. In general, combined detergent / disinfectant solutions or wipes are suitable for hard surfaces. Some products such as bleach can damage fabrics or corrode metals. If separate detergent and disinfectant solutions are used, they must be prepared fresh each day. Use approved products to clean any electronic equipment.

Carpets should be regularly vacuumed using a vacuum cleaner with a high efficiency particulate absorbing (HEPA) filter. It is important to follow the manufacturer's schedule on filter replacement to ensure the filter remains effective.

Steam cleaning or dry cleaning are acceptable processes for soft furnishings if they become visibly soiled. Workplaces should have a schedule for routine cleaning of all soft furnishings.

Never mix different cleaning products as in some instances chemical reactions can occur which could be harmful to the person cleaning. Avoid 'topping up' detergent or disinfectant containers as this can lead to contamination of the containers and solutions.

Cleaning is to be completed in a methodical way to prevent cross contamination of surfaces. When cleaning, it is important to clean from high to low, from clean to dirty and wipe in an 'S' shape pattern. Use of a damp dusting technique prevents dust particle dispersion when dusting surfaces (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Tips for cleaning



Wipe in an 'S' pattern, taking care not to go over the same area twice



Clean from high to low



Wipe from clean to dirty



Leave to air dry



One wipe/cloth one surface

All products should be used in line with the manufacturer's instructions. The product Safety Data Sheet should be readily available, and occupational safety and health procedures should always be followed. Information on which disinfectants are effective against SARS-CoV-2 is available on the Therapeutic Goods Administration website.

It is preferable to use disposable cleaning equipment which is disposed of after use. Reusable mopheads and microfibre cloths can be used but must be laundered daily and allowed to air dry. All cleaning equipment should be stored clean and dry. Surfaces can be categorised into two groups, frequently touched and minimally touched (Figure 2).

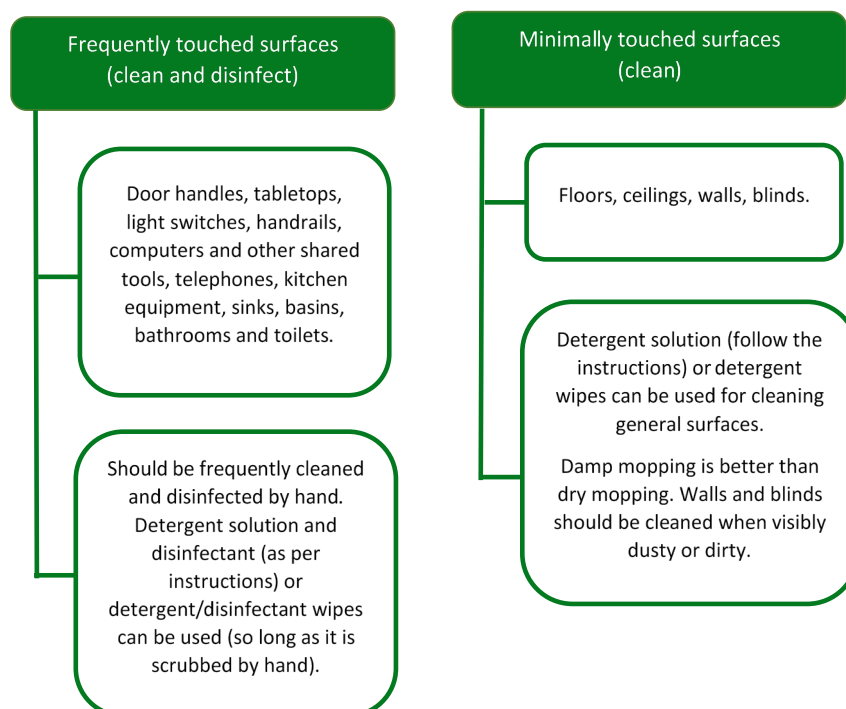
Frequently touched surfaces

Frequently touched surfaces have a higher risk of being contaminated. Attention should be paid to shared workspaces, restrooms, staff change rooms, lift buttons and handrails, chairs, horizontal surfaces such as tables, and other frequently touched surfaces. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least twice a day. Any shared workspaces should be cleaned and disinfected at the end of each person's use of the workspace including the keyboard, mouse and touchscreens.

Minimally touched surfaces

Clean minimally touched surfaces, such as floors, at least once a day. Spot clean other surfaces as required if visibly soiled e.g. blinds and walls.

Figure 2: Routine environmental cleaning



Crockery and cutlery

Shared crockery and cutlery should be washed in a dishwasher using appropriate dishwasher detergent. If a dishwasher is not available, crockery and cutlery is to be washed using hot water and dishwashing detergent. All items are to be completely dry, prior to storing or reuse.

Towels and linen

Linen does not require special laundering but should be washed in hot water and dried. If using a commercial laundry, usual linen handling protocols apply.

Outdoor areas



High-touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, such as grab bars, play structures, and railings, should be cleaned regularly. Cleaning and disinfection of wooden surfaces such as wooden play structures, benches, tables are not recommended.

Personal protective equipment for staff

Contracted cleaning staff should wear their normal personal protective equipment (PPE) when cleaning to fulfil their OSH requirements. Wearing of masks as per the current mask mandate is required.

Staff in workplaces who are requested to clean a workspace due to a staff member being identified as COVID-19, should don a pair of disposable gloves and a face mask prior to cleaning and disinfecting the workspace.

All staff should put on (don) and take off (doff) their PPE in the correct order. Staff are to avoid touching their face, especially mouth, eyes and nose when cleaning and perform hand hygiene after removing PPE on completion of cleaning tasks.

Donning PPE		Doffing PPE	
	<p>Perform hand hygiene</p> <p>Gown or apron</p> <p>Surgical Mask</p> <p>Protective eyewear/visor</p> <p>Perform hand hygiene</p> <p>Gloves</p>		<p>Gloves</p> <p>Perform hand hygiene</p> <p>Gown or apron</p> <p>Perform hand hygiene</p> <p>Protective eyewear/visor</p> <p>Perform hand hygiene</p> <p>Surgical Mask</p> <p>Perform hand hygiene</p>

Waste management

Waste should be placed inside disposable rubbish bags, $\frac{3}{4}$ filled and tied off. Use two rubbish bags if the contents are wet to prevent leaks. The waste can be placed with other general waste (not recycling or green waste) for your routine waste collection. Always perform hand hygiene after handling waste.

Emerging cleaning technologies

Disinfectant fogging

The use of disinfectant fogging for COVID-19 is **not recommended**. Disinfectant fogging (sometimes called misting) is when very fine droplets of disinfectant are sprayed around a room. You still need to clean all surfaces before spraying and the disinfectant may not reach all surfaces. Fogging also involves allowing a significant time to enable the droplets to settle out of the air and onto surfaces before the room can be used again.

Ultraviolet disinfection

The use of ultraviolet (UV) disinfection for COVID-19 is **not recommended**. There is limited published data about the exposure, wavelength, dose, and duration of UV radiation required to kill the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This type of disinfection also requires additional training and correct use of PPE.

Resources

Further information regarding environmental cleaning and disinfection principles for COVID-19 can be found at:

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Healthcare [Environmental cleaning :Information for cleaners](#)

Australian Government [Information about routine cleaning and disinfection in the community](#)

Australian Government [Information for employers](#)

Australian Government [Information about cleaning and disinfection for schools](#)

Centres for Disease Control and Prevention: [Cleaning and disinfecting your facility](#)

Safe Work Australia COVID 19 Information for workplaces: [Cleaning](#)

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This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with disability.

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Version Control

Version	Date	Updates / Changes
1	11 February 2022	New document. Merged 'Advice on environmental cleaning in non-healthcare settings' document with 'Advice environmental cleaning of a site following COVID-19 exposure' document
1.1	01 March 2022	Updated wording to non-hospital settings, to align with audience