



Infection prevention and control advice for environmental cleaning of a site following COVID-19 exposure

This document provides information on cleaning and disinfection during the COVID-19 pandemic after a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been on the premises.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can survive on surfaces for some time, but effective cleaning and disinfection will kill the virus. The length of time the SARS-CoV-2 virus can survive on surfaces varies depending on several factors including the amount of virus expelled onto a surface by respiratory droplets, the type of surface exposed, the temperature and the humidity.

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 recognised or 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.

Staff undertaking cleaning, including contracted cleaning companies, should have received training on cleaning and disinfection and the correct use of cleaning equipment. This includes training in the correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Cleaning principles

It is important to make sure surfaces are cleaned before any disinfection process occurs, as dirt and grime can affect how well a disinfectant works. Clean the surface with detergent and warm water using a clean cloth. Allow the surface to completely dry then follow with a disinfectant. Alternatively, you can use a cleaning product that contains both detergent and disinfectant properties. After cleaning allow the surface to dry.

For a disinfection solution to work, prepare the solution and store it in line with the manufacturer's instructions. Solutions used should be compatible with the surfaces they are being used on. Information on disinfectants to use against COVID-19 is available on the [Therapeutic Goods Administration website](#). The manufacturer's instruction for use should always be followed, the product safety data sheet should be readily available, and occupational safety and health (OSH) procedures followed.

Some products need to be on a surface for a specific period to ensure effectiveness against a contaminant. This is referred to as “contact time”. The manufacturer’s instructions for use should stipulate how much contact time is required.

Never mix different cleaning products as in some instances toxic gases can be generated. Avoid ‘topping up’ detergent or disinfectant containers as this can lead to contamination of the containers.

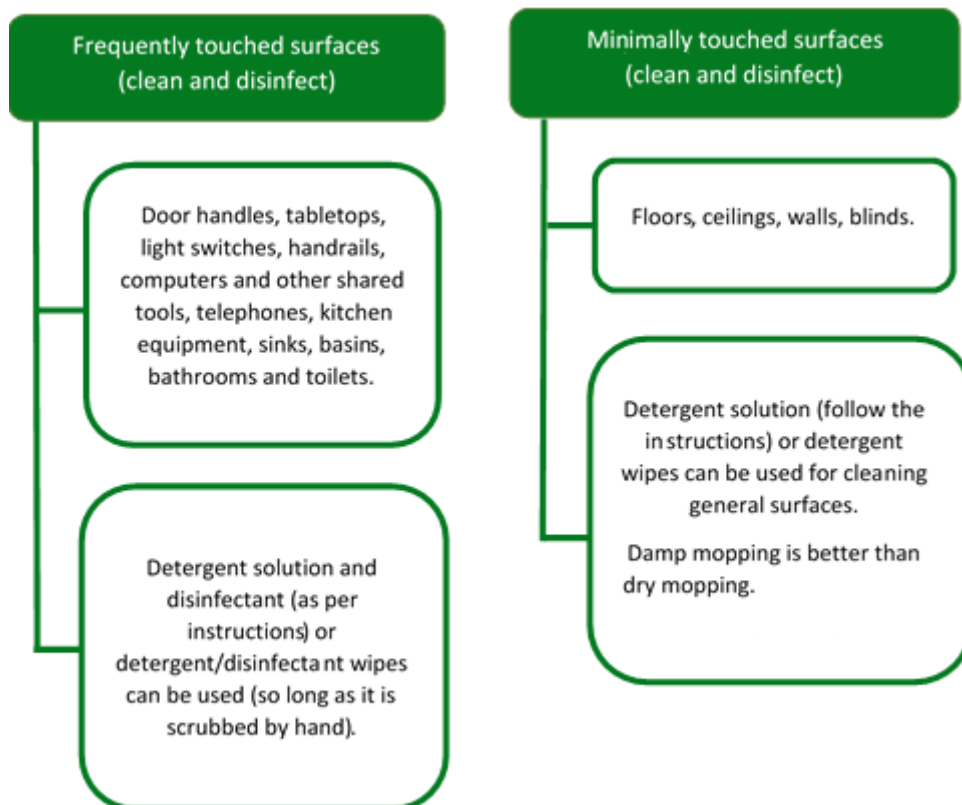
All consumables in the exposure area, such as opened toilet rolls or tissue boxes, should be discarded unless they can be cleaned and disinfected.

When cleaning and disinfection begins, outside doors and windows should be opened to increase fresh air circulation.

All frequently and minimally touched surfaces require cleaning and disinfection prior to resuming normal activity (see Figure 1).

Frequently touched surfaces have a higher risk of being contaminated and are therefore a potential source of transmission. Attention should be paid to shared workspaces, restrooms, staff changing rooms, lift buttons, gym equipment, horizontal surfaces such as tables, chairs and other frequently touched surfaces.

Figure 1: Environmental cleaning



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

Soft furnishings, such as lounges, chairs and bedheads

- Carpets should be vacuumed - ideally with a vacuum cleaner fitted with a high-efficiency particulate absorbing (HEPA) filter.
- Steam cleaning may be used according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Fabric items should be laundered (if possible) with laundry detergent on the hottest possible temperature and according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Towels and linen

- Linen does not require special laundering but should be washed at the hottest possible temperature and items should be thoroughly dried.
- If using a commercial laundry, usual linen handling protocols apply.
- Laundry baskets should be cleaned and disinfected after use.

Crockery and cutlery

- Shared crockery and cutlery should be cleaned in a commercial or domestic dishwasher using appropriate dishwasher detergent.
- If a dishwasher is not available, crockery and cutlery should be washed using hot water and dishwashing detergent. Care should be taken to ensure all items are thoroughly cleaned and allowed to completely dry.

Electronic devices

Electronic equipment includes the following: printers, mobile phones, tablets, touch-screens, remote controls, mice and keyboards.

- Turn the power off and unplug device.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfection products.
- If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of disinfectant wipes or alcohol-based wipes containing at least 70% alcohol.
- For keyboards, remove debris with a small vacuum cleaner fitting prior to cleaning and disinfecting.

Equipment required for cleaning

- Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) that contains between 60-80% alcohol.
- Soap and water, for use when hands are visibly soiled.
- Detergent and disinfectant products or two in one detergent/disinfectant products/wipes.
- It is preferable to use disposable mop heads and cleaning cloths and dispose of after use. If you are unable to use disposable mops and cloths, then reusable mopheads and cloths can be used but should be laundered and allowed to air dry.
- Cleaning buckets: these should be emptied, cleaned, and disinfected with a fresh batch of cleaning and disinfectant solution and allowed to dry completely before reuse.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE): level 2 surgical masks, gloves, gown/apron and protective eyewear.
- Plastic rubbish bags to line the rubbish bin for waste disposal.

Use of personal protective equipment when cleaning

Avoid touching your face, especially your mouth, nose, eyes and the PPE whilst cleaning. Don and doff your PPE by following the steps outlined in the following poster:

- [Donning and doffing PPE](#)

Waste management

Waste should be handled with caution before disposal in the waste bin. Waste should be put securely inside disposable rubbish bags. When dealing with waste, avoid touching the inside of the bag. Make sure the rubbish bag is not more than $\frac{3}{4}$ full to enable the bag to be tied and the contents do not overflow. Use two rubbish bags if the contents are wet to prevent leaks.

This waste can be placed with other general waste (not recycling or green waste) for your routine waste collection. It is important to always perform hand hygiene by washing your hands if visibly dirty or use ABHR after handling waste.

Emerging environmental cleaning technologies

Disinfectant fogging

The use of disinfectant fogging for COVID-19 is **not recommended**. Disinfectant fogging (sometimes called misting) is the use of a spray of very fine droplets of disinfectant throughout a room. Surfaces **must** be cleaned prior to undertaking this process. This type of disinfection also carries chemical exposure risks and requires training and the correct use of PPE. 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 training and correct use of PPE.

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

Australian Commission of Safety and Quality in Healthcare:

[Environmental cleaning: emerging environmental cleaning technologies](#)

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

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

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