

Covid Cleaning Protocols for Self-catering Properties & Short Term Lets

ENGLAND

Version 5, July 2021



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Pre-Introduction

The document has been reviewed by Public Health Scotland (PHS) and Infection Protection Control (IPC) (July 2021).

The issued Cleaning Protocols are guidance, rather than exact steps that you must take, or indeed law. The most important thing to do is to properly risk assess your business, and update that risk assessment periodically.

Public Health England (PHE) COVID-19 information and guidance for non-health and care settings provides information on a number of issues within the protocols survivability/transmissibility of the virus, PPE requirements etc. can be found here:

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

- Operators should follow current English Government guidance on issues such as physical distancing and face coverings
- Properties that have been cleaned and disinfected in line with local policies should be available for immediate occupation, and there is no requirement for leaving properties fallow for 72 hours
- Individual operators should decide on whether guests should strip the beds / laundry themselves. If operators/cleaners remove them (following protocols on good handling of linen, not shaking, PPE if required), then it could be argued that this may actually be more "controllable"
- A common-sense approach should be taken to the washing of crockery/cutlery, based on what cleaners find when assessing property at changeover
- Businesses should move towards a business-as-usual approach, including interaction with guests in line with current English Government guidance
- PHS does not recommend Steam/UV-C light/ULV fogging between guests as standard practice
- A business-as-usual approach should be taken in terms of laundry, (including what happens to linen with visible contamination) in line with local policy.

The industry should now be starting to revert to business as usual and following cleaning policies, protocols and procedures that would have previously (pre-pandemic) been in place.

What to do if a guest develops or arrives with COVID-19 symptoms

Operators should signpost to PHE non-healthcare settings guidance, which currently states:

If a guest informs you they have tested positive for COVID-19 or they have symptoms of COVID-19:

- Advise the guest (and any relevant members of their family or party, such as those sharing a room) to:
 - immediately self-isolate where they are if possible (to minimise any further risk of transmission).
 - arrange an NHS test as soon as possible; Link here: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> and

- return home if they reasonably can.
- Discuss with the guest whether they are able to return home, or whether it is possible to extend their stay. Make sure to inform them of any costs an extended stay would include (which the guest would usually be expected to cover).
- If they choose to return home, they should use private transport but only drive themselves if they can do so safely.
- If a guest cannot reasonably return home (for example if they do not have the means to arrange private transport or they are not well enough to drive themselves home safely) and cannot self-isolate in your accommodation facility, their circumstances should be discussed with an appropriate healthcare professional and, if necessary, the local authority.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/hotels-and-guest-accommodation#customers-5>

Introduction

This document is designed for all short-term accommodation operators: owners, hosts, and property management companies. It contains guidelines on how to clean properties safely in the context of COVID-19, and how to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

It is the responsibility of every operator to ensure that they and their properties comply with health and safety legislation in relation to not only the accommodation, but also to ensure the safety of guests and staff in relation to Covid-19. Limiting the spread of the Covid-19 Virus is therefore an additional consideration beyond your existing responsibilities.

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, hosts, owners and managers of self-catering units and short-term rental operators have a public health responsibility to ensure that their accommodation is clean, not only to the eye, but also that any potential virus is removed to the best of their ability to prevent any spread. We must commit to adapting our procedures to fit the advancement of science and our knowledge of this virus, and other viruses that may be identified in the future.

Owners and operators have a duty of care to customers and staff even where specific legislation does not exist.

It is essential that housekeepers and cleaners are reminded or retrained to ensure that they understand what they need to do and why they are doing it.

It is important to have a strict cleaning protocol in place and that this is clearly identified to both cleaners and guests.

This document is divided into two main parts:

1. **high-level guidelines**
2. **further information and resources.**

1. High level guidelines

Background to COVID-19

COVID-19 is a disease which is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which can be passed via respiratory secretions (i.e. saliva) and faeces, and which can successfully live for up to 2 to 3 days on certain surfaces. COVID-19 is an “enveloped” virus, meaning that it is surrounded by a protective layer of fats and proteins.

SARs-Cov-2 is thought to be primarily transmitted via droplets through talking, coughing and sneezing from person-to-person. However, transmission may also occur through other routes, including contaminated surfaces.

There is building evidence in relation to this virus and the PHS guidance for non-healthcare settings should be referenced.

https://publichealthscotland.scot/media/3227/1_covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings.pdf

Under most circumstances, the amount of infectious virus on any contaminated surfaces is likely to have decreased significantly by 72 hours.

The risk of transmission through contact with surfaces or items (fomite transmission) is now considered to be very low. In most instances, this risk can be mitigated against through good hand hygiene and effective cleaning of surfaces.

Therefore, 72-hour quarantine of items such as returned retail goods, library books or other items is not routinely required provided other mitigations such as hand hygiene (before and after handling goods) and regular cleaning of frequently touched surfaces are in place.

More information can be found at:

<https://journals.asm.org/doi/abs/10.1128/AEM.00526-21?fbclid=IwAR2HaAr37Aa0S4nzeGAraU1QEzsNYIjvMvgpV7Vv9cbXBV8B8zB7Ohr5pg&>

General advice

Standard cleaning procedures negate the need to leave properties vacant for any length of time between guests. Properties can be reoccupied after cleaning in line with the procedures laid out in these protocols.

It is important that Individual property owners or managers continue to make a professional judgement in terms of what is right for their businesses.

With regards to face coverings and physical distancing, it is recommended to follow the latest English Government advice when meeting guests.

Keep up to date with the latest guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-covid-19/hotels-and-guest-accommodation>

We would like to highlight the essential wearing of masks when you are meeting anyone who is not in your immediate family/bubble inside a property – e.g. when doing a meet & greet. And if possible, guests should be met outside to be given keys if they cannot collect keys without any contact.

Ventilation has been evidenced as a key factor in trying to reduce the risk of spread of the virus. Good ventilation in our properties while anyone is working in them and encouraging guests to keep the property well ventilated both while they are there and also when packing up to leave is best practice.

In reference to protective clothing for cleaners and housekeepers it is recommended that that the guidance within PHE non-healthcare settings is followed and currently states:

- **If you are cleaning after a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19**, follow the [guidance on cleaning in non-healthcare settings](#). **You may need to provide cleaners and housekeeping staff with personal protective equipment** (such as a face mask or visor) to protect their eyes, mouth and nose, when cleaning areas where there is a greater risk of exposure to the virus (for example, in a hotel room where someone unwell has spent the night).

Therefore, the wearing of gloves/apron/masks is not routinely recommended. Instead, standard procedures, i.e. what would be done in non-COVID times, would suffice unless in specific situations arise.

Where either guests or operators / cleaners are considered high risk, particularly those with underlying health conditions or the elderly, and that includes you and your family, further English Government guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

For each changeover, cleaners should follow these steps:

- Risk Assessment (cleaning companies may have their own particular guidelines and risk assessment protocols)
- Load reduction: removal of waste and increased ventilation
- Deep cleaning process to remove any residual dirt on surfaces etc
- Professional disinfection: removes the unseen virus and leaves the space safe

Guests should be reminded about their responsibility to maintain personal hygiene levels and they must be provided with adequate hand washing facilities/supplies and cleaning products. More detail can be found in part 2: further information and resources.

Risk Assessments

The core principle of this guidance is risk management. Therefore, all operators should conduct a risk assessment of their property.

Broadly speaking a risk assessment involves identifying potential risks within a property and taking active steps to mitigate those risks.

One size does not fit all: Whilst every business and property's requirements are different the issues raised here are those which most will have in common. It will be up to you to identify your businesses specific risks and the mitigation required. After all you know your business better than anyone else.

The basic steps for undertaking a risk assessment are as follows:

1. **Look:** for the points of transmission for Covid-19, i.e. high touch points and identify rooms with minimal ventilation.
2. **Decide:** the likelihood of transmission via various touch points.
3. **Evaluate:** whether your current regime is sufficient or whether you need to do more and assess whether it is 'reasonably practicable' i.e. wiping all the door handles with a disinfectant cleaner reasonably practicable, but it might not be reasonably practicable to wipe every skirting board at each changeover.
4. **Record:** your findings and draw up a simple list of guidance points for the person/s who are going to do the cleaning, even if it is yourself.
5. **Review:** as the danger of the virus recedes you may want to gradually alter your regime, e.g. reduce the rate of disinfection or re-introduce removed items. Put the review date on your Risk Assessment.

A risk assessment template is attached in the appendix as part of this guidance.

Guidelines for Cleaning

The following steps will minimise the risk of the people responsible for cleaning, contracting the virus and ensuring the accommodation is safe for incoming guests.

1. Carry out a **Risk Assessment**. This should be done in advance and there will be protocols put in place (A risk assessment template is attached as part of this guidance).
2. Ask guests to **ventilate** the property.
3. Provide the correct **clothing and cleaning products** for the cleaners.
4. Cleaners should follow the following **cleaning process**:

- Ensure property is ventilated whilst cleaning. If it is safe to do so, and doesn't compromise insurance, suggest that guests leave windows open prior to departure. This will ensure a reduction in any air borne virus in the property.
- Understand the clean level required and have the appropriate equipment.
- Wear appropriate clothing as per business as usual (unless in specific circumstances).
- Prepare the area to be cleaned (reducing the load) – remove waste, remove dirty linen and towels and carry out initial cleaning required (i.e. load dishwasher, clear out fridge for leftovers, clear surfaces, etc).
- Bedding & Linen: Property Owner/Manager/cleaners bag and remove linen (following protocols on good handling of linen, not shaking, PPE if required) it is argued that this is more controllable than guests undertaking this themselves. PHS noted that clean pillow and mattress protectors were advised for each changeover that potentially provided an additional layer of mitigation in the early stages of the pandemic as we were learning about the virus and its behaviour, but they do not believe that this is essential, given new evidence on fomite transmission. PHS do not believe that the rotation and quarantine of duvets and pillows between every set of guests is necessary. Naturally, standard procedures should be followed in the event that a pillow or duvet was found to be soiled or contaminated with body fluids during changeover.
- Disposal of waste: waste of any kind should be placed in a plastic bag, tied and removed from the property and disposed of in an external bin. Hazardous waste should be disposed of according to government or council guidelines.
- Clean using general cleaning products – or hot soapy water taking a 'common sense' approach to cleaning and washing dishes, utensils, cups & cutlery.
- Disinfect using appropriate products and ensuring it is left on the surface for the required time to kill the virus: make sure the product will work on enveloped viruses. Look for EN14476 and follow manufacturers guidelines.
- Wash hands fully after the removal of protective clothing. Hand sanitiser can be used if warm running water is not available (There is limited evidence of difference in bacterial reduction across temperature).

Guidance for Operators and Hosts

Guests

Operators or Hosts should:

- Decide how they prefer to interact with guests during their stay.
- You may wish to consider using contact-free check-in methods but where operators are interacting with guests, they should follow SG guidance on physical distancing and face coverings.
- Consider installing a hand sanitiser station at the entrance to the property.
- Ensure that guests have all relevant information that they need ahead of their arrival.
- Provide helpful information for guests via email, including:
 - Helpful numbers and contacts.
 - Guidance in case a guest shows COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Local walks / attractions that are open for use under social distancing rules.
 - Appliance instructions.
 - Heating instructions.

- Make sure that guests have access to appropriate guidance in the event that they develop COVID-19 symptoms.
- Advising guests that you have taken extra steps and letting them know that you have taken all possible steps to protect them and clean the property suitably is important
- Consider providing a cleaning standard tick list for transparency for the incoming guest.
- All properties should have adequate supply of cleaning materials, including virucidal disinfectant, tissues, hand wash and/or sanitiser and cloths, disposable gloves for guests use.
- Guests should be able and encouraged to maintain the cleanliness of the property during their stay.
- Guest Information Folders and other items within properties are fine for use, and in line with advice from PHE guests can be reminded of good hand hygiene before and after handling items within properties

Maintenance

Wherever possible, maintenance of properties during guest stays should be kept to a minimum. In the event of essential maintenance being required, English Government guidance on face coverings and physical distancing should be followed, and ventilation of the property should be maximised

Local communities

The lifting of lockdown restrictions to allow self-catering / short-term and holiday rental properties to reopen will be widely publicised. You should therefore be prepared to answer questions from your local community about the measures you are taking to ensure the safety of your guests, staff and those living close by. The sector complied immediately to calls from Government to close properties and to cancel bookings, in order to protect the NHS and save lives. Concern about safety remains the highest priority and will motivate your efforts to open in a measured and considered way. Where there are shared stairwells or entrances it may be advisable to ask your staff and guests to wear face coverings in these areas.

What to do if a guest develops or arrives with COVID-19 symptoms

- Advise the guest (and any relevant members of their family or party, such as those sharing a room) to:
 - immediately self-isolate where they are if possible (to minimise any further risk of transmission).
 - arrange an NHS test as soon as possible; Link here: <https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test> and
 - return home if they reasonably can.
- Discuss with the guest whether they are able to return home, or whether it is possible to extend their stay. Make sure to inform them of any costs an extended stay would include (which the guest would usually be expected to cover).
- If they choose to return home, they should use private transport but only drive themselves if they can do so safely.
- If a guest cannot reasonably return home (for example if they do not have the means to arrange private transport or they are not well enough to drive themselves home safely) and cannot self-isolate in your accommodation facility, their circumstances should be discussed with an appropriate healthcare professional and, if necessary, the local authority.

If they cannot reasonably return home, and the local authority cannot come up with another option, and the guest has to stay, (and pay) then here is the next set of Guidance. Here's the actual written guidance from the Government website.

If the guest self-isolates in your accommodation facility:

- Inform the guest of any relevant safety measures you will take, and ensure they are familiar with the guidance on possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection which they should follow.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

- Discuss practical measures with the guest, such as changes to meal and laundry provision. They should stay in their accommodation and should not use shared areas (such as TV rooms or lounges) or shared dining facilities. If meals are delivered, contact with the guest should be minimised and social distancing maintained at all times. You should also consider whether symptomatic guests should clean their own rooms and strip their own beds, to avoid exposing cleaning or housekeeping staff to unnecessary risk.
- The guest must not leave the accommodation facility, except in a few specific circumstances, including for urgent medical assistance, urgent veterinary services, legal obligations, attending the funeral of a close family member, accessing critical public services, and to move to a different place of isolation if it is impractical for them to remain at your accommodation facility. They are also permitted to leave where they need to in order to obtain basic necessities (such as food and medical supplies). However, you should discuss with the guest whether there are other ways these supplies could be provided so they do not have to expose others to potential transmission risk by leaving their place of self-isolation unnecessarily. You should remember that it is not your responsibility to enforce self-isolation rules; enforcement of the law remains a matter for the police.
- Once the guest has finished the required self-isolation period and is no longer symptomatic, they no longer need to isolate.

If your facility is unsuitable for self-isolation (for example, if it has shared washing facilities, or there are risks to staff that cannot be mitigated):

- Guests with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 should return home to self-isolate if they can. Ensure that guests are aware in advance that they will not be able to self-isolate in your facility and may have to arrange private transport home if they need to self-isolate.

2 Further Information & Resources

Further information on COVID-19

You might see various references to Coronavirus, such as SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19. The virus itself is called SARS-CoV-2 and is responsible for causing the COVID-19 disease. COVID-19 is shorthand for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (when the disease was first discovered).

Coronaviruses are part of a family of **enveloped cells**, which means that they're wrapped in a protective layer of lipids (fat) and proteins. SARS-CoV-2 virus is an enveloped virus, and to successfully neutralise the virus, products must be used that are effective on 'enveloped viruses'. SARS-CoV-2 is passed through respiratory secretions and faeces and can live on different surfaces for different lengths of time. When you touch a surface with virus on it, you can transfer that virus to your hand, which in turn may be ingested by you (through touching your face, rubbing your eyes, etc)

Washing your hands with soap, or disinfecting them with hand sanitiser, are effective ways to dissolve the viruses' protective envelope which then exposes and neutralises the virus¹.

More detailed guidance

What products should I be using?

In order to assist in the prevention of the spread of the virus it is important to understand the difference between cleaning and disinfecting. Cleaning is the act of removing dirt and other visible signs of surface fouling, such as grease marks or stains. Disinfecting is when you use specific chemicals to kill viruses or germs (for example when you spray an area with a bleach solution, such as a sink or toilet bowl). It is essential to clean first, and then disinfect.

- **A virucidal disinfectant** is any physical or chemical agent that deactivates or destroys viruses. EN 1276 is a disinfection standard for Bacteria – most specifically MRSA. To be sure of killing viruses you should use a disinfecting agent certified for **EN 14476**.
- Virucidal spray is a very common and cheap method to clean all hard surfaces and high touch points (light switches and door handles) and can easily be implemented by anyone. You just need to check that your spray works on enveloped viruses to be effective against Coronavirus and ensure that it has the appropriate dwell time (leave it to air dry). Some products need diluting, so you need to make sure you get the concentrations correct. This method is the best for frequent cleaning and for hard surfaces. It's not so effective on soft furnishings and it also requires you to cover all surfaces manually. Virucidal sprays with EN14675 or EN14476 are tested on similar viruses but haven't yet been tested on SARS-CoV-2. EN14476:2013+A2:2019 are products that have been tested on and found to be effective on SARS-CoV-2. **Look out for products certified as EN 14476.**

¹ <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/best-way-to-wash-your-hands/>

- **Sodium hypochlorite** is a solid white powder but is more commonly used dissolved in water. Solutions of **sodium hypochlorite** are commonly referred to as **bleach**, although household **bleach** also contains small amounts of several other compounds, including **sodium hydroxide** and calcium **hypochlorite**. These products can be purchased online. While bleach will eliminate the virus on surfaces it also has other side effects that can have negative impacts on your health. We would advise caution at all times when using bleach and never mix it with any other cleaning products.
- **70% Ethanol** (Anhydrous Alcohol) is an effective cleaning agent that kills microbes, denatures proteins, and dissolves lipids. **Ethanol** is also known as **ethyl alcohol**, alcohol anhydrous, denatured alcohol. This product cannot be shipped to a private residence.

Log Kill Rates

In terms of infection control, the Log Kill Rate means how effective a cleaning product is at reducing bacteria, viruses, or other microorganisms that can be the cause of disease. In microbiology, they use the term colony forming units (CFUs), which is a unit which is used to estimate the number of viable (i.e. living) bacteria or fungal cells in a sample. The following table shows how many CFUs you are left with using different chemical products for the reduction of bacteria. As you can see, the number of bacteria left using a 99.999% product is only 10 as opposed to 1000 with a supermarket product.

Log Kill Rate Chart

CFUs	After use of product killing xx% of bacteria	You are left with	Log Kill Rate
1m	99%	10,000	2-Log
1m	99.9%	1,000	3-Log
1m	99.99%	100	4-Log
1m	99.999%	10	5-Log
1m	99.9999%	1	6-Log

Guide to cleaning different surfaces

According to [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces) studies², Coronavirus can live for up to 2-3 days on plastic and stainless-steel surfaces. Since these materials make up many of the things which we regularly touch on a day to day basis, such as light switches and taps, it's vital to disinfect surfaces to reduce the possible risk of transmission between people. This is why the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-infection-prevention-and-control-for-health-care-workers)³ advises the use of diluted Sodium Hypochlorite (bleach) at 0.5% to regularly disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, kitchen surfaces, and bathroom surfaces. Further studies to help us understand more about how the virus transmits across surfaces are being conducted every day, so it's important to keep up to date and follow the guidance. You can keep up to date through the Centres for Disease Control & Prevention ([CDC](https://www.cdc.gov))⁴ or the [WHO](https://www.who.int).

Adapted from: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) Technical Report: Disinfection of environments in healthcare and non-healthcare settings potentially contaminated with SARS-CoV-2.

(S: Suggested O: Optional)

² <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces>

³ <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-infection-prevention-and-control-for-health-care-workers>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov>

	Healthcare Setting / RED RISK SCU	Non-Healthcare Setting / AMBER RISK SCU	General Setting / Green Risk SCU
Surfaces – be aware of where the surface is – kitchens need to be safe for food preparation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially Clean with a general detergent or hot soapy water Then disinfect with a Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.05% sodium hypochlorite OR 70% ethanol [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial clean with general detergent or hot soapy water Then disinfect with Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.05% sodium hypochlorite OR 70% ethanol [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean with general detergent or hot soapy water. [S]
Toilets & Bathrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.1% sodium hypochlorite [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.1% sodium hypochlorite [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.1% sodium hypochlorite [O]
Textiles – Linens, towels,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot-water cycle (90oC) AND Regular laundry detergent Alternative lower temp cycle + bleach or other laundry products [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot-water cycle (60oC) AND Regular laundry detergent Alternative lower temp cycle + bleach or other laundry products [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hot-water cycle (60oC) AND Regular laundry detergent Alternative lower temp cycle + bleach or other laundry products [O]
Cleaning Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-use disposable OR Non-disposable disinfected with: Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.1% sodium hypochlorite [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-use disposable OR Non-disposable disinfected with: Virucidal disinfectant OR 0.1% sodium hypochlorite [O] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-use disposable OR Non-disposable cleaned at the end of each session [S]
Protective Clothing for Cleaning Staff (NB check chemical being used for level of mask needed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surgical mask Disposable long-sleeved water-resistant gown Gloves FFP2 or 3 when cleaning facilities where AGP have been performed [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surgical mask Uniform & plastic apron Gloves [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniform Gloves [S]
Waste Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infectious clinical waste category B (UN3291) [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In a separate bag in the unsorted garbage [S] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsorted waste [S]

Hot Tubs, Pools or Spas

- There is no evidence to suggest that Covid-19 can be passed through water in hot tubs, pools or spas. Proper maintenance and cleaning processes (including disinfection with bromine and chlorine) should deactivate the virus in water. PH levels should be kept at 7, and free chlorine 1.5. However, pools, hot tubs and spas should not be shared between guests staying in other properties, so best practice would be to maintain rota systems to avoid separate groups of guests mixing.
- However, external touch points need to be handled with protective clothing by maintenance staff and disinfected. Handles, lids and control panels should all be cleaned, or disposable protective clothing worn when handling. BISHTA guidelines should be followed⁵.

UK legislation related to health and safety

There is already a great deal of provision made under UK legislation in relation to Health & Safety liabilities:

- The Occupiers Liability Acts 1957 and 1984
- The Management of Health & safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the minimum you must do is:

- Identify what could cause injury or illness in your business (hazards)
- Decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk)
- Take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn't possible, control the risk

As an employer, you're required by law to protect your employees, and others, from harm⁶.

Further guidance can be found on the Health and Safety Executive's website⁷.

Further guidance can be found about those at higher risk from COVID-19⁸.

Additional links

PHS guidance for non-healthcare settings: https://publichealthscotland.scot/media/3227/1_covid-19-guidance-for-non-healthcare-settings.pdf

UK Government Guidance: Staying alert and safe (social distancing)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance#guidance-for-the-public>

Best practice: how to hand wash (poster) <https://www.yas.nhs.uk/media/3142/detailed-handwashing-poster.pdf>

Guidance for employers and businesses on coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

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

Public Health England: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

Public Health Scotland: <https://publichealthscotland.scot>

Public Health Wales: <https://phw.nhs.wales>

Public Health Northern Ireland: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net>

⁵ www.bishta.co.uk

⁶ <https://www.hse.gov.uk/simple-health-safety/risk/index.htm>

⁷ www.hse.gov.uk

⁸ <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/people-at-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/whosat-higher-risk-from-coronavirus/>

Cleaning up body fluids: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/oce23.pdf>

Additional Accreditation

You may consider additional accreditation in order to increase consumer confidence in your cleaning protocols:

Covid-19 Cleaning Protocol Certified Training:

A no-nonsense, easy-to-follow course created for property owners, managers and their cleaners looking to ensure their properties operate safely when they open⁹.

Good to Go Standard:

The Good to Go standard initiative is a self-certification scheme developed by VisitEngland in partnership with VisitScotland, VisitWales and Tourism Northern Ireland. It is directly linked to national and sector specific public health and safety guidelines and aims to give confidence to businesses, visitors and communities of high standards of compliance and hygiene in tourism establishments. It operates through an online portal, backed up by process checks and supported by a call-centre facility to answer more detailed questions from businesses¹⁰.

Quality in Tourism's Safe, Clean and Legal Scheme:

The accreditation is suitable for hospitality operators and accommodation providers, who want to provide guests with reassurance of standards, but for whom quality (star) ratings may not be relevant or applicable. The accreditation works for any business looking to demonstrate their commitment to standards, reassuring potential guests that you have appropriate standards and that they have been inspected by an independent third party¹¹.

AA Covid Confident:

The AA COVID CONFIDENT scheme is open to all hospitality establishments that pass the AA's stringent criteria, including: hotels; restaurants; pubs; B&Bs and guest accommodation; camping, glamping and holiday parks; self-catering accommodation; hostels; serviced apartments; attractions; and golf courses. The scheme is free¹².

This guidance has been developed in partnership by the Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers, the Professional Association of Self-Caterers, and Premier Cottages. It is supported by the Tourism Alliance, the Scottish Tourism Alliance and the Wales Tourism Alliance.

Disclaimer

This content is based on guidance from the HSE (Health and Safety Executive), WHO (World Health Organisation), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Global Biorisk Advisory Council (GBAC), and Centres for Disease Control (CDC), NIH (National Institutes of Health), NHS (National Health Service). These agencies do not endorse this content. This is guidance only, and we make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability, or availability with respect to this content provided for any purpose. Any reliance you place on such information is therefore strictly at your own risk.

⁹ <https://holiday-let-cleaning.teachable.com/p/holiday-let-cleaning-post-covid>.

¹⁰ <https://goodtogo.visitbritain.com/your-business-good-to-go-scotland>

¹¹ <https://www.qualityintourism.com>

¹² <https://www.ratedtrips.com/aa-covid-confident>

Appendix

A1) Risk Assessment Template

A2) Cleaning Check List

A3) Cleaning Protocols, Additional Guidance for Self-Catering Properties and Short-Term Lets in the Context of Covid-19 FAQ

Covid-19 Risk Assessment for Short-Term and Holiday Rentals and Self-Catering Properties

Property Name

Date of Assessment

Assessment Carried out by

Date of Next Review:

Notes:

What are the Hazards?	Who Might Be Harmed and How?	What are you already doing to control the Risk?	What further action do you need to take to control the risk?	Risk Factor / Urgency		
				High	Medium	Low
Person to person contact during COVID 19 pandemic (Host and guest)	Becoming infected with COVID19 and further spread the infection		<p>Minimise contact between the two parties.</p> <p>Consider protective face covering for any welcome staff and ensure guests and welcome staff understand social distancing guidelines.</p> <p>Provide a pre-arrival/ departure pack for guests explaining procedures.</p> <p>Use self-check in approaches where appropriate such as lock boxes with Host to video call or phone the guests after guest arrival to ensure customer satisfaction and to answer all queries</p> <p>Ensure guests are not present during interim cleans</p> <p>Any issues needing a maintenance visit to be arranged when guests are out of the property where possible (unless an emergency)</p> <p>Provide a FAQ document on all aspects of the property for example:</p> <p>When bin day is How the boiler works How to switch the heating on How the cooker works</p> <p>This will minimise any visit to the property</p> <p>Have an illness during stay reporting procedure and useful contact numbers in the property</p>			
Cleaner / housekeeper not fit for	Could spread COVID 19 through		Create an ongoing checking system and document for			

Covid-19 Risk Assessment for Short-Term and Holiday Rentals and Self-Catering Properties

work and infected with COVID 19	cleaning within the property		staff health / wellbeing			
<p>Cleaning regimes not effective / fit for purpose</p>	<p>Contaminated accommodation / spread of COVID 19</p>		<p>Create a cleaning plan that all cleaning staff must adhere to and sign for each clean</p> <p>Create a cleaning checklist that all cleaning staff must fill in and leave in property for transparency</p> <p>Create a maintenance checklist that all cleaning staff have to sign for on each clean, any issues to be flagged and dealt with before the guests arrival</p> <p>in-depth ongoing staff training to ensure knowledge, clear understanding, and skills of every task undertaken</p> <p>Cleaning standards checked periodically by supervisors or external 3rd parties (e.g. accreditation)</p> <p>All cleaning team members are given the correct protective clothing and training on how to use correctly and instructions on handwashing, protective clothing disposal and their well being</p>			
<p>Incorrect / ineffective cleaning materials used / Cleaning regimes not recorded</p>	<p>Not cleaning or sanitising the property correctly</p>		<p>Put a cleaning requirement document together, clearly stating what should be sanitised within the property for example</p> <p>Touch points, door handles, banisters, surfaces, bathrooms</p> <p>What should be disinfected, floors, walls</p> <p>Ensure all cleaning materials are clean and fit for purpose</p> <p>Ensure all cleaning equipment is PAT tested and fit for purpose and the being used in the correct way</p> <p>Put a health & safety file together with all cleaning products used and for what purpose, COSHH sheets if required, all previous cleaning / maintenance schedules for the accommodation and all risk assessments</p>			

Covid-19 Risk Assessment for Short-Term and Holiday Rentals and Self-Catering Properties

<p>Dealing with a guest who is unwell or infectious outbreak in your property</p>	<p>The spread of an infection outbreak</p>		<p>Place a what to do if you suspect you as a guest are ill or have an infectious outbreak document in the property including relevant phone numbers and actions required</p> <p>Video call/ call the guests to clearly understand the situation and if the guests need to extend their stay and for how long</p> <p>Build into terms and conditions the cost and requirements if a guest has to extend their stay through illness for self-quarantine</p> <p>Build a relationship with fellow property owners (buddy system) to see if arriving guests can be relocated into one of these properties if original booking cannot be fulfilled due to guest illness</p> <p>Deliver clean linen and linen bag for the guests to place used linen in (leave this in the property)</p> <p>Deliver, medicines, food supplies and extra cleaning materials to the outside of the property</p>			
<p>Incorrectly laundered bedding</p>	<p>Bacteria not killed off properly</p>		<p>Use cotton/ linen bedding and wash on a full 60-degree wash cycle (not a quick wash). If you can't wash your linen at 60 degrees, ensure it is tumble dried or ironed (the heat from these processes will also neutralise the virus)</p>			
<p>Changeover clean</p>	<p>Contaminated accommodation / spread of COVID 19</p>		<p>All changeover cleans can only be completed once the guests have left the property</p> <p>All protective clothing is available to cleaner</p> <p>All cleaning / maintenance procedures are adhered to and documented accordingly</p>			
<p>Legionella</p>	<p>Infection of Legionella from standing water if the property has been lying empty</p>		<p>Before accepting your first guests, and if you have a gap of 2 weeks or more in your property Flush the whole water system for two minutes or more. First flush your toilet, then let the kitchen taps and the hand basin taps run for two minutes or more to let both hot and cold water pass through.</p>			

Covid-19 Risk Assessment for Short-Term and Holiday Rentals and Self-Catering Properties

			<p>Flush the shower through if your shower has not been used for two weeks or more, disinfect the showerhead. The showerhead should be removed, and the shower run for two minutes. The showerhead should be disinfected before being re-fitted by immersing for at least an hour in any solution designed for cleaning baby feeding bottles (e.g. Milton). Showerheads should be regularly disinfected about four times a year.</p> <p>Finally, let any other taps run for two minutes.</p>			
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Notes on completion	
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Check List for Cleaning Self-Catering Units

Date

Property Name

Cleaned by

Signed

Cleaning Check List

All surfaces are to be cleaned first, then disinfected

Consideration should be taken to address the impact of children as well as adults: touching lower wall heights and parts of furniture

Entrance	
Key lock box cleaned	
Keys cleaned	
External handles wiped and disinfected	
Communal Parts	
Internal doors and door furniture wiped and disinfected	
Wipe down walls (children's handprints)	
High level surfaces and skirting boards dusted	
Light and power switches wiped and disinfected	
Surfaces, wiped and disinfected	
Bannisters wiped and disinfected	
Windows cleaned	
Floors cleaned in line with standard cleaning protocols	
Wipe down fire extinguishers	
Living Spaces	
Internal doors and door furniture wiped and disinfected	
High level surfaces and skirting boards dusted	
Light and power switches wiped and disinfected	
All touch level surfaces and furniture, wiped and disinfected	
Electrical equipment, Wi-Fi hub and remote controls wiped down and disinfected	
Soft furnishings and curtains: standard procedures should be followed if any visible contamination is found.	
Mirrors cleaned	
Windows cleaned	
Hard flooring hoovered and mopped with virucidal disinfectant	
Empty Bins and disinfect	
Kitchen	
Internal doors and door furniture wiped and disinfected	
High level surfaces and skirting boards dusted	
Light and power switches wiped and disinfected	
All touch level surfaces and furniture, wiped and disinfected	
Electrical equipment, Wi-Fi hub and remote controls wiped and disinfected	
Soft furnishings and curtains: standard procedures should be followed if any visible contamination is found.	
Mirrors cleaned	

Windows cleaned	
Hard flooring hoovered and mopped with virucidal disinfectant	
Empty Bins and disinfect	
Washing machine / dish washer / microwave / kettle / toaster: clean and sanitise doors, handles and controls	
Oven and hob: clean and disinfected surfaces, doors, handles and controls	
Fridge: clean and disinfected inside and out, including handle	
Pans, crockery, utensils to be washed thoroughly	
Drawers and cupboards wiped and disinfected	
Floor hoovered and mopped with virucidal disinfectant	
Clean and disinfect highchair	
Bedrooms	
Internal doors and door furniture wiped and disinfected	
High level surfaces and skirting boards dusted	
Light and power switches wiped and disinfected	
All touch level surfaces and furniture, wiped and disinfected	
Electrical equipment, Wi-Fi hub and remote controls wiped down and disinfected	
Drawers and cupboards wiped and disinfected	
Soft furnishings and curtains: standard procedures should be followed if any visible contamination is found.	
Mirrors cleaned	
Windows cleaned	
Carpets hoovered: standard procedures should be followed if any visible contamination is found.	
Empty Bins and disinfect	
Bathrooms	
Internal doors and door furniture wiped and disinfected	
High level surfaces and skirting boards dusted	
Light and power switches wiped and disinfected	
Clean tiles	
Clean shower / bath / sink including pedestals and splashbacks	
Clean and sanitise taps	
Clean plugholes and pour disinfectant down	
Clean and sanitise toilet bowl using a toilet brush to agitate the cleaning process and include under the toilet rim	
All surfaces and furniture, wiped and disinfected	
Electrical equipment, Wi-Fi hub and remote controls wiped down and disinfected	
Mirrors cleaned	
Windows cleaned	
Carpets Hoovered: standard procedures should be followed if any visible contamination is found.	
Hard flooring hoovered and mopped: standard procedures should be followed if any visible contamination is found.	
Soak toilet brushes in bleach	
Outside Space	
Disinfect bin lids	
Clean outdoor furniture and gates	
Clean any outdoor play equipment	
Clean Barbeques	

Cleaning Protocols and Additional Guidance for Self-Catering Properties and Short-Term Lets in the Context of Covid-19

FAQ

Should we follow the cleaning protocols strictly?

The issued Cleaning Protocols are guidance, rather than exact steps that you must take, or indeed law. The most important thing to do is to properly risk assess your business, and update that risk assessment periodically.

Cleaning Products and EN Numbers

I am confused by the EN Numbers, can you provide more information on this?

Be aware of the difference between EN1276 & EN14476

EN 1276 is a disinfectant suitable for Bacteria – most specifically MRSA.

To be sure of neutralising viruses you should use a disinfecting agent certified for EN 14476.

Other disinfectants are effective on the following:

VIRUSES	<i>Poliovirus, Norovirus, Influenza A, adenovirus, Coronavirus (EN 14476)</i>
BACTERIA	<i>MRSA (EN 1276), E.coli (EN 13697), Pseudomonas aeruginosa, Staphylococcus aureus (EN 1276, EN 13697, EN 13727, EN 14561)</i>
BACTERIAL SPORES	<i>Bacillus subtilis, Clostridium difficile (EN 13704)</i>
FUNGI	<i>Aspergillus niger (EN 13624, EN 13687, EN 1650), Cabdida albicans (EN13624, EN 13697, EN 14562, EN1650)</i>

The are many products on the market now claiming on the labels that they kill coronavirus but on closer inspection on the back the product only has an EN 1276 certification. Below is a simple overview to germicidal standards that you might find useful.

There are numerous multi-EN standard products (including EN 14476) widely available for use both as standard spray-and-wipe disinfectant and also for use in a fogging machine. These fluids are available in either ready-to-use formulations or in concentrated formulations that can be diluted to deliver an extremely economical anti-viral solution.

Do we have to change any of the Cleaning Protocols to deal with New Variants of Covid-19?

The short answer is no: all known variants of Covid are killed by the correct use of the cleaning materials covered here. Coronaviruses are part of a family of enveloped cells, which means that they're wrapped in a protective layer of lipids (fat) and proteins. SARS-CoV-2 virus is an enveloped virus, and to successfully neutralise the virus, products must be used that are effective on 'enveloped viruses'.

A virucidal disinfectant is any physical or chemical agent that deactivates or destroys viruses. EN 1276 is a disinfection standard for Bacteria – most specifically MRSA. To be sure of killing viruses you should use a disinfecting agent certified for **EN 14476**.

Should I remove all printed material?

Advice from PHS states that there is very low risk from contact with books etc. as long as cleaning and good hand hygiene is followed.

Green Products – Are there any environmentally friendly products that I can use?

There are some products available in both shops and online that are ecologically friendly but conform to EN 14476.

Be cautious of claims that products are ecologically friendly. Ensure that the pH is between 10.8 and 11.4 (on the alkaline side of the neutral mid-point) and that it is certified as EN 14476. Un-fragranced products are recommended.

In terms of ecological information, look out for

- *Environmental fate (movement and partitioning): completely miscible in water, non bio-accumulative.*
- *Degradation and Persistence (ecotoxicity): high concentrations in receiving waters have low toxicity to marine organisms, detergent component is readily biodegradable according to appropriate EC legislations.*
- *Data: toxicity in seawater – Naval tov 2.*
- *Why un-fragranced? Some guests could also be allergic to strong smells.*

Cleaning Surfaces, Bedding & Soft-Furnishings

Bedding and Linen – Do I need to change pillow protectors and mattress protectors after each guest?

The important thing is ensuring the integrity of the pillow and mattress and that any protectors can be cleaned & disinfected appropriately and as required with a local risk assessment, using products compatible with pillow/mattress-cover materials to ensure that these covers remain impermeable to fluids.

How do you stop the risk of cross-contamination onto the pillow or mattress whilst stripping them?

When removing the protectors, do it carefully turning them inside out on themselves. With a mattress protector you can take off at all corners and fold in on itself. This is how you would remove the linen too.

Should bedding be washed at 60 degrees?

You can wash the beddings at 40 degrees if:

- *you tumble dry*
- *you iron the sheets*

NB do double check the heat setting for your protectors as you may damage them if too hot in the dryer.

Shared Facilities and Extras

Outside equipment and seating: should I continue to provide outside equipment, seating and other outside facilities?

You may wish to consider cleaning and disinfecting these areas, as you would in business as usual

Can guests share facilities?

In the absence of explicit guidelines from Government, each property will need to do a risk assessment for their particular circumstances. For example, if you have a shared outdoor pool, and (say) three or four cottages, it may be practicable to have a rota so that each cottage can use it privately in turn, and social distancing can be maintained, and you may want to close changing/toilet facilities. If you have a shared outdoor pool with 30 cottages, this may not be a practicable solution. Toddler ball pools are likely to be impossible to sanitise, so it would not be recommended to open these. Games room equipment can be taken outside, etc. Every situation will be different, and you will need to make an appropriate judgement.

Can guests use hot tubs and pools?

There is no evidence to suggest that Covid-19 can be passed through water in hot tubs, pools or spas. Proper maintenance and cleaning processes (including disinfection with bromine and chlorine) should deactivate the virus in water. PH levels should be kept at 7, and free chlorine 1.5. However, hot tubs and spas should not be shared between guests staying in other properties.

It is best practice to enable social distancing through implementing pool rotas where possible, as pool over-crowding should be avoided. Access to pools will need to be thought through, and if there are gates then hand sanitisers should be provided. Pool changing rooms and toilets are allowed to be opened if you can maintain social distancing in them and maintain a cleaning regime.

Guides, Maps, Books & Games: should I continue to provide guests with useful resources to use whilst on holiday?

There is significant added value to a guests stay where 'extra touches' are provided.

Welcome baskets: should I continue to provide a welcome basket?

Welcoming guests is a very important part of the guest experience. If you wish to continue to offer local produce to guests during their stay you may wish to consider only offering produce which is sealed or packaged. You may also wish to consider how you are presenting the produce.

Where can I find out more?

If you are not already a member of your relevant body, please do consider joining. These include:

- *Association of Scotland's Self-Caterers (ASSC)¹³ provide advice, lobbying and leadership for self-catering operators in Scotland and beyond.*
- *Professional Association of Self-Caterers (PASC UK) lobbies and supports self-caterers across the UK¹⁴.*
- *Domestic Cleaning Business Network¹⁵: a useful network for cleaning professionals across the UK.*

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¹³ <https://www.assc.co.uk/>

¹⁴ <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/>

¹⁵ <https://dcbn.org.uk/>