

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

FAQ

PLEASE NOTE, Version Updates:

- **We will periodically be issuing updates.**
- **These updates will be posted on our website.**
- **Please ensure you check regularly to ensure you are up to date with the current version of the cleaning protocols and associated documents.**

Can we have a printable word version of the cleaning protocols?

Yes, we have provided a word version of both the Risk Assessment and Cleaning Check List.

Should we follow the cleaning protocols strictly?

This is all a guide, rather than exact steps that you must take. It will change and evolve and really it is up to you how you implement it, and what procedures you want to implement for each scenario. It will be adapting and changing as the weeks and months go by and as the R rate increases and decreases.

Preparation to Re-Open

Can I travel to my self-catering property to prepare to re-open?

Scottish Government Phase 2 update notes that:

“In line with relaxation of house moves on 29 June, we are clarifying that travel to a second home for essential maintenance would be possible”.

In England and Wales, you currently can't.

Travel Restrictions – Who can travel to my property?

The opening of self-Catering accommodation and the re-start to opening your business should coincide with the lifting of travel restrictions. Visitors will be required to adhere to any travel restrictions within their area of residence and will not be allowed to travel unless their government lifts restrictions to do so. There are currently restrictions on visitors from abroad travelling into the UK, in that they will be required to self-isolate for 14 days when entering the country.

Do I need to get the Guests Contact Details?

Yes, it is important that you obtain contact details for your guests to include:

Name | Address | Telephone number | email address

This is important information for track and trace, Keep the information in accordance with your GDPR protocols and you may wish to consider only keeping the information for 6 to 12 months.

Can mix households come to stay?

The number of households who can stay in self-catering accommodation is subject to the periodic reviews as informed by the science and public health evidence. The criteria set for each phase of the route map to commence must be met. Members should watch for updates at review points, where any planned changes will be covered.

Large Properties and Groups – I own a large property which caters for groups, what are the requirements for opening?

We understand that the indicative opening date for self-catering properties is initially based on single household use. We are requesting more information from government to clarify the requirements for multiple household groups.

Suspected Covid-19 cases and guest self-isolation: what do I do if a guest develops or arrives with Covid-19 symptoms:

*According to **UK Hospitality guidelines**, if a guest presents themselves with symptoms or Covid-19 or is asymptomatic but declares the need to self-isolate, they should be advised to check out and return home to self-isolate according to current government guidance. If the guest has acute symptoms, has breathing difficulties, or their life is at potential risk, seek medical help immediately. Businesses should refer to NHS Inform for further advice on what action to take in the event of a known or suspected case of Covid-19 within the premises.*

Be aware that guidance can change, so always check the government sites if a case arises in your business.

Approaches to Cleaning

Should we disinfect on arrival at the property before doing anything?

There is no definite right or wrong answer, it's your choice of how you want to reduce the risk to you.

Some will 'pre-disinfect', although this is not necessary unless you know someone has been sick. Some will wear gloves, and some will wash hands.

What should I wear when I go to the property? Should I wear a visor?

When you arrive at the property after your guests have left, you should wear your protective clothing to stop you getting the virus.

When doing the clean you should wash your hands regularly, especially when taking on and off your gloves. By washing your hands, you will stop the chain of infection and stop yourself from getting the virus.

Visors are to stop direct respiratory droplets, they won't make any difference when vacuuming or changing beds, but you might want to wear one if you are meeting a guest at the property.

Respiratory face masks – Do I or my cleaners need to wear face masks?

Recommendations to wear protective clothing are noted within the cleaning protocols.

Recommendations are generally to 'consider' your approach to protective clothing. The findings from your individual risk assessments will be proportionate to your own business and should highlight the choices you wish to make to mitigate certain risks identified.

Please note with regards to face masks: *A number of facemasks on sale here in the UK are sold with false or counterfeit CE markings. Under normal circumstances, seeing a cheap product*

with dodgy certification would draw only a wry smile from us, but in view of the dangers of Covid-19, this is now a very serious matter. In addition to ingestion of virus, there is also the risk of respiratory blood alkalosis where poor quality or counterfeit masks are worn.

Do I need to leave 72 hours between bookings?

There is no requirement for a gap between bookings, if you do a robust 2-part clean:

- 1) Clean
- 2) Disinfect

Cleaning Products and EN Numbers

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

The following information will be added to Version 2 of the Cleaning Protocols Document:

Be aware of the difference between EN1276 & EN14476

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**.

VIRUSES	<i>Poliovirus, Norovirus, Influenza A, adenovirus (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.

Fortunately there are several 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.

How long does it live on different surfaces?

Latest evidence published in *The Lancet* and *The New England Journal of Medicine* illustrates that information and knowledge is evolving all the time. Currently it is thought that the virus can live on some common household surfaces for:

Surface Type	Present	No Longer Present
Air	2-3 hours	
Paper and tissue	30 minutes	3 hours
Copper	4 hours	8 hours
Wood, cloth and cardboard	1 day	2 days
Glass	2 days	4 days
Plastic and stainless steel	4 days	7 days

**This is based on testing initially, then at 4 days and then 7 days, when the virus was entirely neutralised.*

Should I use a fogging machine?

Ultra Low Volume (ULV) Fogging is the use of machines that push out disinfectant in a fine mist to cover all surfaces, because the mist is pushed out under pressure the disinfectant spreads across a wide area and can get into hard to reach areas. Fogging takes place after cleaning. It does not preclude the need to clean first. Operators must wear full protective clothing (surgical mask, goggles and gloves) and be well trained on both the equipment and the chemicals they are using. EN 14476 compliant chemicals should be used. It is not mandatory to use a fogger.

- A key advantage to fogging is that the room is safe to be reopened after 15 minutes.*
- Ventilation is always a positive method to remove any airborne virus, although evidence suggests that the virus does not remain airborne for long. Ventilation is not required, however, after using a fogger.*
- Bacteria dies within 30 seconds to 1 minute using a fogger. A virus is not alive, as a bacteria is, so you cannot 'kill' it. You neutralise it. Fogging will neutralise a virus in approximately 5 minutes. Testing is still ongoing. Assume that it will be neutralised within 10-15 minutes.*
- The fine fog lands on all surfaces and condenses. On glass, this may appear to leave a 'smear'. This can be wiped off with a microfibre cloth after 15 minutes.*
- Curtains and soft furnishings should be fogged from a distance, to avoid over saturating it. When used correctly, material should be dry within 6-7 minutes. Whilst the majority of chemicals used in foggers are alkaline, you may want to test on an inconspicuous area on some materials.*

WHO updated their guidance on 14th May: "In indoor spaces, routine application of disinfectants to environmental surfaces via spraying or fogging (also known as fumigation or misting) is not recommended. Spraying environmental surfaces in both health care and non-healthcare settings (e.g. patient households) with disinfectants will not be effective and may pose harm to individuals. If disinfectants are to be applied, manual surface cleaning with detergent and water using applied friction (e.g. brushing, scrubbing) must be performed first to ensure physical removal of organic materials, followed by use of a cloth or wipe which is soaked in the disinfectant.

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

We are currently researching bleach and chemical free products. We will provide more information when we have it.

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.

Unfragranced 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 unfragranced? 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?

There is no official guidance on this as yet: however, you might consider changing pillow protectors as well as pillow slips, as pillow covers aren't Hepa Filters. You may consider changing duvet protectors and mattress protectors between guests. Alternatively, you might either wish to wash pillows (rotating stock) or spray the actual pillow / mattress / duvet with disinfectant spray (certified as EN 14476).

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 if the guests had not done it already for you.

Should bedding be washed at 60 degrees?

You can wash the beddings at 40 degrees if:

- *you are not using it straight away*
- *you tumble dry*
- *you iron you are going to get temp up anyway*
- *it's going to be long enough between.*

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

Soft Furnishings: how do I clean and disinfect soft furnishings between guests?

You might wish to consider a disinfectant spray (certified as EN 14476) on soft furnishings, mattresses and in particular high touch point areas (where do you draw the curtains?). Fogging would effectively treat soft furnishings (assuming the fogging liquid being used was a suitable virucide). Not all disinfectant sprays will have been tested for use on Covid-19 so we would suggest speaking with your supplier. You may wish to consider using a carpet cleaner/steam

cleaner on carpets and soft furnishings, but these may only be required in the instance of an infection

Polished Wood & Porcelain: how do I clean and disinfect more delicate surfaces between guests?

We would suggest avoiding anything like peroxide or bleach (as you are never sure of the concentrations). However, you may wish to consider using a plain (non-smell) Quaternary compound (possibly pH neutral), but if you are really worried about the finish, soap and water (as usual) should be adequate. We have been advised that a product containing 70% alcohol may dull a wood varnish, but we do not have evidence of this at this point.

What can I use on leather sofas?

Check the product that you are using. Anything that is Hypochlorous acid based is fine for all surfaces, but if in doubt ask the manufacturer and check it in a discreet place first. Most products will be suitable (except bleach), as all have been developed for mass fogging / misting.

Porous Surfaces: how do I clean and disinfect more delicate surfaces between guests?

We would suggest that surfaces such as Granite you continue to clean as you would normally. You may wish to consider avoiding everything except soap and water and 70% alcohol (if the granite is not polished completely, however, expect the soap to get ingrained after a while) We have been advised that bleach, ammonia, peroxide are likely to affect / dull it and lot of commercial disinfectants will have citrus and other mild acids so best avoided. Again we do not have evidence of this at this point.

Shared Facilities and Extras

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

It is recognised that the virus does not survive long outdoors, however you should consider key touch points if guests are using outside equipment or facilities such as BBQs, gates and seating. You may wish to consider cleaning and disinfecting these areas.

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.

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. Evidence suggest that the virus does not survive long on paper. However, you may wish to consider either a rotation of items, where items are bagged/boxed, taken away and stored securely for 72 hours or whether any items can be wiped, cleaned and disinfected at changeover. Be clear to explain this to guests so they don't just think you haven't bothered taking out risky items. Alternatively, you could half the collections, then take half out, and each turnaround you swap what's there.

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, i.e. whether you use a wipeable, disposable or single use, container or simply leave the produce as stand-alone items. Any welcome notes or information should be either single use or wipeable.

Where can I find out more?

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

- ASSC <https://www.assc.co.uk/> Association of Scotland's Self Caterers: provide advice, lobbying and leadership for self-catering operators in Scotland and beyond.
- PASC <https://www.pascuk.co.uk/> Professional Association of Self-Caterers: lobbies and supports self-caterers across the UK.
- DCBN <https://dcbn.org.uk/> Domestic Cleaning Business Network: a useful network for cleaning professionals across the UK.