

Cleaning Protocols and Additional Guidance 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.**

Latest Updates – noted in GREEN

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 guidance, rather than exact steps that you must take, or indeed law. 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.

Updated 11 September 2020:

Scottish Government Guidance on Rule of Six Restrictions: Limits for Social Gatherings

Maximum of 6 people from 2 households, plus children under 12.

The Scottish Government has made some updates to the guidance pages (11th September) and further updates will be made as necessary (<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-tourism-and-hospitality-sector-guidance/pages/frequently-asked-questions-faqs/#Limits%20for%20meeting%20others%20-%20maximum%20of%206%20people%20from%202%20households>).

Q: The limit for groups meeting up (indoors and outdoors) is now a maximum of 6 people from 2 different households, with children under 12 exempt. What do I need to do as a business to ensure this rule is being followed properly?

A: This is now a legal requirement and every individual must follow the rules. As a business you should ensure your booking system is arranged so that it does not accept bookings that exceed these numbers. A simple step is to ensure staff who are taking calls for bookings are asking the right questions, including – is everyone from not more than 2 households? Are there any children under 12 from the same 2 households as these do not count towards the 6? Businesses should not accept bookings from groups that are clearly exceeding the limit.

Q: Can I take a booking for a birthday party where children from multiple households who are all under 12 will be there given they are exempt?

A: No, children under 12 are exempt from the maximum of 6 number but not from the maximum of 2 households – it must always be no more than 2 households regardless of the number of children under 12.

Q: I have forward bookings for groups of more than 6 people from 2 different households – what should I do?

A: It is the responsibility of individuals in the first instance to ensure they are following the rules so those who have made the booking should be in touch to discuss alternatives. If not you should review your bookings and where necessary make contact to discuss alternatives. Businesses cannot accept bookings above the limits so will need to be proactive in engaging clients to avoid situations where guests present in groups above the limits. This may mean a cancellation but may also be a rebooking for numbers that comply with the new rules. This will avoid difficult situations on arrival if no action has been taken as it will not be possible to accommodate groups who present for service who are above the limits.

Q: Is this law or guidance?

A: From 14 September, this is the law

Q: What are the penalties, if any?

A: See this [guidance](#) on compliance and penalties (note it is still to be updated with new limits on numbers meeting).

Q: Can 2 households come from England, or just one?

A: It is the law in Scotland that applies, regardless of the origin of the traveller, so a maximum of 6 people from 2 households.

Q: What is the definition of an extended household?

A: Members of an extended household are considered to be one household for the legal requirements on meeting other households and going outside. If, for example, two adults are in a relationship and they do not live together they, and any children they each live with, can agree to form an 'extended household group'. Everyone in the extended household will be able to act, and will be treated, as if they live in one household – meaning they can spend time together inside each other's homes and not need to stay at least 2 metres apart.

Updated 6 July 2020:

What happens if there is a regional lockdown?

If a specific area is locked down owners/guests should comply with any isolated lock downs in accordance with the specific guidance [for that individual lock down area](#). If this requires guests not to travel, or properties not to take guests, then the operator should follow CMA requirements and offer the customer the options of a transfer to a later date, or a voucher to rebook, or a cash refund.

Updated 8 August 2020

Guidance on holidays in areas with local coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions

The UK Government has issued guidance of what you should do if you're on holiday in an area with local coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions or live in a restricted area and are planning on taking a holiday outside the area:

Steps you should take

- *If you live inside the area, you should only socialise indoors with members of your own household or support bubble*
- *You can only stay in a private home – which includes self-catered accommodation such as holiday cottages, apartments or boats – with members of your own household or support bubble*
- *You can stay in a hotel or similar accommodation (for example, a hostel or bed and breakfast) with another household, but should avoid sharing rooms with people you do not live with or otherwise socialising indoors, for example in each other's rooms, in reception areas, or in restaurants and bars*
- *We advise against sharing a caravan with another household. You should not share private vehicles to travel to your holiday destination*
- *<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-on-holidays-in-areas-with-local-coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions>*

Updated 6 July 2020:

Do I need to get the Guests Contact Details?

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 (England) or Test and Protect (Scotland). Keep the information in accordance with your GDPR protocols and you should keep the details for 21 days.

*In **Scotland**, guidance regarding Test and Protect data collection only applies to hospitality businesses, and as such will not apply to accommodation providers, unless there are restaurants / pubs and other services involved.*

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-tourism-and-hospitality-sector-guidance/pages/collecting-customer-contact-details/>

Updated 17 July 2020:

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

*In **Scotland**, In the event that a guest develops symptoms whilst staying away from home, they should immediately book a test through NHS Inform or, if they can't get online, by phoning 0800 028 2816.*

In accordance with Test and Protect, people with symptoms are required to self-isolate for at least 7 days, and everyone in their household should isolate for 14 days. If the test is negative, everyone can end isolation. If the test is positive, everyone should continue to isolate, and the NHS Test and Protect team will be in touch to start contact tracing. Those contacted through the Test and Protect programme will be required to self-isolate for at least 14 days.

If guests who are isolating can travel home safely to isolate, avoiding the use of public transport, they should do this.

In the event that this is not possible, the guest should discuss this with the NHS Test and Protect team. The guest may be signposted to the National Assistance Helpline on 0800 111 4000 if they need help to isolate and cannot arrange it themselves or through friends and family. In some circumstances further discussion may be required with the local Health Protection Team and local authority to ensure that the person has suitable accommodation to isolate safely and effectively.

After the required period of self-isolation, guests and anyone else in their party who has been affected can then return to their main place of residence.

The guidance is set out at a high level to cover a range of eventualities and individual circumstances, but the principles below regarding seeking advice from the NHS test and protect team and avoiding risks of transmission are key.

Where is the nearest Test Site?

The NHS will inform the person of the nearest test site.

What happens if you find yourself positive on an island? Will you be allowed on a ferry?

You would be asked not to use public transport, including ferries, due to the risk of wider transmission to other passengers and crew.

Who would be liable for any costs associated with an extended stay, including any cancelled bookings for future guests?

If the person can travel home safely, without the use of public transport, they should do so. If they are unable to do this, and the accommodation is the safest place - then they should isolate there. They would be liable for costs of an extended stay. If it is not possible to remain in the accommodation for the duration of the isolation period e.g. because the accommodation is booked for future guests, and they can't find other accommodation themselves with support from friends or family, the person should discuss this with the NHS Test and Protect team. There is assistance available for those who may need help to isolate via the National Assistance Helpline on 0800 111 4000. This helpline routes the person through to the local authority support team who, in discussion with the individual and the local health protection team, will help identify alternative isolation accommodation.

If a guest develops symptoms in a B&B, must the owner / other guests also self-isolate?

Each case would have to be considered by the test and protect contact tracing team to decide whether there was close contact and a high risk of transmission.

Does the local authority / NHS have to provide accommodation for the self-isolating guests if they can't travel home?

As above, in the first instance they should travel home if they can do so safely. If not, they will need to discuss the safest option with Test and Protect team.

*You can access full guidance for **England** here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-advice-for-accommodation-providers>. It states that: "Unless otherwise provided for in the contractual terms of the booking, the guest will be expected to pay the costs of an extended stay in all but exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances may include but are not limited to where the accommodation provider has failed to follow government guidance to create a covid-secure environment".*

Updated 23 July 2020:

What is the guidance for shared stairwells?

In Scotland, the following Parliamentary Question was answered on 23rd July, regarding guidance for shared stairwells:

Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Scottish Labour): *To ask the Scottish Government, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak, how it will ensure that conditions in shared tenements with properties that are let will not impact on (a) residents' and (b) community health. (S5W-30569)*

Kevin Stewart: *The Scottish Government has taken action throughout the pandemic to ensure that people are protected and that appropriate steps are taken to suppress the spread of the virus. Enclosed spaces present challenges and we have published guidance that has taken account of Public Health Advice on the need for communal cleaning. The guidance is available on our website: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-physical-distancing-and-hygiene-advice-for-multi-storeys-and-high-densityflats/>*

The guidance makes it clear that regular cleaning should continue to be provided during the pandemic in line with Public Health Advice. We expect everyone with responsibility for cleaning communal areas to carry this out and ensure that any staff carrying out cleaning are able to do so safely, with appropriate PPE. It is important that everyone plays their part in continuing to suppress the spread of the virus. Where a tenant has concerns about conditions of their tenement close then they should approach their landlord in the first instance.

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), Candida albicans (EN13624, EN 13697, EN 14562, EN1650)</i>

There 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.*

Updated 10 September 2020:

Should I remove all printed material?

The Scottish Government has not issued any direct instructions to tourism and hospitality providers not to use printed material. In fact, they advise premises to actively provide information material in printed form for guests.

Updated 6 July 2020:

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 (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. EN14476 is the European standard for virucidal efficacy, and it is clearly labelled on any compliant disinfectant product. The disinfectant fluids used in a ULV fogger are no different to the brands that you would buy for use in a pump spray bottle

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. 30 minutes to re-open a room to public may be advisable, especially if the room is cold or was fogged with too much density, as evaporation can take a little longer so there could still be wet surfaces (for example, the floor could still be slippery). 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 is destroyed within 30 seconds to 1 minute using a fogger.

Fogging with a suitable disinfecting fluid will destroy a virus within 5 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. It may be advisable to do a spot test on some materials.

nb: 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. 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?

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.

Updated 17 July 2020:

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.

*In **Scotland**, these can open under the heading that all Tourism and Accommodation can open on the 15th July.*

*In **England**, outdoor swimming pools and hot tubs can open on Saturday 25th July, alongside indoor swimming pools, indoor hot tubs, indoor hydrotherapy pools, indoor whirlpools and indoor Jacuzzi's. The full Guidance on this can be found here:*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/providers-of-grassroots-sport-and-gym-leisure-facilities>

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. 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.