



Infection prevention and control advice for environmental cleaning in non-healthcare settings (home and workplace)

This document provides information on cleaning and disinfection for non-healthcare settings during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes settings such as homes, offices, workplaces, public areas, government buildings, reception areas, schools, childcare centres and shops. These principles can be used for both routine environmental cleaning and when there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19.

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

It is important to make sure surfaces are cleaned before any disinfection process occurs, as dirt and grime can affect how well a disinfectant works. You should clean the surface with detergent and warm water using a clean cloth, then follow with a disinfectant. You can also use combined detergent/disinfectant products.

For a disinfection solution to work, always make and apply the solution in line with the manufacturer's instructions. Information on which disinfectants to use against COVID-19 is available on the Therapeutic Goods Administration [website](#)

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

Cleaning principles

Carpets should be regularly vacuumed - ideally with a vacuum cleaner fitted with a high-efficiency particulate absorbing (HEPA) filter. It is important to follow a filter replacement schedule as per the manufacturer guidelines to ensure that the filter remains effective.

It is preferable to use disposable mop heads and cleaning cloths which must be changed regularly and disposed of after use.

If you are unable to use disposable mops and cloths, then reusable mopheads and cloths can be used but should be laundered daily and allowed to air dry. All cleaning equipment (including mop heads) should be stored clean and dry.

Never mix different cleaning products as in some instances toxic gases can be generated. Avoid 'topping up' detergent or disinfectant containers as this can lead to contamination of the containers. The Manufacturer's instruction for use should always be followed, the product Safety Data Sheet should be readily available, and occupational safety and health (OSH) procedures should always followed.

Spraying or 'misting' a surface or area should be avoided.

Some products need to be on a surface for a set period of time to ensure effectiveness against a virus. This is referred to as "contact time". The manufacturer's instructions for use should stipulate how much contact time is required.

How often should cleaning and disinfection be performed?

The recommended frequency of routine cleaning depends on many factors such as the number of people who use a space, the purpose the space is used for, and the amount of soiling present. It also depends on whether surfaces are frequently or minimally touched (see Figure 1).

Frequently touched surfaces

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

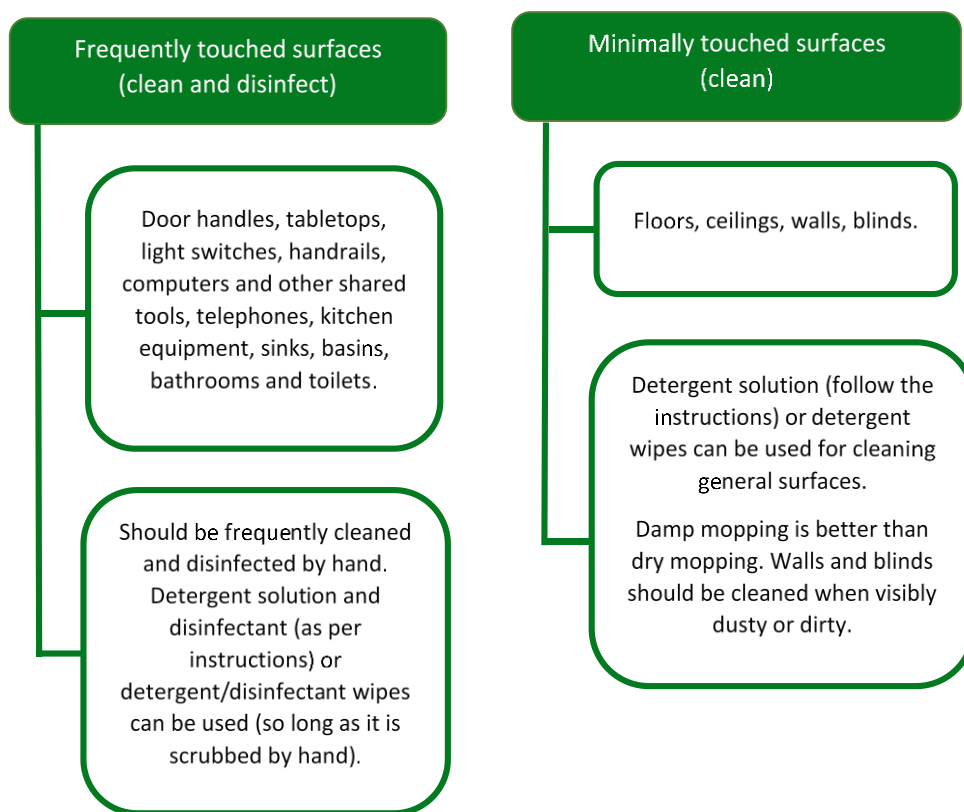
Minimally touched surfaces

Clean minimally touched surfaces, such as floors, at least once a day. Spot clean areas, including ceilings, blinds and walls, as required. These areas do not usually need to be disinfected as well.

When a person has been suspected or confirmed with COVID-19

If a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 has been in the room, **clean and disinfect all** surfaces they may have touched, coughed or sneezed on, including soft furnishings.

Figure 1: routine environmental cleaning



Dishes and cutlery

Shared dishes and cutlery should be cleaned in a commercial or domestic dishwasher using appropriate dishwasher detergent. If a dishwasher is not available, reusable dishes and cutlery should be washed using hot water and dishwashing detergent. Care should be taken to ensure all items are thoroughly cleaned. Dishes and cutlery should be stored clean and dry in a cupboard or covered to prevent potential contamination from sneezes or coughs. Ensure effective hand hygiene is performed prior to and after handling dishes and cutlery.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) for cleaning staff

There is no need for cleaning staff in non-healthcare settings to routinely wear PPE such as surgical masks or gowns when cleaning.

Cleaning staff in non-healthcare settings should be advised to:

- use all chemicals in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- avoid touching their face, especially mouth, eyes and nose when cleaning.
- wear appropriate PPE for the cleaning products used, e.g. disposable gloves when cleaning.

- wear protective eyewear if handling bleach or other disinfectant solutions, to avoid eye splashes. This is in accordance with OSH requirements.
- perform hand hygiene after removing disposable gloves on completion of cleaning tasks.

Emerging environmental cleaning technologies

Disinfectant fogging

The use of disinfectant fogging for COVID-19 is **not recommended**. Disinfectant fogging (sometimes called misting) is the use of a spray of very fine droplets of disinfectant throughout a room. Surfaces must be cleaned prior to undertaking this process. This type of disinfection also carries chemical exposure risks and requires training and the use of PPE. Fogging also involves allowing a significant time to enable the droplets to settle out of the air and onto surfaces before the room can be used again.

Ultraviolet (UV) disinfection

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

Additional information on emerging technologies can be found [here](#).

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

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

Australian Government: [Information for employers](#)

Australian Commission of Safety and Quality in Healthcare: [Environmental cleaning: emerging environmental cleaning technologies](#)

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

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